



Celebration of Joy!



Inspiring speakers, wonderful fellowship, no shortage of laughs and great music and song led by the gifted **Amelia Koh-Butler** (pictured below).



These were the ingredients that helped make the Uniting Church 2010 National Adult Fellowship Celebration (April 21-25) in Greenhills, Canberra, a smashing success.

The Celebration theme *For such a time as this* attracted 150 registrants, one of whom (**Elva Carlisle**) came all the way from Scotland!

BANNER BONUS:

The theme –*For such a time as this* based on **Mordechai's** words to **Esther** in **Esther 4:14 (B)** – was superbly reproduced by UCA National Committee member **Eldrene March** in the form of a striking banner (see photo below).



It was tackled from many different angles by the speakers. For example, Uniting Church of Australia President **Rev. Alistair Macrae**

observed during the celebration dinner. “Note that the context for our Celebration theme is found in the words that open Esther 4:14 (a). “Mordechai urges Esther not to ‘remain completely silent at this time’ before declaring that perhaps she was born *For such a time as this* – saving her own people the Jews from destruction.

STORY SHARING:

“In the same way we in UCAF – the engine room of the Uniting Church with its unique networking and connections - should not remain silent about our personal stories we have to share with our neighbour.

“We are born *For such a time as this* to share and witness these stories of faith – our *powerful moments*, if you like, when God makes a major difference in our lives.”



Richard Luke presents . Alistair Macrae with the ‘Destiny’ booklet

BLESSING: President Macrae’s words came after he was presented with his copy of the UCAF sponsored booklet *Powerful Moments of Destiny* by Editor **Richard Luke** who pointed out that everyone has a powerful moment story within them that can

bless their neighbour. **COMMISSIONED:** National UCAF Chairperson **Alistair Christie** stressed that the booklet has been commissioned by Celebration organisers the UCAF National Committee:



Chaplain Noreen Towers and Chairperson Alistair Christie at Communion

“It is commissioned to go out and bless as many lives as possible, on behalf of our Lord.” UCAF National Committee chaplain **Noreen Towers OAM** said the best way this blessing could impact others was to share the booklet with fellow congregational members and friends.”

SYMBOLS: During the Celebration, Noreen proved a blessing herself with the innovative way she taught bible subjects during lively morning worship sessions. She handed out to attendees a Uniting Church dove logo, Psalm 23 bookmark, brightly coloured butterfly – which many wore with their identification tag - and a candle. They symbolized the need to find our Spirit-led calling (dove), choose Jesus as our role model and shepherd (Psalm 23),



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witness as a transformed vessel (butterfly) and shine as lights in a world of darkness (candle).

“MR PERFECT”!: To highlight that God is not calling perfect people to his Kingdom Noreen had National UCAF committee member **Allan Secomb** stand up to reveal a huge sign on his chest declaring he was “Mr Perfect”!



“I’m Mr Perfect!” Allan Secomb tells Noreen

That sparked huge laughter – but so did President Macrae with his gift for humour. His description of how bad his mother’s cooking was during the commissioning of UCAF’s *Food for the Journey* book by **Janice Willis** – forcing him to become a cook – was hilarious.



Labour of love...Janice Willis details how UCAF ‘Food for the Journey’ book was born

MILESTONE: The presentation of the book to President Macrae was a major milestone for Janice: she not only was the driving force behind the book but also typed

it up in a true labour of love.

Gregor Henderson, of Canberra City Uniting Church Parish, our lunch stop during one of two Canberra bus tours, also had people in stitches.



Bus tour visit...UCAF SA President Max Howland outside Parliament House

It was hard to keep a straight face as he outlined the “saucy” exploits of four women named in **Matthew’s** genealogy of Jesus (**Tamar, Rahab, Ruth** and **Bathsheba**).

At one point, he said the word *feet* in Hebrew can refer to *genitals* thus bringing new meaning to Ruth lying at **Boaz’s** feet in Ruth 3:8!



SERIOUS SIDE: Yes, the UCAF celebration had plenty of humour, but it also didn’t fall short on serious, God-centred themes. Australian Army Chaplain **Kerry Bartlett’s** keynote address at the celebration dinner (seen above with UCAF Chairperson Alistair Christie) outlining life

as an army chaplain was a case in point.

WITNESS: Chaplain Kerry literally deals with matters of life and death every day. An accredited boxing coach and martial arts enthusiast, he not only knows how to train soldiers to better defend themselves in conflict but how to put their trust in God. His chaplain’s perceptive and timely presence in the military operations room has proven a wonderful witness for the gospel during 27 years of chaplaincy. UCAF (ACT) member **George Pratt** thanked Kerry for his address pointing out he had also attended Duntroon Royal Military College.



Frontier Services national director **Rosemary Young AM** touched many with her address (see photo above) on the ailing fortunes of rural Australia: “It has now reached a crisis point.”

LOVE: She stressed it was critical that Frontier Services continues an all-important tradition: Provide tangible evidence of God’s love and the commitment of the Uniting Church to the people of outback



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Australia through a vast network of community services that has already touched many thousands of lives. She fielded more than 40 minutes of concerned questions on how the rural crisis can be resolved.



Also receiving plenty of questions after her address was acclaimed National Director of UnitingCare Australia **Lin Hatfield Dodds** (see photo above).

PRAYER: Lin's slide presentation proved a breathtaking reminder of the vast array of services provided by UnitingCare - Uniting Church of Australia's peak body for social care and outreach.

In answer to one question, she said her confidence as national director for 8 years had been boosted whenever she perceives that people are praying for her behind-the-scenes.

"In reality, I don't know who is exactly praying for me, in heading up by far Australia's largest provider of community services," she said.

BUZZ: "But when it comes to my attention I get a real buzz."

Kerry Enright, National Director of UnitingWorld showed himself a man of

passion befitting the Celebration theme *For such a time as this*.

Hailing from New Zealand where he originally practised law, today his energies are devoted to empowering the Uniting Church to renew its heritage of *international connecting* as a core part of its identity.

"In the Pacific Region alone the Uniting Church has the best reputation among denominations and organisations for conflict resolution and networking," he said.



Eldrene interviews Kerry Enright after his address

PEACEMAKERS: "In Ambon, Indonesia, this reputation has led us to be accepted as mediators in a bitter internal dispute between fighting Muslim factions who, ironically, in 1999 tried to destroy Christianity on the island!"



UCAF Chairperson Rev. Alistair Christie conducts communion

One of the most moving addresses came from popular UCAF Chairperson Alistair Christie on

ANZAC Day before a special communion service.

SUPPORT: He outlined the emotional details of he and his wife farewelling their son **Scott** to the recent first and second Persian Gulf wars. And how they told their son they would support him with their love and prayers – he need never feel alone.

WA CELEBRATION:

The next UCAF National Celebration is earmarked for Perth, Western Australian in mid October 2013.

"Our theme is *Who is my neighbour?* says **Barbara Bennewith**. "Like the 2010 Canberra Celebration we want to showcase the very best of UCAF."

PHOTOS IN BRIEF



National committee celebration dinner table



Prayers for President Rev. Alistair McCrae



All the group fun of playing charades on



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Happy customers: Iain and Auriel Steverson

In organizing the UCAF 2010 National Celebration Chairperson Alistair Christie was supported by a talented and hardworking national committee.

Among those not already mentioned in this report... Vice Chairperson **Denise Secomb** backed him at every point and tackled one of the toughest assignments: working out all the accommodation detail. Working on the nuts-and-bolts of the entire Celebration program was hubby Allan.

SECRET BUSINESS:

He also gained much respect for his *Men's Secret Business* meeting (one of the many electives) which attracted 16 well-seasoned males from diverse backgrounds who vowed never to reveal *The Secret!* Secretary **Margaret Gregory** wore many hats, including computer operator during presentations, overseeing every possible detail regarding the celebration and serving as busy troubleshooter. Her husband **Ron** was equally diligent as treasurer, plus an effective communicator who made a point of mixing with attendees.

Geoff and Judy Hicks (below) must take a bow for the bus tours, which visited such Canberra landmarks as the national museum, parliament house, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture and national war memorial where the closing ceremony featured a bugler playing *The Last Post*.



The Hicks were also responsible for a five-day post-celebration bus tour. Well done! Another committee member **Lyn Drabsch** proved to be a helping hand.



Well done...the UCAF 2009 - 2012 National Committee

BRIEFS

My daughter told a friend I was something like the Pope and a hippy combined! UCA national president Alistair Macrae.

He is the comedian and I'm the straight man in the act. UCA General Secretary **Terence Corkin** on working with Alistair.

Amelia Koh-Butler not only taught new songs but explained how to use the microphone: "Place the microphone about level with your chin not your mouth."

The SA UCAF members gave attendees a floral bookmark with the words: *Now is the time to reach up and reach out to each other.*

Tamar having twins after incest with her father Judah in Genesis 38 beats any soap opera I've seen! Comment after UCA past president Gregor Henderson address

God is after spiritual fruit not religious nuts! UCAF National committee chaplain Noreen Towers

"I watched it on TV but have forgotten the name!" a trivia quiz player learning Shocking had won the last Melbourne Cup.

In his welcome letter to Celebration participants Alistair Christie wrote: *This is a time to spend 'loitering creatively with God and God's people' as one friend described it.*

Participants were given an envelope to place in the Celebration Post Box containing a note to someone they would like to comfort and/or encourage.