

allocated to its oversight. Each council will recognise the limits of its own authority and give heed to other councils of the Church, so that the whole body of believers may be united by mutual submission in the service of the Gospel.”

No visible Church is perfect. But the Lord is in the midst – calling, leading, enabling... Some dear folk are never really committed to the life and mission of any particular body of the Lord’s people. I believe we are meant to be in there praying, sharing and working.

So Let’s Read on...

Day 1: Matthew 16.13-25 _____

Day 2: Acts 14.21-28 _____

Day 3: Acts 15.22-33 _____

Day 4: Philemon _____

Get into the Action!
7. The Uniting Church in Australia

enter into union under the name of the Uniting Church in Australia. They pray that this act may be to the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit...” (Basis, para.1).

This union came into effect on _____

Presbyterianism

The historical origins of Presbyterianism are in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. The principles were enunciated by the Reformer John Calvin in Geneva, a city that became a beacon-light for Protestants for centuries. The Church of Scotland modelled itself on the pattern of the Reformed Church in Geneva and showed itself a Church reformed according to the Word of God in its doctrine, worship and church government.

Inspired by the Scottish Reformer John Knox, Scotland adopted the Presbyterian system of Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and a General Assembly, with a preaching ministry of the same order, and with equal rights of ministers and lay elders in all church councils.

The Church of Scotland strongly emphasised “the Crown Rights of the Redeemer”, as King and Lord of his Church, and strenuously resisted any encroachment by the State upon the right of the Church to control its own teaching and practice.

This week we are looking (briefly) at the heritage, history and organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia. Being a member of the Body of Christ involves us in membership in a specific Church.

The readings of the past week have focussed on the two sacraments, both of which have a reference, not only to the Lord, but to the visible Church.

#1 These things stood out for me

The Basis of Union begins with these words, “The Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia, in fellowship with the whole Church Catholic, and seeking to bear witness to that unity which is both Christ’s gift and his will for the Church, hereby

Congregationalism

The Congregationalists or Independents, in the 16th and 17th centuries in England, showed their desire for a reformation further than the Sovereign, the English Parliament and the Synods of the Church of England had provided during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

They opposed the necessity of rule by bishops, any connection between Church and State, and any compulsion to use a uniform set liturgy in church worship. They believed that each independent congregation should represent the mind of Christ, and that each should govern its own affairs.

Each congregation consisted of professing Christians, a "gathered church" called out from the community. Congregationalism sought "a further reformation without tarrying for any" and without direction from the State or any other outside source.

Methodism

The Methodist Church had its origins in the eighteenth-century revival in England under the leadership of John Wesley.

Wesley, the son of an Anglican minister, came back in 1738 from a mission to American Indians discouraged and disillusioned. He wrote, "I went to America to convert the Indians; but, oh, who shall convert me?" On his journey he had been impressed by the simple faith of Moravian missionaries, and back in London one of these, Peter Böhler, was

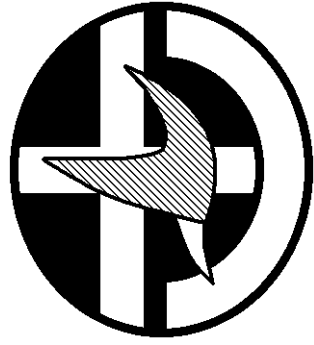
the means of bringing Wesley to saving faith.

It was on 24th May 1738 that Wesley's heart was "strangely warmed" as he listened to a reading from Luther's preface to Romans at a meeting in Aldersgate Street. "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation," he wrote, "and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Wesley began preaching immediately with this new conviction and there were remarkable results everywhere in England and beyond. Methodist preachers "offered Christ" in the highways and byways of towns and countryside. Converts were formed into societies.

The hope of Wesley to his dying day was that revival should spread within the Anglican Church. In fact, the attitude of the clergy was such that, within a year of Wesley's death, Methodism had to become a separate Church.

The Uniting Church in Australia



The Uniting Church, having come from these three traditions, had to establish new structures and organisation. Here are some of the important elements of the UCA.

Congregation _____

Assembly _____

Congregational Meeting _____

Elders _____

Church Council _____

Links and Clusters _____

Presbytery _____

The *Basis of Union* (para.16) has this striking statement about government in the Church, "The Uniting Church recognises that responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them. The Uniting Church therefore so organises her life that locally, regionally and nationally government will be entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing the gifts and graces with which God has endowed them for the building up of his Church. The Uniting Church is governed by a series of inter-related councils, each of which has its tasks and responsibilities in relation both to the Church and the world.

"The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ alone is supreme in his Church, and that he may speak to her through any of her councils. It is the task of every council to wait upon God's Word, and to obey his will in the