



# UC Information

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## Feelings of Jesus and the mission of God.

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Principal, Uniting College

Last year my hometown of Christchurch was hit by a major earthquake. In a matter of seconds, 185 people died and a city centre was destroyed. Over 5000 households were eventually “rezoned”, forced to permanently leave their family homes. (As I write this, our home in Christchurch is undergoing major repairs.)

The earthquake and the aftermath produced in me waves of grief, anger and despair. It made me ask new questions - feeling questions - about the mission and ministry of Jesus.

Did Jesus feel like me?

Well yes.

Jesus felt compassion when he saw the crowds (Matthew 9:36ff). The result was prayer, to the Lord of the Harvest, followed by the sending of disciples on a mission of healing and speaking.

That was not the only feeling. Jesus felt anger in the temple (John 2). The result was the cleansing of a home for prayer, an expression of mission as prophetic justice-making.

Then there was the feeling of love. When Jesus was asked about eternal life (Mark 10:17ff), the response was love. The result was another expression of mission, the radical call to give everything for the sake of the poor.

Then there was the feeling of sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane. The result was prayer, an embrace of the cup of suffering and a surrender to God’s will and purpose. Here was where I found consolation after the earthquake. Miles from home, mission as speaking, justice making or radical discipleship were an impossibility for me in relation to my home town.

But my feelings of sorrow could find expression in a mission of intercession, the invitation to hold the cup of suffering on behalf of my broken and dismembered city.

In other words, feelings have a central place in the ministry and mission of God.

Psychologists point out our human tendency to not be emotional rather than explore how our emotions can be refined and transformed to mature forms (Elliott, “Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament”, Kregel, 2006). This is important for us.

First, for us in ministry, given that we are regularly brought close to emotions, in ourselves and in others, the temptation is to not be emotional. An example is “compassion fatigue,” often suffered by those in caring professions. In the face of suffering, we switch off. (<http://www.compassionfatigue.org>)

Another example comes in conflict. A few years ago I undertook professional development in the area of conflict resolution. The lecturer, one of Australia’s top mediators, observed that churches are the most difficult places within which to resolve conflict. And we all know that around conflict is emotion. Hence that reminder from those psychologists, the encouragement to explore our emotions. Practically, we refine our emotions through journaling, friendship and good supervision.

Second, I sometimes wonder if Uniting Churches are single emotion churches. What I mean is that we have churches (not your’s of course!) that make one expression of mission their priority. “We’re into speaking.” “Oh, but we’re into justice.” Yet the mission of Jesus flows from a wide range of emotions into a multi-faceted mission.

Practically, we grow here in our Prayers of intercession, as we consider our world, tell God how we feel and seek the God of holistic mission to be active - present in words, signs and deeds.

Third, in leadership development. All of us are working with other leaders - in Church councils, in worship planning, in community programs. What does it mean to encourage them to grow, not just in right beliefs (as we engage Scripture and the Christian tradition) or right practices (as we provide feedback to them on what went well) but in right feelings?

Practically, we grow as we ask each other “How are you doing, really?”

Because exploring our feelings connects us mind, body and soul with the mission of our living God.

## PLACEMENTS NEWS

Placements finalised since the last edition of UC Information:

- Rev Dr Phil Marshall to Plains Community Church (0.5) from 1 October 2012

The following is the current list of vacant approved placements:

### Profiles available

- Ardrossan (0.5)
- Barossa (Angaston, Greenock, Nurioopta, Tanunda & Truro)
- Bordertown, Buckingham & Mundulla
- Eden Hills (0.25)
- Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations
- Keith from 1 January 2013
- Mallala and Two Wells (0.6)
- St Andrews by the Sea, Glenelg

### Profiles not yet Available

- Blackwood
- Kent Town (0.5)
- Port Augusta Congress
- Executive Officer MR (SA) - to be advertised

Placements available can also be found at [resources.sa.uca.org.au/uc-positions-vacant](http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/uc-positions-vacant)

If you wish to express an interest in any of these placements, or would like to have a look at the profile, please advise Rev Philip Gardner, [pgardner@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:pgardner@sa.uca.org.au) by **Tuesday 21 August 2012**. **You should also inform your Mission Network's representative on Placements Committee of your interest.** The next meeting of the Placements Committee will be held on **Monday, 27 August 2012** when names of Ministers will be considered to fill a number of these placements.



### **Pornography: 2 Day Seminar - September 14 & 15, 2012** Adelaide West Uniting Church

This seminar is designed to alert those who lead and care of the dangers and the costs of accessing exploitative material

- Day 1: *Addressing some questions about pornography:*  
Day 2: *Social, Psychological and Theological issues in exploitive material  
Assessment and Treatment  
Working with the Collateral Damage*

Presented by: **Rev Dr Peter Powell**,  
Registered Psychologist, Australia; Director, Pastoral Counselling Institute;  
Synod of NSW and the ACT

To Download the brochure or to register and pay on line go to [presbyterysynod.sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations/events-a-registration.html](http://presbyterysynod.sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations/events-a-registration.html)

You are invited to the following  
Special Service

### INDUCTION

**Rev Leanne Jenski**  
Flinders Medical Centre  
26 August 2012 1.30 pm  
At the FMC Chapel

### **Code of Ethics Refresher course**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September**  
**9.30am - 12.30pm**

This session is for those in ministry positions who have already participated in a full training and are needing to attend a refresher (triennially). Cost \$4.00

Venue: **Parafield Gardens Uniting Church**  
Cnr of Shepherdson Road and Salisbury Highway, Parafield Gardens.

To Register and pay on line go to [resources.sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care/cse-training.html](http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care/cse-training.html)

### **Presbytery Synod Office Phone number**

*Did you know the Presbytery Synod Office phone number changed some time ago.*

For general enquires ring **8236 4200**  
For UC Invest enquires ring 1300 274 151