

“We are the Uniting Church in Australia”

Series One: Our Story

“Partnering in Mission”

Colleen Geyer

In 1977 when the church was formed we made a statement to the nation and it said a few things about who the nation could expect us to be if we were being true to ourselves.

Elenie Poulos

The Uniting Church is committed to social justice because we believe that God calls us to work together for a better world.

Stuart McMillan

So the Uniting Church is committed to First Peoples, because of the history of this land and we would not be an authentic church acting with any integrity as the followers of Jesus unless we had a relationship with first people.

Denise Champion

We can have a destiny together. And those words “destiny together” means there’s hope for reconciliation and hope for peace – to be able to live together. We look at ways in which we can share our culture, share the space, share the land in which we live and that seems to me, the very essence, really, of the gospel.

Elenie Poulos

And so one of the roles of the church is to remind people that we can be better, that we can treat people with dignity and respect, and we do that because we believe that everyone is created in the image of God. And we believe that as a church which follows in the footsteps of Jesus who wanted to challenge all of those systems and the structures and even the religious behaviours of his time to be more inclusive of people, to allow people to flourish, then this is the call on us as well in this time and in this place.

Grahame Ryan

Frontier Services is an organization that’s now 103 years old. It began with a vision, Rev John Flynn of the Australian Inland Mission, to provide a mantle of safety for people in remote and isolated communities parts of the country. And we’ve seen that throughout the legacy of the organisation. The development of the School of the Air, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, there are a whole range of initiatives that were brought to the fore through the predecessors of Frontier Services.

Patrol ministers or Patrol Padres travel throughout the length and breadth of the country, via all sorts of means, and they visit isolated communities, farms, mining camps, road gangs, indigenous communities particularly, and in many senses operate as the eyes and ears for that community, assisting with referrals for communities that have issues that might be environmental or sociological, certainly economic, and in many cases health issues too, especially in the mental health area. And they act as a first point of referral.

Secondly we have quite a substantial volunteer program, that provides direct community benefit and assistance, particularly into farming communities and pastoral areas of the country that are

experiencing drought and economic recession. Two other areas that we're developing as well: a greater role for advocacy - speaking up on behalf of people that occupy these isolated communities, and working in partnership with institutions to conduct research into the effects of remote living and some of the consequences of that and how we might be able to then adapt our programs and our resources to assist.

It is the fact that it is such a practical and pragmatic expression of faith. The hands and feet of Christ in the field - what better way to draw in not only other members of other faith communities but indeed the broader secular community. Don't talk about it. Do it.

Sureka Goringe

UnitingWorld is the partnerships agency of the Uniting Church and what that means is we're the people who steward the engagement of the people of the Uniting Church with our partners overseas. We try and build relationships and help people in the Uniting Church to work alongside the ministry of our partners to support them in solidarity and in return have vibrant, life-changing relationships.

Rob Floyd

One of the units is called the Relief and Development Unit. It works with our overseas partners in community development. So that's areas like education, health and economic empowerment for people in poor communities. That unit sends about \$5million a year overseas to our partners and it works with 20 partners in about a dozen different countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

Sureka Goringe

The Uniting Church in Turramurra is a big supporter of one of our projects in North India where the church has initiated building a school in one of the most remote places in the Darjeeling Hills where kids are at risk from trafficking because they don't have access to education. Now the church at Turramurra has committed to raising substantial funds to help the church develop the school, to staff it, to train the staff, equip it and get it started, but they've also taken the trouble to go regularly. Once a year a small group from Turramurra go, and they've got to know the people, they've got to know the teachers, and this year, since the school opened, they've got to know the kids.

Pradeep Kumar Samantaroy

For us, our partnership with the Uniting Church in Australia is very important because through this partnership we are able to explore the possibilities of witnessing for Christ in a more meaningful way, expressing our love and concern for the people and also trying to identify each other's needs and to be able to receive as to give.

Sef Carroll

At the heart of the partnership is relationship, it's friendship. It's also a two-way relationship, and it's about giving and receiving. Jesus' message was about the whole of humanity and particularly those who are poor, those who are outcast, those who are on the fringes. That's what the call is for.

Rob Floyd

When I travel overseas to visit partners, I'm always surprised and amazed at the creativity and energy in people I meet, who may be some of the poorest people living in some of the most difficult places, and yet they have a vibrancy and an energy and a real potential that we can be a

part of and that's a huge privilege to have that opportunity to be a part of the life someone else and to help them to grow and develop into the person that God calls them to be.

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