

## Signs of Life and Hope

On a recent visit to Lockhart River Aboriginal Community on Cape York Peninsula for a meeting on land matters, I was pleased to learn that there were 4 small training groups in session in the community. One in the church hall was a sewing group that is now producing well made clothing and selling them on a market day in the community. Another was youth leadership training in the new rather small Youth Centre where the young community development youth worker is encouraging a small team of youth local leaders. Another great ongoing project in the community is the Art Centre where people young and old are encouraged to develop skills in expressing their view of life, culture and spirituality on canvas.

Some of these groups had their impetus in part from new government requirements that those receiving welfare support should undertake some training to improve their life and work prospects. But I could see that they had a life of their own as well. Undertaking something interesting and stimulating has its own rewards.

These activities complement other actions in the community such as the alcohol management plan that has led to much improved drinking practices and a more stable community life. Another is future planning and visioning that has come from groups camping on their country to workshop with helpful facilitators.

This situation in Queensland contrasts with the long neglect in the Northern Territory that led to the sudden intervention by the previous coalition government. The intervention has been criticised for including features that go beyond improving the everyday wellbeing of people to directing their lives into a mainstream or assimilationist path. This involves destructive elements that deny the validity of Indigenous identity and values. Such a replacement approach has never worked and will continue to be resisted.

We do well to consider in both the Northern Territory and Queensland what the philosophy of development should be.

In contrast to the assimilationist approach, some would like to cocoon Indigenous people in cultural enclaves that as far as possible enable people to maintain a traditional lifestyle (rather like the Amish) but they cannot escape some dependency on outside support and goods. A people's culture has a dynamism that absorbs new things and adapts to changing circumstances while retaining root values.

A more practical approach is to move away from either a protectionist or a colonising mentality to a decolonising approach that encourages and facilitates rather than simply enforces, and listens in dialogue rather than directs autocratically. Openness and dialogue build self-respect, initiative and the ability to make constructive choices in life.



Most Indigenous communities in Queensland have developed a bicultural lifestyle that blends traditional values and practices with modern technology and activities. This is not without tension or dangers, in particular the loss of spiritual values to the pressures of commercial western living.

The way forward is through a partnership approach that provides skilled support to encourage cultural values and practices on the one hand and builds the ability to interact with the western world on the other. Indigenous Land Use Agreements are opening the way for cultural living as well as employment in land management and tourism, while outstations provide a relief valve to the pressures of town living.

Training is an important side of current and future development. Wontulp-Bi-Buya College is making its contribution through leadership training and community development programs that have spiritual foundations, both Christian and Indigenous, and practical outcomes in leaders who can make a valued contribution to their people's well-being and quality of life.

David Thompson



*Certificate III in Community Organising and Development  
1st year students in 2007*



# Wontulp-Bi-Buya News

Bi-annual News for  
Queensland churches & supporters

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## Tribute to Pastor George Rosendale

A special presentation of appreciation was conducted at the Trinity Lutheran Church on 22 November 2007 to Pastor George Rosendale for his contribution to the College. Pastor Rosendale was

one of the founding people who planned to set up the College initially in Townsville before it was relocated to Cairns in 1998.

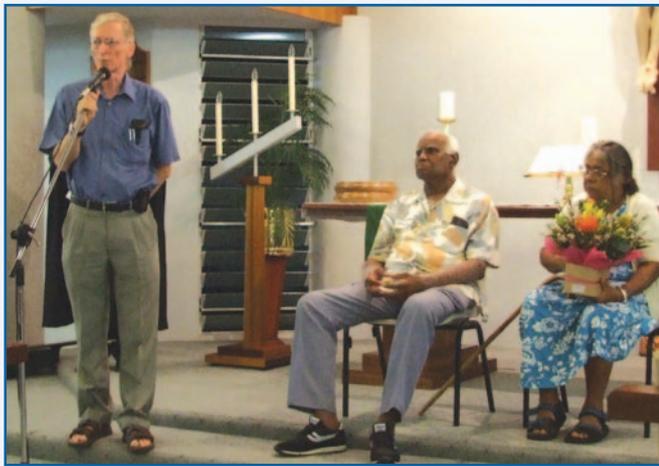
Through his involvement with the Lutheran Church he was able

to influence them to become involved with the College and its aims along with the Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches.

Pastor George believes that "The Gospel is Good News about God. Good News about his creation and his teaching and his promise of freedom. My Aboriginal people knew about this but they did not know how the Creator or the Ancestor Being would free them." (Compass, Spring 2003 vol 37 No 3)

He has had a tremendous impact on the College with his strong involvement in his role as mentor and lecturer of Indigenous theology. In these lectures, he always told those students who were part of the 'stolen generation', "You have lost your culture, so please, here is my culture. Take it."

It was because he saw the disintegration of Indigenous culture among the Aboriginal people that he inspired the production of a number of books of studies in Aboriginal Christianity.



*Rev David Thompson honors the contribution from Pastor George Rosendale and wife Maud*

## Southern Students up North

In recent years, the Bible Society NSW have blessed us with bringing students from Christian schools in Sydney to work with our young Indigenous kids and assist in educating them about Christ. In October 2007, a fresh group of students came up and visited the communities of Yarrabah and Mossman Gorge.

The community kids enjoyed interacting with the Sydney students and learnt a lot from them and they look forward for their return. A Sydney student said, "it's great to come up here (north), because the kids are so different to the ones down south. We can really feel a connection up here because the people are much more approachable and friendly".

The students also performed at a fellowship night for the break-up of a theology class. Here they demonstrated plays conducted from passages in the Bible to show the community kids. The audience found these funny but meaningful. Keep up the great work.



## From the Principal

Greetings Friends and Countrymen...

Well another year is upon us; the holidays are over and for most its back to work as usual. 2007 has yet again been a time where Wontulp has appropriately succeeded in the call that God has placed upon it in building up and training Indigenous Christian leaders from various Indigenous communities in the state of Queensland.

Throughout the year we have seen a consistent progression of people both lay and ordained, male and female successfully complete and graduate from their respective courses. The training they have received has been designed to prepare them to be effective ministers to their communities and to preach the word of God in a way that their people will not only understand but also be motivated themselves to pursue a relationship with God.



Whilst on the subject of preparing people for ministry, in November last we here at the College community joined with others in being blessed by the opportunity to make a special presentation to say thank you to former teacher, mentor and now retired Lutheran Pastor, George Rosendale. For many years, he has for many years been involved in the work of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in building up and training Indigenous Christian leaders.

Apart from his involvement at Wontulp, Pastor George together with his wife aunty Maud, have made a wonderful contribution in working to build up and train

Indigenous Christian leaders in many communities throughout Australia over many years. As I reflect upon what Pastor George has previously shared with me, that task has been on occasions quite difficult and filled with many disappointments. So it is very heartening to see that through all their trials and tribulations Pastor George and aunty Maud continue to be excellent examples of Christian discipleship.

As someone who has known Pastor George for many years as a student and fellow minister of the gospel, I thank God for his ministry and wish both he and aunty Maud all the very best in their retirement.

I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome all students and staff back to Wontulp in 2008 and I pray that God's guidance and blessing be upon you all as you journey through the year.

Yours In Christ  
Rev. Des

## Resignations

It is with great regret that we received two staff resignation in January 2008.

The Rev. Desmond Rumble leaves after a year as Principal to take up a position in the Environmental Protection Authority to renew his community development interests. He has made a positive contribution to the operation of the College in 2007.

The Rev. Barry Paterson is leaving to move into retirement after a period of long service leave. Barry has served as Theology Teacher since August 1999 and has been responsible for the development of the Diploma of Theology course and study materials. This course is now bearing fruit in a regular flow of new students and graduates who are taking up leadership roles in their churches and communities. He also developed materials for the Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training to equip graduates to be tutors and to return as visiting teachers. More recently he began the construction of resources to provide online learning.

We wish them both well in their new directions in life.

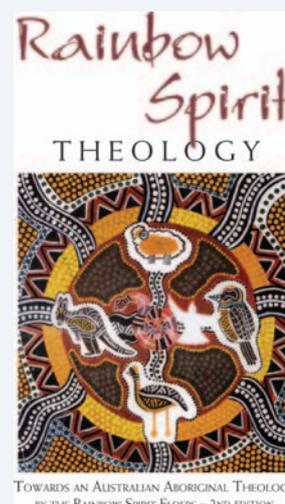
## Special Workshops

It was brought to the committee that there was a need in the wider community of Cairns region for non-Indigenous Christians to study Theology from an Indigenous perspective. After much discussion, the committee agreed to conduct a series of workshops offering two study units from the Diploma of Theology. Two workshops were conducted with great success with more than 20 participants in attendance. This was due to the hard work and persistence of Fr Barry Paterson and Fr Ian McAlister, and with the assistance of the Diploma students.

## Rainbow Spirit Theology

*Hot Off the Press*

The Ground Breaking Rainbow Spirit Theology book has finally been republished. The book is available from the Australian Theological Forum and from Wontulp-Bi-buya College. Contact our office for more information or simply fill in the order form and we will send you the book.



## November Graduations

22 November 2007 was a great day for the Indigenous communities of Queensland as a total of 18 students graduated from Diploma of Theology, Certificate III in Theology and Certificate III in Community Organising and Development. Congratulations to you all for successfully completing your course.



### Certificate III in Community Organising and Development

- Mr Edward Turpin – Kowanyama
- Mr Brian Connolly – Yarrabah
- Miss Clare Ogilvie – Mossman
- Miss Margaret Gebadi – Seisia, NPA
- Mrs Thelma Lander – Quilpie
- Mrs Marilyn Wallace – Wujal Wujal
- Miss Ruby Winkle – Wujal Wujal
- Miss Virginia Ambrym – Yarrabah
- Mrs Ellen Roughsey – Mornington Is
- Mr Wayne Costello – Yarrabah

### Diploma of Theology Graduates

- Rev Charles Loban – Thursday Island
- Rev Paul Tom – Kubin Village, Moa Island
- Rev Stephen Tabo – Cairns
- Mrs Evelyn Parkin - Brisbane
- Mrs Maria Gebadi – Seisia, Bamaga
- Miss Evelyn Ambrym – Yarrabah



### Certificate III in Theology Graduates

- Mrs Lillian Noah – Pormpuraaw & Mer Island
- Miss Clare Ogilvie - Mossman

## Help Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Grow

Please send me \_\_\_\_ copies of Rainbow Spirit Theology at \$16.95 posted

Please send me \_\_\_\_ copies of The Fishtrap Makers - Kos and Abob at \$19.95 posted

/ \_\_\_\_ copies of Trigger Fish and Trevally - Nagag and Geigi at \$19.95 posted

/ \_\_\_\_ copies of The Peacemaker at \$16.95 posted / \_\_\_\_ copies: How Kangaroo Found His Tail at \$16.95 posted

/ \_\_\_\_ copies of Milbi Dabaar at \$25.00 posted / \_\_\_\_ copies of The Beyond is Near at \$5 posted

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