

Between 3 and 4 o'clock on the fourth day you see a cloud of dust gathering in the distance. In about 20 minutes, the atmosphere having been so permeated with dust that it gets into the houses, notwithstanding all precaution, the wind has passed over, and now it begins to blow from the Artic regions—it before came from the Equator—it is like inhaling nectar, and the temperature at 4 o'clock is 100 degrees lower than it was at 3. They had 10 or 12 of these hot winds during the summer, repeated at intervals of nine or 10 days. Fruits they had in magnificent abundance. Two or three pounds of grapes from a vine the first year of planting was the rule, not the exception, and there were 6,400 acres covered with vines, and the yield was so great that during the summer the grapes could be purchased in the market at 25s per ton. He had paid 7s 6d per lb. in England for grapes. In South Australia his servant brought in a basket one day containing 40lbs., and said she had given 5d for them—at the rate of 2lbs for a farthing. Produce was dear enough at other seasons. They paid 6d or 8d for a cabbages, and 2d per lb. for potatoes. It was a very healthy climate, the whole mortality of the colony being less than the healthiest part of Great Britain, although in Adelaide the mortality of infants between two months and five years is five times greater. They produced the finest wheat in the world, as proved by their having taken off the gold medal at the various International Exhibitions, yet they could not compete with this country as to the quantity produced per acre. Their prize wheat averaged from 68 to 69lbs per bushel; other nations from 65 to 66. Having 550,000 acres under wheat cultivation, they were enabled to send some thousands of bushels of wheat and thousands of tons of flour to this country. They had copper mines and silver mines, and some thousands of men engaged in getting gold, and he produced a little nugget of gold worth £1 17s 4 1/2 d, which had been washed by the rains from one of the hills. The rev. gentleman closed an interesting and instructive address by relating some personal adventures in the colony.

When reported back in Adelaide, Maughan's joking remarks on the bad state of Adelaide's streets cause a row for its apparent denigration of the city. In a letter to the *Register* on 15 June 1870 Maughan provided a corrected version of his address including the vital sentence: 'He was happy, however, to say that now they had roads and streets in and around Adelaide, which would do no dishonour to any country in the world.'

Sources:

South Australian Register, 25 January 1870, p. 6, 15 June 1870, p. 3.

William Cooke, *The Man of All Work: A Memoir of the Life and Labours of the Rev. James Maughan, with Selections from his Sermons and Lectures* (London, 1872) F. Hambly, 'Maughan James (1826-1871)', Australian

Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography. Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/maughan-james-4173>, published first in hardcopy 1974, accessed online 16 July 2017. Arnold D. Hunt, *This Side of Heaven: A History of Methodism in South Australia* (Adelaide, 1985).

Our Next Meeting



The main focus of the meeting will be 'Leaders of the Women's Suffrage Campaign in SA'. Guest historian Dr Jenny Stock will engage with this topic in conversation with a panel of discussants.



SA Women of the Suffrage Movement (top to bottom): Serena Thorne Lake, Elizabeth Nicholls, Lady Mary Colton

We hope our members are planning to be present at our next public meeting, which will be held on **Sunday 8 October at 2:30pm at Brougham Place Uniting Church, North Adelaide.**



There will also be an opportunity to find out more about this 1861 heritage-listed building, and the influential ministry of Rev. James Jefferis, a progressive church leader at Brougham Place and elsewhere in the late nineteenth century. Afternoon tea will be provided.



Uniting History SA September 2017

Women Leaders in Church and Society Guest Editor: David Houston

It has been good to be alive in a generation that has looked to affirm the leadership and roles of women in society, and not least the Church. The Uniting Church celebrates the gifts of women in electing them to the roles of Moderator within state Synods, and as Presidents for the national Church. Most recently the Anglican Church has appointed Bishop Kay Goldsworthy at the Archbishop of Perth. The emergence of women in public affairs has been equally important. In politics - a Prime Minister, Premiers in several States and many Ministers and members of governments. In the Judiciary, we see the integrity of their work as judges and magistrates.

This emergence of women as leaders in Church and national life, has its background in the development and history of the Women's Suffrage Movement in South Australia.

And for our interest, the next meeting of the Historical Society on 8 October will recall its significance again. Dr Jenny Stock, an Historian will revisit this important story with us.

Helen Jones sets the scene for the community's increasing support for the concept of women's suffrage in Chapter 4 of

her history on the suffragists, *In her own name: a history of women in South Australia from 1836*, revised edition 1994, published by Wakefield Press. She says,

The lives of people who worked for women's suffrage disclose something of the campaign itself, and of the nature of South Australian society. The suffragists were both women and men: rich, poor and comfortably middling in income, middle aged, young and elderly. Most who were actively involved lived in or near Adelaide, and many were church members, mainly of Nonconformist denominations. For some, but by no means all, concerns about the effect of alcohol had led them to join temperance societies or the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which favoured prohibition. Some were members of trade unions and some were members of Parliament. They had in common a single aim: to achieve the Parliamentary vote for women. (Jones, 1994)

Many of us may have read Catherine Helen Spence's

(Continued Page 2)

'Don't forget Mary Colton'

from RAELENE TELFER

WHERE is the women's suffrage centenary tapestry and plaque in the Flinders Street footpath to honour Mary Colton?

Mary Colton, wife of Premier John Colton, was a dedicated Methodist. She was a Sunday school teacher to generations of girls at Gawler Place and a founding member of Pirie Street Methodist. This church was next to the site of Epworth Building and resources from Pirie Street Methodist have been used at Pilgrim Church, Flinders Street.

Helen Jones has an entry on Mary Colton in her book, *In Her Own Name*, Wakefield Press, revised edition 1994.

She says that Mary Colton was president of the Women's Suffrage League when the suffrage was won in December, 1894. She was widely known before then for many years in South Australia for her multitude of efforts on behalf



Mary Colton, president of the Women's Suffrage League from 1892 to 1895 — and a Sunday school teacher for 50 years.

of women, children, the poor and the aged.

"Mary Colton was a shining light among Methodist women, not oppressed by the strictures of her church but serenely happy, and described as 'sunshiny'," the book says.

"She, like Mary Lee, had the capacity to organise well, to use time

to advantage, and to mix with others at all levels of society."

Her husband, John, was Adelaide's Mayor in 1874-85 and a member of Parliament from 1860-87. He was twice Premier during that time. He was knighted in 1891.

"Mary developed a considerable insight into political processes," Helen Jones says in her book.

"Like Mary Lee, Mary Colton had an enormous capacity for work. She never abandoned her church responsibilities, continuing for 50 years to teach her Sunday School classes, to work for the Dorcas Society and in 1893 to become founding president of the Women's Auxiliary of Foreign Missions.

"The magnitude of her efforts for others made her so widely known and respected that she undoubtedly influenced some opinion to support the women's suffrage platform.

"She continued working at her philanthropic tasks until near the end of her life and died on July 28, 1898."

From: *The New Times*, 1994

The UCA History Centre

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Individual—1 year	\$20
Individual—5 years	\$80
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Congregational—Life	\$250

Contact the Centre for more information

(From Page 1)

novel, *Clara Morrison*. In it she conveys her thoughts and feelings about the emerging life and character of early Adelaide. It is a very engaging story. Beyond her writing, Spence’s integrity and forthrightness led her to be a leading journalist, public speaker and advocate for the place of women in society. She was also a professing Christian and an active lay preacher within the Unitarian Church .

Mary Colton is another who has a valued place in the suffragists story. On page , we have reprinted a *Central Times* article written by Raelene Telfer in 1994. It conveys an image of another active Church woman with a great commitment for her community. To read it as a ‘copied’ piece from that centenary year adds to the historical feel of the article. It is a short but informative summary of Lady Colton’s life.

Another lesser known contributor to the movement came from a rural background and setting. Born in 1879, Jannetta Hannam Octoman lived most of her life at Lipson, near Tumby Bay. She was a Sunday School teacher, Church organist, and local community leader, and one of the first women to stand as a candidate for a seat in the South Australian Parliament. She was unsuccessful, but this was not to deter his interest in public and political affairs. Her library shelves were full of Parliamentary Hansard, and ready political conversations could always be had at her place. I can recall her saying to me on a pastoral visit in early 1964, ‘women are beginning to find, and be given their rightful place in public affairs’. Small of stature, her genial and engaging manner influenced many local women to participate actively in local affairs.

Helen Jones (1994) also reminds us in ‘*In her own name: a history of women in South Australia from 1836....*’, that it was not only women who were actively involved in the campaign for women’s suffrage—many men were also key players. Foremost among these was Dr (later Sir) Edward Stirling, first President of the Women’s Suffrage League, from 1888 to 1892, and who introduced the first women’s suffrage legislation in the South Australian Parliament.

The following brief extract of her description of him provides us with a good appreciation of his character.

Stirling was a man of many talents, enormous energy and concern not only for science but for people. ... The motive for his women’s suffrage Parliamentary initiatives lay in his character and background; as a scientist he saw no reason why women should be cut off from public responsibilities. As a husband and father of daughters he had first hand knowledge of their capabilities, which he also observed in female students at the Advanced School for Girls and at the University of Adelaide. Liberal in his politics, he was prepared to stand up for principles and to work for his beliefs. (Jones, 1994)

Two things came to mind when I read this. We need to continue the affirmation and recognition of women in leadership at every level of community life. And secondly, our theology of Church and Christian ministry reminds us that women and men are equal partners in the leadership and ministries we undertake in Christ’s name. These understandings will help us shape both our church and society in a holistic way.

David Houston
Guest Editor and Vice President, UCSA Historical Society

Maughan Church and Mission buildings, a find example of modern architecture, were opened on 11 December 1965.

In Adelaide, Maughan was an attractive speaker and a popular lecturer. He was keenly interested in scientific experiments and the natural world. He regularly gave lectures on topics such as ‘Volcanoes, earthquakes and tidal waves’, and ‘Chemical properties of carbon, and its compounds’. More importantly he applied his extensive scientific knowledge to some pressing issues in South Australia. In 1866 he gave an influential lecture to the Adelaide Philosophical Society in which he advocated the adoption of deep drainage in Adelaide in order to ensure the health of the city, and he won a prize awarded by the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of South Australia for a competition essay on the causes of diseases of wheat and the best practical remedy.

Maughan’s ‘yearnings for usefulness’ were not deterred by his fragile health. Three years after arriving in Adelaide he began suffering from a chest disease and his constitution became ‘so enfeebled’ that the did not enjoy ‘a single day’s perfect health’. In 1869, in the hope of restoring his health by taking a complete break from work, Maughan returned to England in the company of Samuel Way. Once there, he travelled around the country, preaching every Sunday and addressing meetings, often about life in Australia. He attended the English Conference of the Methodist New connexion at Sheffield in 1870. He and Way hoped that this Conference would support a proposal to unite with the Bible Christians but the move was unsuccessful, union was finally achieved in 1907.

Maughan arrived back in Adelaide in November 1870. By this time he was seriously ill. He died on 9 March 1871. To honour his legacy, the Franklin Street Church was named after him. His wife Catherine died in Adelaide in 1911.

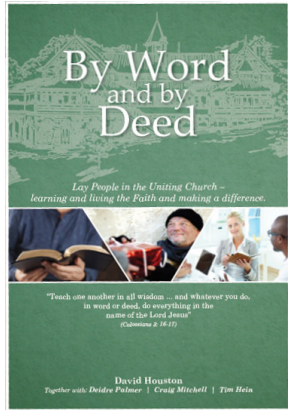
One of Maughan’s meetings, reported in the *Stockport and Cheshire County News*, was reproduced some months later in the *South Australian Register*, 25 January 1870.

The Rev. J. Maughan, from Australia, said it was more than 14 years since he was in Stockport before. He then came to seek a wife, and found one, and through a more deserving, self-sacrificing missionary’s wife the town never before produced. (Loud applause.) He was married in old Mount Table. South Australia was the scene of his labours, and there he had left his wife, with four children, to superintend his



James Maughan, about 1865
(William Cooke, *the Man of All work*)

Church during his absence in England. That colony possessed a peculiar yet beautiful climate—a higher temperature than England—the cold less in winter and the heat much greater in summer—properly speaking, instead of four seasons, they had only winter and summer. During seven year’s residence there he had only seen one small piece of ice about the size and thickness of his finger-nail. The youth who found it was carrying it to an editor as a great curiosity, but unfortunately it melted away before he could reach the office, and the editor never saw it. (Laughter.) He had also heard a man boast that he had seen six flakes of snow on one occasion. (Laughter.) But they had a great deal of rain in winter, and when it did rain there was no mistaking the character of the season, for the whole country became almost covered with it. It might fairly said that the rains fell for about three months without an interval, and caused such a quantity of mud to be created in the streets of the city that notwithstanding the precautions taken by the authorities in macadamizing, &c., locomotion became very difficult. A story was told, not that it was true, but as a satire on the disgraceful state of these roads after rains, and before Macadam visited that country. It was said that a new ‘chum’ (a new comer) walking up King William-street, the finest street in the city, 100 feet in width, with footpaths 25 feet in width on both sides, saw a good-looking hat in the middle of the road. He very naturally crossed over and picked it up, when a head was turned up and voice called, out, ‘Halloa, that’s my hat!’ (Laughter.) the ‘chum’ said, ‘What are you doing there?’ and the voice replied, “I’ve got stuck in this bottomless street, and my horse is below me.’ (Loud laughter.). Their swans were black, and their cherries grew with the stones outside; the trees, instead of shedding their leaves in autumn, simply shed their bark, and retain their leaves, and the few hedges they had were generally composed of the geranium and cactus. Their jackasses were birds, and whilst our birds sing, their jackasses laugh. After the three months’ rain, they get three months of the most delicious weather. Then follow the hot winds, when doors and windows are closed, and every crevice stopped up. Towards the evening of the first day you begin to feel pretty warm, and you may sleep pretty well if the mosquitoes don’t trouble you—when they do come they sting with a vengeance. Next day it is very hot—you change your attire. On the third day the temperature reaches to 145°, and at night to sleep is impossible; the houses are lighted up, and the people wile away the time as best they can.



**Book Launch
By Word and by
Deed**

Let me introduce this new Lay Education history project. It explores the history of lay education and ministry training programs for lay members in the Uniting Church in South Australia and our preceding denominations. I have been pleased

to work with Deidre Palmer, Craig Mitchell and Tim Hein to bring together this work.

Four years ago, conversations within a group of retired ministers convened by the late Rev. Keith Smith focused for two or three meetings on the place lay education has had within our Church, and the role it needs to have in the future. My interest was triggered to research the story.

Over time I have gathered stories of people, movements and structures across the 180 years of our history. I see them offering important snapshots of when and how our Christian education programs influenced and shaped our mission and ministries. It began by exploring our early Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian heritage. Written histories, church records, then from the post WW2 period, personal reflections provided by ministers and members of congregations have been important to the story. St. Paul’s image of the Church in Colossae offers the template for what I have seen in the various phases of our history. “Teach one another in all wisdom ... and whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus”. (*Colossians 3: 16-17*)

In a variety of contexts, we see both ordained ministers and lay leaders enabling members to learn and live their faith, and make a difference in their working and community life. In their different times and settings George Taplin, William Torr, Charles Duguid, Kate Cocks, Peter Matthews, Cliff Symons and Bill Edwards were inspiring educators in Christian faith and discipleship.

Sunday Schools, the Christian Endeavour Movement, Youth groups in their various forms were very influential in the faith formation of thousands of children and youth. Intentional planning for lay education emerged in the 1960’s and became a key focus for us as we approached Church Union in 1977. From Chapter 5 onwards the progress of this development is set out in some detail. Structures, systems and programs are described and personal stories of ministers, lay ministry workers and students give real value to the whole project.

As a Church, we have an inspiring history of education for leadership and ministry in both the local congregation and the working world. It reveals we have always been seeking to respond to the changes needed to be relevant yet true to our calling. To the present, we have become an adaptive Church and the future of our educa-

tion and training for lay participation in mission and ministry is well focussed. Our past has informed our present and together they will inform our future.

I express my appreciation to the UCSA Historical Society for their generous assistance in making the project possible, and to MediaCom for their help and assistance in its publishing.

The Book Launch will take place on Monday afternoon, 16 October at 4.30 for 5pm in the Student Common Room at Uniting College, Lipsett Street, Brooklyn Park.

David Houston

**The Rev. James Maughan’s Impressions
of South Australia
David Hilliard**

The demolition of Maughan Church in Franklin Street in 2016 severed the last visible link with one of Adelaide’s most prominent ministers of the mid-nineteenth century. The Rev. James Maughan was the first minister in South Australia of the Methodist New Connexion, a Methodist denomination that emerged in England in 1797.

The New connexion, founded by Alexander Kilham was the first major secession in Methodist history. Kilham, influenced by radical political movements of the day, advocated a more egalitarian form of church government, with more power for lay members and less for ministers, than the followers of Wesley were willing to accept. In 1862 James Maughan, born in County Durham, an able younger minister, was sent to Australia by the New Connexion Missionary Committee. After look at possibilities in Victoria, he decided to commence work in Adelaide. A group of New Connexion members had started a congregation in the early 1840s but without a minister it had faded away.

With his wife Catherine and four children, Maughan arrived in Adelaide in December 1862 and began holding services in a rented room in Hindley Street. The Methodist New Connexion Church was formed on 5 January 1863. Under Maughan’s energetic leadership a substantial church in Franklin Street was opened in December 1864. In this project the congregation’s ambitions outstretched its resources. Its membership at that time was about eighty but it built a church that seated at least five times that number. The building cost some £4000 of which the New Connexion in England sent £1000 and energetic fund-raising raised another £1000 but the remaining debt weighed down the congregation for many years. In 1867 a second New Connexion church was started at Hope Valley and a two-storied residence was built for the minister in Whitmore Square. In 1887 the New Connexion in South Australia merged with the Bible Christians. In 1900 the South Australia Methodist Conference decided to make the Franklin Street Church a Central Mission. The new

Further highlights from the Uniting Church National History Conference

**THE UNITING CHURCH IN
AUSTRALIA AS AN
EXPERIMENT IN ECUMENISM**

An abridged version of the keynote address delivered by **Associate Professor Renate Howe AO** at the inaugural Uniting Church National History Conference, ‘A Pilgrim People Forty Years On’, held in Adelaide, June 2017



The founding of the Uniting Church Australia (UCA) in 1977 should be celebrated as a pioneering union of three major Protestant denominations: Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational. It is one of the few Protestant interdenominational unions that has been achieved internationally and joins the United Church of Canada, which was formed fifty years earlier in 1925 — a union of the Methodist Church, two thirds of the Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec.

However, as Andrew Dutney, leading historian of the UCA, has written, there has been little recognition of the significance of the UCA’s formation which has rather been depicted as a marriage of convenience between declining denominations.¹ Dutney concludes that when it comes to the UCA ‘Australia’s churches seem to suffer from a marked inferiority complex’² and few have argued for the importance of this distinctive Australian church and its contribution to the wider ecumenical movement.

It is important to recognize the influence of the interdenominational Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) on the formation of the UCA. Members of the ASCM, established early in the twentieth century in Australian universities and affiliated to the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), were participants in the post-war ecumenical movement and the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The ASCM involvement in the international ecumenical movement and its leadership for denominational cooperation and union in Australia was driven by determination for a Christian influence in achieving a fair, just and peaceful post-war world³. It is important to place the UCA in this broader context as too often it is the administrative and financial advantages that have been emphasized as forces for church union rather than theological imperatives.

The Foundation of the UCA

In recognition of the need for a united post-war Christian witness to shape the post-war world, various models were considered by the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations... A united church should not be just an organizational amalgamation of three denominations but a church based on an agreed theological Basis of Union. However, it was 1957 before

serious negotiations began for an agreed theological vision essential to determine the organizational framework of the new denomination and a further twenty years before agreement was reached on a Basis of Union in 1977.

Those with an ASCM background were theological leaders in these negotiations, especially three professors from the Melbourne Divinity School: George Yule and Davis McCaughey of the Presbyterian Ormond College and Colin Williams of the Methodist Queen’s College. All had been involved in the international ecumenical movement as Protestant churches in a

number of countries explored new forms of ... ministry and organization in response to the rapid social and political changes of the post-war world⁴. This ... reinforced [their conviction] that a Basis of Union would be fundamental in determining organizational arrangements.

However, the protracted negotiations over the Basis of Union as a theological vision for the Uniting Church dragged on over twenty years. The delays were a reality check for those from the ASCM who were involved in the negotiations and had underestimated the divisive issues of property and forms of governance. As American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr observed, those involved in the postwar negotiations for a peaceful world and new forms of the church were often too idealistic about the realities of power and self-interest and the tensions between emphases on evangelism and social justice.

The first report of the Interchurch Council on Church Union (ICCU), which had been established with a membership of seven representatives of each of the three denominations, was published in 1959. It aimed to set out a theological context for union and drew on the model of the Church of South India Union... The second ICCU report of 1965 proposed a Basis of Union and a statement concerning scriptural authority. The teaching of the evangelical revival, which had been included in the first report was revised for the second report reflecting the difficulties of reconciling especially Methodist and Presbyterian theological views. The second report also addressed contentious issues such as the nature of baptism, ordination and the appointment of bishops. This 1965 report was rejected by the Presbyterians and no doctrine of ministry was laid down in the draft Basis of Union completed in 1971. It was 1975 before the final vote of approval for the Basis of Union, incorporating many amendments, was achieved.

[Neither Colin Williams nor Davis McCaughey’s were involved for the whole of these protracted negotiations]... However, Professor George Yule and Dr Harold Wood, who had been a member of the Sydney University SCM and was now Principal of Melbourne’s Methodist Ladies College, devoted themselves to visiting Methodist and Presbyterian congregations explaining the Basis of Union and building support for the UCA. Harold Wood is described by his biographer Ian Breward as ‘one of the most influential advocates for reunion in Australian Methodism’ and

[argues that] the union of Methodist churches at the turn of the century had predisposed the Methodists to support further union. Wood had urged the [union] of the major Protestant churches since 1943 and favoured a federation model rather than an organic union. Federation could have mitigated the legal problems over property that immediately emerged as a major issue for the Presbyterians. Although the federation model was not adopted, Wood was vital in getting the Basis of Union proposal through the Australian Methodist conference, especially when he was Secretary-General in 1954.

Davis McCaughey... elected as [the first] President of the Uniting Church... was the public face of the new church, firmly placing it in the context of the international ecumenical movement. Phillip Potter, a friend and former colleague of McCaughey in the post-war ASCM, and now General Secretary of the WCC, was an invited guest to the inauguration — an indication of the contribution international theological leadership made to the formation of the UCA. Lesslie Newbigin of the WCC also attended the inauguration and observed that ‘it did seem that this was an occasion when old denominational and theological barriers were lowered and trust was created at a deeper level.’⁵

Baptism of Fire

Baptism of Fire is the title of John Harrison’s book on the early years of the UCA. The ASCM theologians had planned the Basis of Union as the guiding document for the new church — this was the vision statement while the Constitution and Regulations would spell out the detail. However, the Basis of Union was not central to the dominant issues faced by the Uniting Church in the early years, as the devastating effects of the ‘Death of God’ controversy in the 1960s changed the theological environment and led to the collapse of the ASCM. As well as theological issues there were major tensions with the Presbyterian Church over property settlements, especially in NSW, while in Victoria the prestigious Presbyterian secondary schools did not join the Uniting Church. The establishment of a Presbyterian ‘continuing’ church reflected these theological, financial and property conflicts. As well, holiness congregations, mainly in NSW and Queensland, did not join the new denomination.

Gender issues quickly emerged. Women had been largely absent from the WCC negotiations in Geneva and in the Uniting Church negotiations in Australia. Although women were a majority of ASCM members and also the majority of members in denominational congregations they had only a marginal involvement in Australian church union negotiations. Indeed James McCaughey can recall his association of church union with men in suits arriving for meetings in his father’s study! No women were appointed to the Joint Commission and no women were among the consultants who assisted the Commission or among the observers from other denominations. Andrew Dutney describes the church union negotiations as dominated by ‘a very male spirituality’ based in the dominant church ethos of the 1950s and 60s. It was not surprising then, that

gender became such a divisive issue in the early years of the UCA.

Where are we now? What is the future of the UCA as an achievement of the ecumenism, and as a ‘pilgrim people’?

I see the following as among the main issues:

- The bureaucratic nature of the UCA today, compared with the vision of a theologically driven church. This is evident in the UCA response to the decline in congregations, an ageing membership and substantial financial problems. Especially in Victoria, the response has been a huge fire sale of church property, especially local churches. The sale of churches has been governed by pressing financial reasons but without strategic plans or consultation with congregations. There is little evidence that the UCA is developing community strategies that would continue a local congregational presence, such as encouraging cooperation and the sharing of resources.
- The expansion of the UCA bureaucracy at state and national levels, focused on administration rather than witness, has been an outcome of a powerful welfare sector, largely financed by state and federal governments, which has become a dominant force in the UCA bureaucracy.
- As well, there are emerging challenges to UCA membership. The growth of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations reflects a growing holiness movement especially in Queensland but also Melbourne and Sydney. At the other end of the theological spectrum is Progressive Christianity, formed in the USA and especially strong in Melbourne. Its broad aim is to seek a community that is inclusive of all people — including but not limited to conventional Christians and ‘Questioning Sceptics’, believers and agnostics, women and men, those of all sexual orientations and gender identities — and to find grace in the search for understanding, believing there is more value in questioning than in absolutes.
- In the broader context there are challenges for the Uniting Church in responding to an increasingly multicultural Australia, reflected in the growing non-Christian population of predominantly Muslim background and significant Asian migration.

In responding to such challenges the UCA needs to develop a renewed emphasis on the gospel and a more outward-looking focus on reaching local communities. As well, better use can be made of the UCA theological institutions that are of high quality but underutilized in meeting the need for more debate around public policy. These are major challenges but as yet no new generation of theological and strategic leaders has emerged compared with those so influential in the years of the founding of the UCA.

As Andrew Dutney writes, for UCA pilgrims ‘church union is not a job done but a job beginning.’⁶

1 Andrew Dutney, *Manifesto for Renewal: The Shaping of*

- a *New Church*, Uniting Church Press. Melbourne, 1985, p.5.
- 2 Andrew Dutney, *Manifesto for Renewal: the Shaping of a New Church*, Uniting Church Press, Melbourne, 1986, p 5
 - 3 Renate Howe, *A Century of Influence, The Australian Student Christian Movement*, UNSW Press, 2009
 - 4 Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda, an Autobiography*, SPCK, London, 1985
 - 5 Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, p. 174.
 - 6 Dutney, *Manifesto for Renewal*, p 7.

Few attendees at the National Conference will forget the fervour with which Brian Howe, one of our ‘elder statesmen’, delivered this inspirational message about Methodism’s legacy.

Methodism and the Uniting Church

Rev. Dr the Hon. Brian Howe AO
UCA National History Conference, Adelaide, June 2017



I suppose that I think of Methodism especially around people who impressed me when I was growing up and as a young adult, and the most important of these people illustrated an important trait of the Wesleyan tradition.


Alan Walker in the Mission to the nation in the early 1950s I think illustrated the outward looking, evangelical character of Methodism in his addresses at that time. When I reread the speeches in *Australia Finding God: the message of the Mission to the Nation* (1953) I was impressed by their non-religious character. They spoke to being a country in the Asia-Pacific region. The appeal of Walker was not so much one calling people to be more religious; rather it was an appeal to us to be of good voice on racism, and it is good to be reminded how much he stressed that theme, whether he was in South Africa or conducting mission in the deep south in the United States.

Colin Williams, with George Yule, wrote on of the earliest formation documents of the Uniting church when he was briefly in Melbourne teaching us theology. This was immediately following the completion of his PhD, at Drew University, on John Wesley’s theology for today. Williams was one of the first theologians in America in the mid-twentieth century to take Wesley seriously as a theologian, and his work with others spawned a renewed interest in Wesley’s intellectual contribution as opposed to his organizational skills. Williams stressed the fact that Wesley as a post-reformation scholar reinterpreted ‘justification by faith’ to emphasize the importance of grace not only bringing us to faith but also continuing to make possible our development in faith throughout our lives. It was this through-life faith that made possible the contribution of Methodists to the social transformation of Georgian England. Williams’ focus on the church as mission had

its influence in the struggle against racism in America in the 1960s and 1970s.

Finally, Dr Clifford J Wright, the great Christian educationalist, drew heavily on Wesley’s emphasis on additional means of grace mediated especially through small groups, or ‘class meetings’ as Wesley called them, designed to help foster through-life faith. Wright was shocked by the ignorance of the laity of the fundamentals of Christian faith and devoted much of his life to encouraging through-life Christian education. He always taught inductively as Wesley himself had done, emphasizing the importance of one’s own experience along with the experience of those around us. Very much influenced by Paul Tillich, Cliff Wright made the theology of correlation his own, constantly referring to the developmental experience that we all enjoy as life moves through its various phases—birth, adolescence, settling down, work, family, ageing and so on. It was this existential quality there in Wesley that Wright discovered and translated into life-forming and transforming Christian Education programs.


It is important in the Uniting Church not to lose the transformative spirit of Methodism that was always about changing the world as much as it was about changing the person in the image of Christ. Wesley was an intellectual and it is important not to ignore his sense of faith as being about the whole person and the whole of life. Wesley placed great emphasis on education as one of the means of building capability for mission, transmitted often through small and informal groups. He sought to create a movement that would have as its aim transforming lives and transforming society. This continues to be a central challenge facing the Uniting Church in Australia.



Can you help?

Here at the History Centre, we have many photos that have been generously donated to the collection. Some of them are not labelled with who they are, or where they are.

This photo is one of these. The only possible identifying information on this one is "To Stan, with Christian love, from John"



Do you know who this is? Do you recognise him?

If so, we would love to hear from you.