



Message Stick



The bi-monthly Magazine of the

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

Our Mission: The UAICC is made up of ordinary people who do extraordinary things with God promoting the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians through: Holistic Evangelism, Justice, Transformation and Empowerment.

Ralph Peinkinna Commissioned in Aurukun



The commissioning of Ralph Peinkinna included elements of a traditional initiation ceremony.

" Keep visiting and knocking at door ways, keep meeting and reaching out amongst the people, be Christ to them... care and serve them..." Rev Shayne Blackman.

Rev. Shayne Blackman on behalf of Calvary Presbytery, officially commissioned Ralph as a community Minister to serve the people of Aurukun on Cape York.....full story inside.

Contents

Queensland

- *Ralph Peinkinna Commissioning* 1.
- *Ministry in Mapoon* 2.
- *Napranum Kids Club* 2.
- *Shalom Music, Drama & Hospitality Centre Opening* 3.

Victoria

- *Narana Partnerships Reconnecting Youth* 4.

Northern Regional Council of Congress

- *Yolngu Radio Broadcasts into Arnhem Land* 4.

South Australia

- *New Ministry at Murray Bridge* 5.
- *UAICC Frontier Services/ Mobile Aboriginal Patrol* 5.

New South Wales

- *Congress Turns 21!* 6.

Western Australia

- *World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People* 6.

Congress Reflections

- *Pastor Bill Hollingsworth* 7.

Tasmania

- *Ministry at Risdon Prison* 8.



From the National Administrator



With the recent passing of spring and the onset of warmer months, I cannot help but marvel at the new life nature has heralded all around us. This new life no matter how large or small it may be, is very much congruent to the new life Congress is seeing in Indigenous people we engage with as we continue to minister holistically around the nation.

The many broken spirits, anguish and despair that we have been witness to have been replaced with a spirit of strength, confidence and a hope for a brighter future. This has always been achieved by our common resolve to realize our vision of building faith filled, just and equitable pathways for Aboriginal and Islander people.

We do so in the hope that this nation is increasingly built *not* on the ideals of a 'society' where relationships are entirely governed by employment, law or contracts but a real community in which the connection is love – a community in which we can share our gifts with each other to enrich each other's lives.

The stories within are just a sampling of the many activities Congress is pursuing around the nation as we endeavor to continue to keep raising the bar and affecting positive change where needed. I congratulate Ralph Peinkinna on his commissioning and the important role he will no doubt fulfill in the community of Aurukun. Narana Creations continues to play a vital role in reconnecting Indigenous youth to their culture as a basis for their affirmation as they find their way in the world.

We welcome the exciting initiative of Yolngu Radio in the Northern Territory and the benefits it will no doubt bring to the residents of many remote communities that have up until now only had access to radio in English. We pray for the new Ministry at Murray Bridge in South Australia and celebrate the 21st anniversary of Congress in New South Wales.

Rev Willie Pickett has returned from the world Christian gathering of Indigenous people in the Philippines and ministry is continuing to offer hope to the Indigenous inmates of Risdon prison.

We are once again proud to present another reflection from Pastor Bill Hollingsworth the Chairperson of Congress's National Elders Council.

If you know of anyone that would like to subscribe to Message Stick, please have them send an email to the editor at: rpuaicc@bigpond.com.

Rev Shayne Blackman
National Administrator
Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress



COMMISSIONING OF RALPH PEINKINNA

The commissioning took place on a Sunday August 6th from mid afternoon, and concluded with a huge meal prepared by the church elders. Members of his clan and ceremonial group accompanied Ralph for his commissioning singing traditional songs while carrying branches. As Ralph was brought to the door of the church he was revealed from out of the middle of the group and was ceremonially presented for commissioning.



Ralph is commissioned as community pastor. From left Rev Shayne Blackman, Rev Silas Wolmby and Ralph Peinkinna.

In the church following the ceremony many came forward to greet Ralph. Greetings from the churches in Napranum and Mapoon were conveyed by the minister and members who were present. A final blessing through song was conducted by a group of the church elders, and then a blessing by Rev. Silas Wolmby from Aurukun on Ralph for his service as a community pastor.



Elders sing a blessing for Ralph Peinkinna.

Ralph is already fulfilling many features of the community pastor role he was commissioned into: visiting families, leading worship and preaching, supporting the local minister and elders, and pastoral support to the youth. Ralph is also chair of the Aurukun Community Justice Group – traditional owners with responsibility for law, order and community well-being.



MINISTRY IN MAPOON LIVING WITH HOPE

Church life in Mapoon is alive and well. For worship we mostly meet on the Health clinic veranda in Mapoon as we do not yet have a church building. Worship life is vibrant when people come to sing, pray, read the scripture, preach, discuss the word of God as well as draw, paint and colour-in as a response to what God is saying to us. The congregation comprises quite a number of children and young people who have grown strongly in their spiritual lives.



Ministry agent James Hughes leads a Sunday evening beach service at the old Mapoon Mission Site.

If ministry agent, James Hughes, is late in picking them up from their houses (up to 10 km away), they start walking to church along the dusty road and the young people that live nearby start setting up the chairs for church. Sometimes we have our worship service down at the beach especially at the site of the original church mission in Mapoon. Easter morning services have been held at this site for the last two years with quite a number of people attending worship.

It is a humbling experience to be worshipping in this place where people have lived for thousands of years and worked and worshipped through the time of the missions for many years as well. The view out from the beach to Mulgrave Bay is just awesome and naturally turns the congregation's minds to the worship of our Creator God.

Other community congregational life includes going on day trips - swimming and fishing. James Hughes, ministry development worker placed by Calvary Presbytery, is in his third year in Mapoon and said "It's good to get out into the bush and enjoy the country together. Elders sometimes come with us and teach us about skills such as coconut leaf weaving and shell necklace making.



NAPRANUM KIDS CLUB TRANSFORMING LIVES

The Elders and local leaders of the Congress Congregation in the Indigenous community of Napranum, were inspired by the vision from John 3:16, that 'Jesus is the saviour of everyone' as they have ministered over the last 7 years. One of the ministries run is the Napranum Kids Club, run by the women's program - Druamalon (meaning women). The Club started six years ago for children affected by domestic violence. One outcome of this group who are now mostly 17 years of age or older, is that they are now becoming leaders of the youth program, and leading the Kids Club too.

Maryanne Coconut, Druamalon Coordinator said "their raised self esteem, wellbeing, confidence, and self care, pride and presentation have been the fruits of this program they are the ones now running youth camping, workshops, serving the younger ones through leadership of the Kids Club. They have developed confidence in speaking up front, running and catering for activities, learning these skills through their involvement in the Kids club" a number of these ones are now taking up local traineeships and employment in mining, community services, administration and art.

Cultural and spiritual basis for ministry Lucini Huni - Kids Club worker shared "These young ones are having an impact on the wider community, as their parents see them going to Kids Club, church and become very supportive. The young ones have learnt through the elders sharing cultural stories and dances to the boys and girls. Many of them have also been baptised." At Easter the services in the church were full of children and young people, and the sunrise service was held on the beach with a meal of fresh fish.



Lucini Huni with children of the Napranum Kids Club. The club is helping to produce a new generation of young Indigenous leaders.

Lucini, Mary Anne, and local Minister Rev Davui reflected that some of key principles the congregation has stuck too in local ministry are: 1) Talking with the people, listening to them, building trust, and struggling and going through things with the people. 2) Nurturing and caring for people in a spiritual way, and having reliable, consistent people in leadership. 3) Using God given wisdom to involve ourselves in such areas of ministry." This approach has led to slowly changing lives and this community....transformation.



SHALOM CHRISTIAN COLLEGE NAIDOC & OPENING OF PERFORMING ARTS, MUSIC AND CATERING CENTRE

Shalom Christian College held its official opening of its new Performing Arts, Music and Catering Centre on Friday 15th September. The opening was conducted by the Board of CCDEU Ltd and the Federal Member for Herbert Peter Lindsay MP.

The Centre is well equipped boasting an impressive range of musical instruments, recording studio rooms, kitchen and catering facilities and performance areas. The Centre has been well embraced by the students who are continually raising the bar with their impressive productions and culinary creations.



An array of traditional performances featured as part the opening of Shalom's new Performing Arts, Music and Catering Centre.



The performance area of Shalom's new Performing Arts, Music and Catering Centre.

The landmark occasion was complemented with the College's annual NAIDOC Day celebrations which included an array of entertainment, cultural performances and exhibitions for the many students, dignitaries, guests and staff that were present.

Funded by CCDEU Ltd, the Australian Government and Queensland Government, the new Centre promises to be a central feature of the College in which student talent from various communities will be showcased to the wider community.



NAIDOC was celebrated with a mixture of traditional and non-traditional entertainment.



Traditional Aboriginal performances by Shalom students stunned the crowd.



Shalom's principal Chris Shirley (right) outlines the features of the new Centre to the CCDEU Ltd Board and visiting dignitaries.



Torres Strait students proudly display their community banner as part of the NAIDOC march.



NARANA PARTNERSHIPS RECONNECTING YOUTH



Partnerships are a strong focus of the work of the UAICC in Victoria. Congress Victoria has formed a partnership with two other well know organizations Maya Free living and healing Centre and also the Whitelion Foundation.

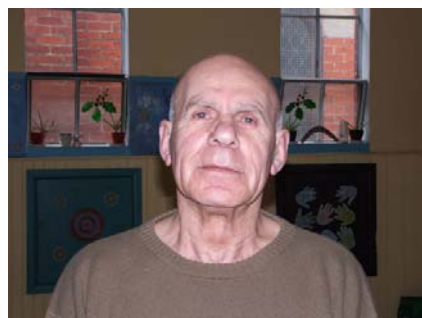
The new partnership is about reconnecting Aboriginal youth to their culture and breaking the cycle of 'incarceration' in the Melbourne juvenile justice centre. Uncle Lester Green visits and mentors many of the young Aboriginal people who may be facing court or are imprisoned in the Melbourne Juvenile Justice centre.



From left: Vince Ross (UAICC National Chairperson), Mark Watt (CEO Whitelion Foundation) and Reg Blow (CEO Maya Freelifving and Healing Centre) - a new partnership that aims to reconnect Aboriginal Youth to their culture.

Lester is currently visiting and mentoring approximately 20 young Aboriginal youth. Some of these youth are at a very vulnerable time in their lives and the work that Lester offers, is offering guidance, support and cultural re-connection.

The Whitelion Foundation has unique networks including AFL sports role mentors and employment programs.



Lester Green mentors many young vulnerable Aboriginal youth at risk.

Maya Free living and healing is based at Congress's Minajalku Centre in Melbourne and is running women's workshops and other workshops that assist in getting Aboriginal people of substance abuses including drug and alcohol programs.

Narana Creations and the UAICC Victoria offers the 'Circle of Learning' with training and employment strategies, along with ministry.

For more information please visit: www.narana.com.au



YOLNGU RADIO BROADCASTS INTO ARNHEM

The Northern Territory's Chief Minister, Clare Martin officially launched Yolngu Radio, a new Indigenous radio service broadcasting in Arnhem Land. Following a traditional ceremony performed by a Yolngu clan from north-east Arnhem Land, and words from Yolngu Radio listeners, the Chief Minister launched the ground-breaking service saying; "Yolngu Radio is the first Indigenous radio service in the country to provide coverage to a whole culture and language group. I'd like to congratulate Aboriginal Resource and Development Services for a job well done."



Northern Territory Chief Minister Clare Martin officially launches Yolngu Radio - a new Indigenous radio service broadcasting into Arnhem Land. Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc. (ARDS), a non-profit Aboriginal organisation operates and manages Yolngu Radio. Yolngu Radio focuses on providing its listeners with access to information on issues including petrol sniffing, drug abuse, family violence, diabetes, other health, legal and economic issues.

Yolngu Radio uses the language of the people (Yolngu Matha) providing real education they can readily understand, answering questions they have about the contemporary world around them. The early success of Yolngu Radio has proved to ARDS that when Yolngu people are empowered with knowledge, they take control of their own lives and address the real problems they face.

One Yolngu Radio listener confirmed; "We have been able to see a lot of changes in health and community behaviour as a result of Yolngu Radio. Richard Trudgen CEO of ARDS said: "Yolngu Radio is now a reality and ARDS would like to thank the many people and organisations who supported the realisation of this vision. We are delighted to be celebrating this day with the Chief Minister and so many of our great friends and supporters."

Many Yolngu people were at the launch today to help celebrate the achievement. One commented; "Yolngu Radio has been great for our people. At last we have our own radio that we can listen to and understand, not like listening to English." Yolngu Radio broadcasts 24hrs/day, 7 days/week across north-east Arnhem Land and in Darwin.

For more information please visit: www.ards.com.au



NEW MINISTRY AT MURRAY BRIDGE

Murray Bridge is home to a large contingent of Aboriginal people, many of whom are Ngarrindjeri people, whose traditional lands comprised the Coorong, the Lakes and lower River Murray area. Murray Bridge is 75 kilometres east of Adelaide, an easy hours travel on the freeway which leads to Melbourne.

Congress State Elder, Bruce Carter and his wife Kathy have lived near Murray Bridge for a number of years at Kalparrin, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. Quite a few families live at Kalparrin with many children.



From left: Glenys Wilson, Ken Sumner, Kathy Carter and Justin Sumner lead children in singing.

In response to a request from the Congress Elder and his wife, the State Development Officer, Rev. Ken Sumner took up the opportunity to commence a Sunday School at Kalparrin in February this year. The Sunday School is supported by a group of adults, who share in the leadership of the ministry. In addition to the children's ministry a couple of singalongs have been held. The first one attracted a good crowd, with one elder commenting, "people turned up who we would not expect to see there." After a BBQ tea and the "official" singalong in the hall, another singalong continued outside around the campfire.

"...Seeing the young people singing, and the love of God flowing though them was great..."

The Congress National Conference attracted a large contingent from South Australia. Amongst these were six people from Murray Bridge who had never been to a national conference. Glenys Wilson who has just joined the SA Regional Council as the Murray Bridge representative said, "I enjoyed the fellowship, especially with women from all over Australia." Glenys' husband, Victor Wilson agreed that the fellowship was a highlight, saying "Seeing the young people singing, and the love of God flowing though them was great. The conference was not just a talkfest. It was about our Father's business." The Murray Bridge ministry of Congress is an exciting new initiative which is indeed about God's business for Aboriginal people in that place. Your prayers and support is appreciated as the folk there continue their faith journey with our Lord under the Congress banner.

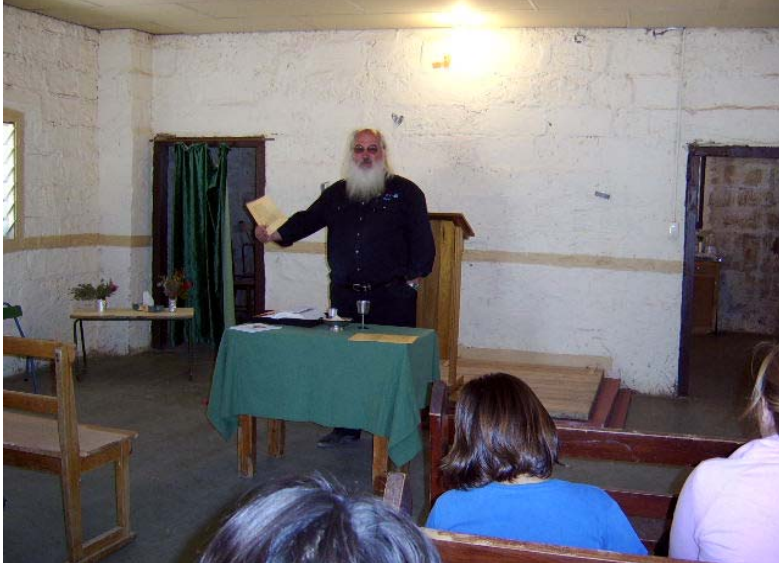


UAICC FRONTIER SERVICES MOBILE ABORIGINAL PATROL

Nepabunna

Part of the UAICC/Frontier Services Mobile Aboriginal Patrol is the presentation of the Gospel to the remote parts of South Australia. On Sunday October the 8th David led a Church service in the small Adnymathanha community of Nepabunna.

Nepabunna is situated in the Northern Flinders Ranges near the conjunction with the Gammon Ranges. The Community is keen to have regular services and a Pastor from nearby (60k's) Copley also visits the town. Please pray for David's patrol ministry.



David Wright leads a worship at the remote community of Nepabunna.

Oodnadatta

A Sunday school and Church worship have grown out of the desire of three Outback women wanting to have Christian values taught to their children and community. Julia Lennon, Kimberely Amos and Maxine Mark of Outback Oodnadatta realized that there were values that could be passed onto their children of the community if they started a Children's church group.



David Wright and the children of the Sunday School in Oodnadatta.

They started their groups in the Women's shed at Oodnadatta and taught Bible stories and songs to the children. David Wright heard of the ladies effort and offered resources and assistance. David was soon visiting Oodnadatta on Sundays and to hold church services. David said. "I try and visit once a month incorporating the Sunday and do Sunday school and the worship time. We have a great time. God really is present".



CONGRESS TURNS 21

Congress turned 21! The occasion was celebrated on Sunday 22nd October 2006 at the John Lees Christian Centre, Penrith Uniting Church. Didgeridoo music echoed through the church to commence the celebrations. Five hands transferred the flame from the Christ Candle to light the "campfire" candle. "Baba Waiyar", a Torres Strait Islander blessing was sung by a Torres Strait Islander community choir (from a CD.)



Celebration through song: From left: Rev. Neville Naden, Lorraine Roberts, Dorothy Gordon, Dianne Torrens & Tim Torrens.

A gospel song was sung by members of the NSW UAICC and Penrith Uniting Church Sunday School and Senior Fellowship led the singing of traditional chorus such as "wide, wide as the ocean" and "build on the rock." Traditional hymns accompanied by music from the piano, guitar, tambourines, koolap and marackers inspired all to join in with much rejoicing.

The preacher was the Rev. Dorothy Gordon, the widow of the Rev. Charles Harris, visionary and co-founder of the Congress. Penrith UCA Church Council Chairperson, Freda Whitlam was present at the National Assembly when the UAICC was first proposed and told the story of that inspirational experience. The organiser of the event was Pearl Wymarra who has been a member of the Penrith congregation for forty years and a foundation member of the NSW UAICC. Pearl is currently working with the New South Wales UAICC within the NSW Synod Board of Mission. All enjoyed the morning tea provided by the Penrith UCA with members of the NSW UAIC supplying homemade damper and grammar pie, a fitting end to a joyous and blessed event - *Stephen Webb Courtesy Insights.*



Traditional hymns featured throughout Congress's 21st anniversary celebration: From left: Freda Whitlam, Pearl Wymarra & Rev. Russel Davies.



WORLD CHRISTIAN GATHERING OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

In September my son and I were able to attend the WCGIP (World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People) convention in Davao City in the Philippines. The trip was made possible through the financial assistance of Pastor John Blacket and Khesed Ministries. The WCGIP was founded by Monte and Linda Ohia from New Zealand who are both of Maori origin. The goal of WCGIP is to enable indigenous believers of Jesus Christ to meet, and express themselves to God and to each other in ways which affirm godly Indigenous worship, teaching, prophecy, pasturing, evangelism, and discussion.

Davao City

Spanish influence was hardly felt in the Davao until 1847, when an expedition led by Don Jose Uyanguren came to establish a Christian settlement in an area of mangrove swamps that is now Bolton Riverside. Davao was then ruled by a Moro chieftain, Datu Bago, who held his settlement at the banks of Davao River. After Uyanguren defeated Datu Bago, he renamed the region Nueva Guipuzcoa, in honor of his home in Spain, and became its first governor. Oyanguren's efforts to develop the area, however, did not prosper.



WCGIP participants: Rev Willie Pickett (centre) with Filipino Ministers from the Baptist Church in Manila - the Philippines capital city.

I was so over whelmed by the 20 Indigenous nations that were represented there at the Davao meeting affirming that Indigenous people around the world have a place in the kingdom of God. And that more importantly our culture can bring glory to God especially our language, dance, music and instruments.

There were many highlights from the opening ceremony to the closing ceremony and I even got painted up donned a red lap, lap and played the tapping sticks while my son Willow did traditional dances and he also played the didgeridoo.

We were celebrities for most of the time as it was the first time participants saw real Australian Aboriginal people! We also realized after looking around that we are so blessed here in Australia, our life style is so different but we live in a blessed country. I believe God is at work in all indigenous people groups of the world and he is redeeming people an their culture for the purpose of Glorifying himself. - *Rev Willie Pickett.*



CONGRESS REFLECTIONS PASTOR BILL HOLLINGSWORTH



"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." How many times have we uttered these words which are part of the Lord's prayer without fully realizing it's implications ?

Peter realized the importance of these words which were spoken in his hearing when he was given the keys to the kingdom of heaven. I believe there were three keys. He used one in Jerusalem when he spoke to the crowds just after Pentecost, and three thousand men were saved that day. This was the key to the Jews. He used his second key to unlock the gates of the kingdom of heaven when he followed Phillip to Samaria. This was the key to the part Jew, part Gentile. His third key threw open the gates to the Gentiles when he visited Cornelius's home. Paul followed this up years later with his ministry to the gentiles. The apostles took with them Jesus' command to be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.

Their ministry was clear. It was to be the same ministry Jesus announced in the synagogue in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

What has all this got to do with us in 2006? Everything! Unless we are kingdom orientated and get the big picture, our church activities will be inward looking and filled with religious rituals which make no contribution to the kingdom.

"...We are being dispersed into the mainstream with great haste and threatened if we do not comply..."

Our Jerusalems and Judeas and Samarias surround us, and the uttermost parts of the earth are brought closer with modern communication technology. The poor, the broken hearted, the captives, the blind and the bruised describe our people. Government money is the Jacob-Esau experience: exchanging a birthright in this land for a bowl of meat stew. The first born of this land are being told to exchange their inheritance for a western value system based on monetary prosperity and a sports loving god.

We are being dispersed into mainstream with great haste and threatened if we do not comply. "Show cause" and "in breach", and "key performance indicators" are the goads towards "optimum performances expected". Community Development Employment Programs (CDEP's) have had the community development taken out and replaced with employment program. Cultural and social engineering on a grand scale is being undertaken.

In view of all that I have said so far, kingdom living is not an option anymore. It is a necessity. We have the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Use them. As the psalmist said, "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endures for all generations." (Psalm 145:11-13).



MINISTRY AT RISDON PRISON

The newly completed Risdon Prison complex in Hobart will see some changes to visiting arrangements for Congress Minister, Rev. Grant Finlay. Grant has been visiting people at Risdon since 2001 after an Elder was concerned that at that time there was no one regularly visiting Indigenous inmates, who make up about 10% of the prison population.

Grant visits the prison each fortnight for one-to-one conversations. "It's not a comfortable place but people seem to appreciate the visits. Sometimes it's just the chance to get out of the yard for a while. Other times someone might be going through a stressful or a life changing time. I think it helps that I'm not part of the 'system' so there's a different dynamic about the conversations compared to when they need to do prison business or speak with a lawyer."



Tasmania's new Risdon Prison - Congress ministry is reaching out to its Indigenous population.

The new prison will see a move to individual case management so each person will have an individual contract outlining visiting rights, work or education activities. It will be quite a cultural shift from the previous format.

"It's challenging being there, but it's always very worthwhile." - Rev Grant Finlay

- RESPONSE -

Yes I want to support the work of the UAICC.
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