

Multiculturalism Matters

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH MORETON

1 OCTOBER 2014



Justice issues have culturally diverse faces at Logan UC

CULTURAL diversity has figured prominently in a series of Sunday services on "Who is our neighbour?" at Logan UC this month.

The theme began on September 14, with emerging Aboriginal leader Brooke Prentis linking Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan with the challenge for churches to engage meaningfully with indigenous people in their communities.

After a focus on biblical notions of justice on September 21, refugee concerns took centre stage on September 28 with Mr Dingsai Cangmah, a leader of the Matu Christian UC Faith Community at Woodridge, sharing his experience of coming to Australia from Burma via India.

The series will conclude with Tamil refugees this Sunday, October 5.

The series is on video at vimeo.com/loganuniting.



PHOTOS show: (top) Rev. Graham Keech interviews Dingsai Cangmah; (middle) Matu singers perform at Logan UC; (bottom) Brooke Prentis preaching. Photos—Tim Bennett

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Multiculturalism Matters is published fortnightly and emailed with the Presbytery Newsletter. You are welcome to email, or copy and distribute. Each issue can also be downloaded from the Presbytery web site: <http://www.southmoreton.org.au>. Please email David if you would like to receive the newsletter directly by email. Submitted photos and stories reflecting the cultural diversity of the South Moreton Presbytery are welcome.



Rev. Tino Scanlan (left) and Pastor Siaosi Semaia



Olders to lead Samoan National Conference

REV. Tino Scanlan of Inala UC and Pastor Siaosi Semaia of Forest Lake UC will become the new Chair and Secretary respectively of the UC's Samoan National Conference this month.

They will be inducted at the conference opening service at Lidcombe UC, Sydney, on October 16, at which Brisbane Samoans will lead some of the singing.

Several hundred Samoan UC members will attend the four-day conference.

The Assembly's marriage paper, leadership training, language resources, church planting, youth ministry, and relations with partner churches are among the items listed for discussion, with worship and cultural activities also a key part of the triennial gathering.

Assembly leader shares in Nuer day of prayer

THE solidarity of the UCA with South Sudanese communities in Australia grieving the slaughter of recent months in their homeland has been conveyed in Brisbane by the Rev. Dr Tony Floyd.

Dr Floyd, the Assembly's Director of Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry, attended the Nuer UC Faith Community's day of prayer and mourning at St David's, Coopers Plains, last Saturday.

The vigil was part of a global movement organised by the Nuer diaspora in many countries, in the wake of widespread inter-tribal violence which has continued since a political crisis in the newly-independent nation last December.

Dr Floyd, who was in south-east Qld for a conference of Zimbabwean Methodists from Australia and New Zealand, stayed for the whole vigil, helped lead in prayer, and joined in the community dinner.



Nuer UC Faith Community leader Moses Leth starts the vigil of prayer and mourning, with Rev. Dr Tony Floyd and community elder George Yak Gai.

UnitingWorld reports on disbursement of funds raised for South Sudan

FUNDS raised in this Presbytery to help displaced persons in South Sudan have now been distributed by UnitingWorld.

The agency has reported to the Nuer Faith Community following the donation of about \$9000 raised in the Day of Hope for South Sudan fund-raising day on May 31.

UnitingWorld says it has added extra funds to make a total of \$30,000 and this has been distributed through two agencies.

"Half of the funds have been sent via ACT Alliance, a global coalition of church-based relief agencies of which we are a member. The funds will be used on the ground by

Lutheran World Service to provide water, food and education to displaced persons in Greater Upper Nile state.

"The other half of the funds have been sent directly to our partner, the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency (of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan) to provide emergency food and non-food items to people affected by the conflict in Juba."

The agency expressed its appreciation to the Nuer UC Faith Community for their commitment to working through UnitingWorld and its overseas partners, and conveyed its prayers for those who have lost family in South Sudan.

Logan churches stand for peace with Muslims

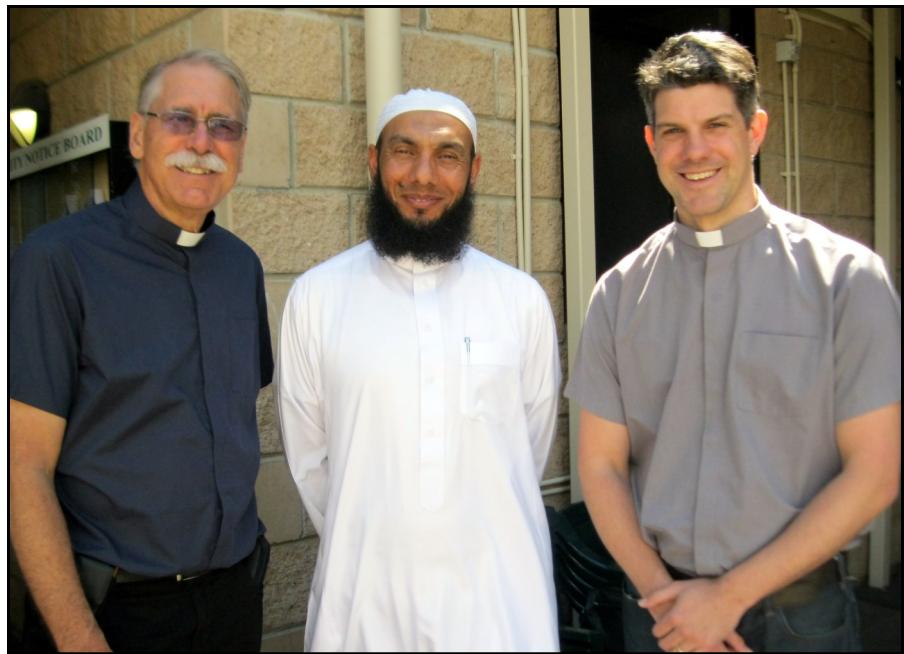
CLERGY and representatives from more than 20 churches in Logan City and further afield have made a joint call for inter-religious peace and respect in the community.

They gathered at the Kuraby Mosque last Friday to make a public declaration of their support for local Muslims, in the wake of attacks against Muslims in recent weeks.

Acting imam at the mosque, Dr Mohamad Abdalla, told the gathering that respected Muslim leaders around the world had unanimously condemned the "Islamic State" insurgents in Syria and Iraq.

Christian spokesman for the event, Pastor David Busch, said the gathering was intended to show that churches would not allow the actions of a few to create religious or racial tensions.

The mosque had been burned in 2001 after the "9/11" attacks.



Revs Alan Robinson (left) and Tim Robinson (right) with acting imam Dr Mohamad Abdalla outside the Kuraby Mosque last Friday. Photo: Tim Bennett

A call for solidarity: The Kuraby statement

As Christians and church leaders, we are standing today side by side with our Muslim brothers and sisters, to condemn all violence and to plead for peace and respect in our community of Logan City.

All of us, Muslims and Christians, condemn all acts of violence. Tragically, throughout history, all religions have had their violent extremes, and have been co-opted by ideologies and militants for causes and actions that are the opposite of their religion's teachings and values.

The values and violence of extremists like IS and ISIS are not representative of the vast majority of Muslim people in Australia, who are distressed and appalled at the actions of these militants and their supporters, and who have always been committed to peace, mutual respect and community well-being.

Criminal activity and military aggression need to be dealt with by the appropriate authorities in accordance with law. What is not helpful is scapegoating an entire group of people on the basis of religious belief.

As people committed to building cohesive and diverse communities in Australia, we are very concerned at how Muslims are being unfairly smeared in the eyes of the public by being associated, through their religion, to violent extremism which they themselves oppose.

In recent conversations with our Muslim friends, they have told us how one member of the community in a hijab (or scarf) had been attacked in the street, and another member of the community in a niqab (or veil) had been stalked and then assaulted in her own home, and another member had been abused by a complete stranger who threatened to run her over in his car, and of other unprovoked attacks on vulnerable Muslim women.

We are all people of faith. An attack on any of us

because of our religion, is an attack on all of us.

All of us have the right to feel safe on our streets and in our homes. All of us have the right to practise our faith freely without fear.

We appeal to every member of our community: Stop this harassment, stop these attacks, stop this climate of suspicion.

This is a time for all people of goodwill to act decisively and positively to protect the fabric of our community. We ask all people to:

- 1) Act in an exemplary manner, being strong but gentle.
- 2) Adopt a dignified, friendly, courteous approach towards all.
- 3) Respect people regardless of their faith. Don't tell other people what you think they believe, let them tell you. Please listen.
- 4) Respect other's views, even if we disagree with their views. Acknowledge both similarities and differences between our faiths.
- 5) Not treat an individual as a spokesperson for their whole religion, nor judge people by what other people of their faith may do.
- 6) Speak positively of our own faith, not negatively of other's.
- 7) Encourage positive relationships between our faith communities.
- 8) Encourage constructive relationships with the wider community.
- 9) Use their wisdom, knowledge, skills and resources to serve others.
- 10) Discuss any problems face to face so we can solve them peacefully.

Forum considers UCA marriage document

ISSUES impacting on culturally diverse communities arising from the Assembly's discussion paper on the theology of marriage were the focus of a seminar at Kangaroo Point UC on Saturday, September 20.

While only a small group gathered, the discussion was wide-ranging, and included sharing personal stories of how marriage had changed in recent generations of each person's family.

Assembly director for Christian unity, doctrine and worship, Rev. Dr Chris Walker, participated, and the discussion will help inform his report on responses to the paper to Assembly Standing Committee in November.



At the marriage discussion: (back, from left) Judy Hunter, Wil Lightfoot, Rev. Alan Robinson, Rev. Dr Chris Walker, Malo Semaia; (front, from left) Deaconess Terani Lima, Rev. Maile Molitiki, Akesa Racava.

Ecumenical Worship Night

Wednesday, October 8, from 7:00 pm

Broadwater Road Uniting Church

481 Broadwater Road, Mansfield

**A night of celebration, worship and testimony
from Australia's emerging indigenous Christian
leaders across the denominations.**

All welcome! Bring your friends!



**Grasstree
Gathering**

**Emerging Indigenous Christian
Leaders Conference 2014**

Two entertainment programs:

Brisbane City Hall

11:00 am and 2:00 pm

All-day Korean food fair

King George Square

10:00-4:00



**Featuring artists from South Korea and
across Australia, including Korean
traditional dance, K-POP, Taekwondo,
body-building, a magician, singers, and more!**

**2014 Korean Cultural Festival
to Celebrate the G20 Summit**

Saturday, October 4

Organised by Pastor Jeong-Su (Jay) Park of Calvary Korean UC