

## COVENANTER' S NEWSLETTER No.20 – December 2008

Dear Covenanters,

The About Face program is a great opportunity for young adults 18 – 30 years old to experience another culture. Read more below. Please consider whether there are any young folk in your congregation that may benefit from such an experience and whether your community might sponsor or support their application. Time is running out so consideration needs to happen now.

**Applications close on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2009**

See the website for more details and stories. <http://www.aboutface.org.au>

### About Face 2009



## Information for Applicants

About FACE 09 is a *Faith And Cultural Exchange* for young adults between 18 and 30 years, to take place from 28<sup>th</sup> June to 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2009. Participants will elect to spend two weeks in a placement with either an Aboriginal community in Australia, or with a partner church in the Asia-Pacific region. The About FACE 09 program is an exciting and strategic opportunity for young adults to participate in the reconciliation and covenanting process with Aboriginal communities in Australia, and to share in solidarity with partner churches in the Asia-Pacific region.

The program will raise awareness of what it means to live in a global community, and to share resources and opportunities responsibly and with justice. It aims to create an 'about face' in the attitudes and lifestyles of participants, and to build relationships and bridges of understanding. About FACE 09 is not simply an event for an individual, but is a shared experience with congregations and communities.

### **About FACE 09 Process**

#### **Phase one – application and interview process**

Congregations and Presbyteries are encouraged to identify young adults who could be invited to apply for About FACE 09, and to consider ways to actively support successful applicants prayerfully, pastorally and practically. Applications close on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2009, and it is envisaged that all applicants will be interviewed by a selection panel coordinated within the home Synod in late February. Applicants will be notified in early March 2009 about the outcome of their application and interview.

#### **Phase two – Preparation**

Participants will be encouraged to establish a Support Group and begin meeting with them. Congregations will be encouraged to arrange a Commissioning Service prior to departure to the About Face 09 program. Participants will meet in their home Synod prior to joining the larger group in Victoria for pre-placement preparation.

#### **Phase three – Placement**

Participants will be in small groups of two to six people for two weeks in a placement in an Aboriginal community or an overseas partner church. Host communities will arrange a program for participants, with a focus on fostering relationships and building bridges of understanding.

### **Phase four – Debriefing**

Participants will gather together in Victoria to share their experiences, and prepare for re-entry to their home congregations and community. On return to their home state, participants will have an opportunity to gather with others in their Synod for mutual support and encouragement, and further debriefing if needed.

### **Phase five – Project**

All participants will be encouraged to identify a practical project as a follow on from the About FACE 09 experience. They will also be encouraged to stay in touch with other About FACE 09 participants for mutual support and encouragement, and to identify and develop common projects and initiatives. All participants will be encouraged to share their stories, experiences and insights with the local and wider church and in the community. All participants will be encouraged to remain in friendship and solidarity with their host community, including advocacy, supporting projects, and raising awareness of specific issues for the host community to the wider community in Australia.

### ***Costs of Program***

All costs indicated here include food, accommodation, briefing/debriefing resources, travel insurance, and all administration costs. Cost does not include travel to and from Melbourne (arrangements for this need to be made by delegates themselves), personal spending money, visa costs (if applicable) and medical costs (eg immunisations if required).

Flight bookings will be made in March on receipt of the first payment of 50% of the total cost of participating in the program. All flights will be subject to availability. We reserve the right to increase the costs if airfares and taxes increase markedly in 2009 prior to making flight bookings, but will endeavour to work within the cost structure based on information available in November 2008.

All participants will be provided with fundraising ideas to help meet the program costs. Participants are encouraged to discuss their interest in the About FACE 09 program with their home congregations, Presbytery and other community networks.

- Aboriginal Placements: \$1500 (deposit \$750)
- Asia-Pacific Placements: \$2200 (deposit \$1100)

Participants are invited to indicate their location preference, but the final placement will be determined in light of the interview and recommendation of the selection panel and will take into account personal and cross-cultural maturity. This process will take seriously duty of care, and the welfare and well being of all participants.

#### **About FACE 09 Office**

Justice and International Mission  
Synod of Victoria & Tasmania  
130 Little Collins Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

03 9251 5271

[info@aboutface.org.au](mailto:info@aboutface.org.au)  
<http://www.aboutface.org.au>

The Partners in this project come from across the life of the Uniting Church in Australia and include:

- Commission for Mission, Synod of Victoria & Tasmania
- Justice and International Mission Unit, Synod of Victoria & Tasmania
- Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)
- Uniting International Mission (UIM), National Assembly
- National Youth Activities Reference Committee – NYARC
- National Faith and Development Consultant, National Assembly

## Face the Facts

Friday, 28 November 2008

The Australian Human Rights Commission has just updated the online Face the Facts education resources, which aim to provide students with a stronger understanding of issues concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants and multiculturalism, asylum seekers and refugees.

Race Discrimination Commissioner Tom Calma said there was a clear need for information that addressed prevailing myths and stereotypes about refugees, migrants and Indigenous peoples.

"The Face the Facts education resource is designed to complement the material in the 2008 Face the Facts publication and uncovers issues that are often misrepresented," Mr Calma said.

"It is an essential resource for exploring these issues in the classroom."

The activities are suitable for use in a range of key learning areas for secondary students across Australia. Teaching notes, student activities and worksheets are provided, plus a range of recommended online resources and further reading.

The resources are designed to introduce Australian students to human rights concepts in an engaging, relevant way and are available online at:  
[http://humanrights.gov.au/education/face\\_facts/](http://humanrights.gov.au/education/face_facts/)

Download copies of the "2008 Face the Facts" book here:  
[http://humanrights.gov.au/racial\\_discrimination/face\\_facts/index.html](http://humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/face_facts/index.html)



## Some Last Minute Ideas for Christmas Gifts

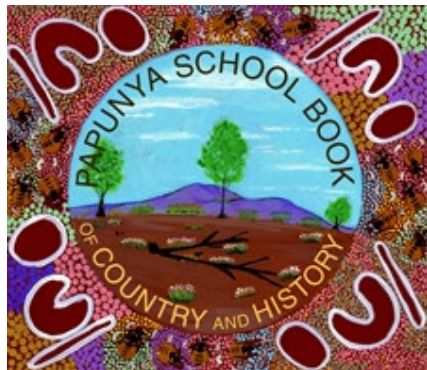
Why not give a book such as **Anna the Goanna** or **Papunya School Book**. Purchase from major bookstores, locally or online. Or even the already hard to get DVD, "The First Australians"

For children:

### **Anna the Goanna and other poems**

By Jill McDougall & Jenny Taylor RRP \$19.95  
Aboriginal Studies Press 2008 ISBN: 97885575 666 1

Read these poems written for Aboriginal children and you'll realise just how much children everywhere have in common, as well as the unique heritage Australian Indigenous children have. Highly Recommended.



### **Papunya School Book of Country and History**

Allen & Unwin RRP \$16.95

This multi-award-winning book tells the story of how Anangu from five different language groups came to live together at Papunya. From the time of first contacts with explorers, missionaries and pastoralists, through to the Papunya art movement and the Warumpi Band, this multi-layered text finally leads us to the development of the unique educational environment that is Papunya School. As an example of two way learning, it is a profound metaphor for reconciliation. This will interest older children and adults.

This book and many others relating to Indigenous issues and

culture is available (checked out on 15 Dec) in the Picture Books section at Dymocks in Rundle Mall.

For Adults:

### **Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology**

By the Rainbow Spirit Elders.

Available from UniChurch Books: \$14.95

ATF Press, ISBN 9781920691806

This text has been prepared by a group of Aboriginal Christian leaders with the aim of integrating the traditions of Aboriginal culture with the traditions of Christianity. The key to reconciliation is dialogue and understanding. Rainbow Spirit Theology provides a source of genuine dialogue between Aboriginal and immigrant Christians who enjoy a rich life on what was once Aboriginal land.

Authors include George Rosendale, Nola Archie, Dennis Corowa, William Coolbura, James Leftwich and Jasmine Corowa, representing six Aboriginal peoples and ministry in four Christian traditions.

Assisting the project were Robert Bos, Norman Habel and Shirley Wurst.

This is a useful book for adults who wanted some understanding of Aboriginal spirituality; good background for teachers too. Available online so a little late maybe for Christmas but something you might consider buying with some Christmas money?

<http://unichurch.victas.uca.org.au/>

### **Tjinatjunanyi Report Card 2008**

Many thanks to all who have prayed, contributed money or in other ways supported this excellent Port Augusta Congress program in 2008. Walter Reyes, the teacher, reports:

**We celebrated** the student's achievements in a week 9 with a community gathering. **We celebrated student's progress in relation to their inclination for learning, their increase in resilience, behaviour modification and their understanding of self-determination to accomplish their goals.**

Awards were presented to all students in front of their families which made the event more significant because it re-enforced the need of community support for their children and for their futures.

**The results:** 9 students completed one SACE unit Stage 1 Australian studies: one student is to claim SACE block status for stage 1; another student is entitled to transfer his traineeship hours into SACE units. Finally, this ends 2009 with a great smile and hope for these students' future.

**'We are making a very small brick, a strong brick to contribute in the building of the bridge; over the gap' Mr Walter Reyes, December 2008**

### **Coming next year: Covenanting Forums**

Palya, Go with God,

*Peter*

16 December 2008

'Til we meet again,

Hold the warmth of the camp fire in your heart

And may the Creator Spirit, the God of peace,

At this Christmas time and into the New Year,

Always walk with you.

*Peter Russell*

Covenanting Coordinator  
Mission Resourcing Network  
Uniting Church in Australia –  
Presbytery and Synod of SA

Level 2, 212 Pirie Street ADELAIDE  
GPO Box 2145, Adelaide SA 5001  
P: 8227 0822 M: 0427 667 607  
E: [prussell@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:prussell@sa.uca.org.au)

Note: The Covenanting Coordinator position is only half time. Office hours are usually in the first half of the week, Monday to Wednesday when not out and about. The Covenanting Coordinator is able to preach at Services, and talk to Church Councils, Bible Study and Fellowship Groups. For further details contact the Covenanting Coordinator. **Please note that the email address has changed.** Past copies of this newsletter may be downloaded from the website:

<http://www.sa.uca.org.au/goto/covenanting> and click on **What's New**

The resources, events and conferences listed in this newsletter are not necessarily officially supported by the Uniting Church. Information is provided as presented by the relevant organisations. The views expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily reflect the policy of the Uniting Church.