



## BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Rod Dyson  
Executive Officer, MRN

I continue to find Australia's treatment of refugees and asylum seekers quite disturbing. Like everyone else I have heard the arguments about them not entering Australia through the appropriate channels etc. But it is also true that we would never ship our own children off anywhere without being sure that they were safe. The problem is that we can obey the rules of the land but still not be doing the right things as Christians. I am reading Leonard Sweet's book *Out of the Question ... into the mystery* (WaterBrook Press 2004) and have found it quite helpful. Chapter 3 in this book is actually titled *Doing It Right and Still Failing the Test*.

This chapter focuses on Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22.1-19). It is a passage that troubles many Christians and certainly troubled Sweet for years. After all what sort of God would ask any one of us to sacrifice one of our children? Even though God provided a sacrificial ram in place of Isaac you can imagine the impact on their relationship of Abraham's willingness to strap Isaac to the wood on the altar!

Sweet separates this story into two issues. The first is the obedience test. Abraham passes this test because he is willing to obey God even if it means the death of the child of promise. And at one level we want to affirm that our allegiance to God comes before anything else.

The second issue that Sweet identifies in the story is what he calls the relationship test. He notes that Abraham grows in his relationship with God. Indeed there is a covenant between them. Abraham is so confident in this relationship with God that he is willing to intercede on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham is challenged by God to do what is just and right and in interceding for these towns Abraham is challenging God to also do what is just and right. Will God not spare these towns if

there are fifty righteous people there? Abraham is bold enough to say to God, *"Far be it for you to do such a thing – to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right (22.25)?"* We all know that Abraham keeps arguing with God and the result is that even if there are only ten righteous people God will not destroy these towns. Why is Abraham so confident here but will not intercede for his own son? It is one thing to say yes to taking Isaac on a three day journey to a sacrifice (the obedience test) but why didn't Abraham argue all the way telling God that to go through with the command was unjust.

To actually go through with the command to sacrifice Isaac was a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of God. Abraham showed that he did not understand what God is like.

Some may well argue that asylum seekers enter our country 'illegally' but to treat them inhumanely and not show hospitality is a grave misunderstanding of how terrible the life circumstances of refugees and asylum seekers are. It is also, I believe, a misunderstanding of the nature of God and the call upon our lives to welcome the stranger to our land.

*"Imagine a world where the representatives of the greatest military power on earth are humbled by an unarmed healer from the backwaters of Galilee. If you can imagine this kind of world, you possess... an imagination ready to discern the reign of God." Stanley Saunders*

## PLACEMENTS NEWS

Placements finalised since the last edition of UC Information:

- Steph Tai, Ministry of Pastor to Freedom, (0.3) from 1 July 2011
- Coralie Evans, Phase 3 Candidate for MOW to Grange and Westminster Village (0.7) from 15 July 2011
- Rev Beth Seaman to Mission Resource Person (Urban) from 1 August 2011
- Paul Turley, Phase 3 Candidate for MOW to Clayton Wesley from 1 August 2011
- Rev Jana Norman to Pilgrim from 1 August 2011
- Rev Mark Hewitt to Crossways from 1 September 2011

The following is the current list of vacant (or soon to be vacant) approved placements:

### Profiles available

- Adelaide West
- Burra (0.5)
- Loxton (0.6) and Renmark (0.4)
- South West Fleurieu (Delamere, Inman Valley, Myponga, Range Road, Yankalilla)

### Profiles not yet available

- Barossa
- Kent Town (0.7)
- Spicer from 1.09.11
- Mt Barker (0.?) from 1.05.11

### Advertised Positions/Placements

<http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/uc-positions-vacant.html>

- Adelaide Congress (Profile available)
- Christ Church (Profile available)
- Eldercare: Aged Care Chaplain (see separate notice)

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 June 2011**. 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 June 2011** when names of Ministers will be considered to fill a number of these placements.



THE NATIONAL MINISTERS' CONFERENCES 2011  
**Ministry in a time of Transition**

**Registrations have now closed for the Adelaide Ministers Conference. Limited Space is still available for Conference 2 in Alice Springs**

Please join us as we celebrate with the following Congregations and people over the next few months.



### INDUCTIONS

**Rev Tony Eldridge**  
Westbourne Park  
14 June 2011 7.30 pm

**Rev Jane McDonald**  
Kimba  
7 July 2011 7.30 pm

**Rev Wes Howland**  
West Lakes United  
12 July 2011 7.00 pm

### COMMISSIONING

**Pastor Brian Scott**  
County Jervois  
10 July 2011 2.00pm at Cleve

June Pre-sessional Seminars  
Friday 17 June 2011

Limited Space still available for the following:

- **Child Safe Environments:**  
*Full day and Half Day refresher*  
*Venue: Uniting College*
- **Mental Health First Aid**  
*Venue: The Corner 1pm to 4pm*

Note: Ministry of Pastor Information Seminar  
**CANCELLED**

To book contact Gill Morel on 8236 4204 or

### **AGED CARE CHAPLAIN Full Time**

**Eldercare Inc.** is a UnitingCare agency of the Uniting Church providing residential care for aged persons in South Australia.

**Eldercare** is poised to develop an exciting new pastoral care ministry program. We are seeking applications from suitably experienced and qualified persons for **The Lodge** (Wayville).

The successful applicant will join a team of highly motivated Chaplains committed to delivering leading edge pastoral care for our residents, their families, and our staff. We want a lifetime learner passionate about pastoral care and an ability to work in a team environment.

Written applications close midday 17 June 2011.

More information, job and person specifications from:  
Rev. Jim Spiker 0408 698 122  
[jim.spiker@eldercare.net.au](mailto:jim.spiker@eldercare.net.au)