



MEDIA RELEASE

Synod of New South Wales and the ACT

Uniting Church in Australia

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Uniting Church Moderator seeks change from ‘business as usual’ to serving the common good

The story of Christ’s birth is a story of promise, hope and revolutionary love.

In his 2012 Christmas message, the Moderator of the Uniting Church’s Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, the Rev. Dr Brian Brown, argues that the miraculous advent of a saviour in a humble stable compels us to stop doing business as usual and to commit ourselves to something bigger than any of us.

Christmas message from the Rev. Dr Brian Brown

When “business as usual” spells disaster, it is time to change course and serve the common good. In a world that seems hell-bent on slow-cooking itself this century, and intent on fracking the bedrock of civil, respectful society, the Christmas message of peace and generosity of Spirit brings an urgent and timely note of hope.

The sobering context in which our rich nation does “business as usual” is one where over two million Australians, including more than half a million children, live below the poverty line; where over 80% of housing services report being unable to meet demand. No room at the inn, indeed!

Here is my wish-list of what we as a nation might be prepared to give to make beneficial changes to our communities and our world:

- withdraw the \$12 billion of subsidies and other incentives to fossil fuels, and reinvest this money in research and development of clean energy;
- reduce our order for new submarines from 12 to 9, and reinvest the \$9 billion that would be saved in public education, health and housing, especially for our most disadvantaged citizens;
- in our State of New South Wales, completely withdraw shelved legislation to deregulate Boxing Day for shopping, and so secure for shop-workers a gift of two consecutive days off to be with family and friends over Christmas;
- implement a humane system of processing asylum-seekers that is speedy, fair and efficient, and that ensures they don’t live in poverty and despair while they are waiting.

For a wish list to become a gift list, we have to be prepared to pay the cost of the change from “business as usual” to serving the common good. The reward is a healthy planet and healthy community, along with the joy of knowing that we are living ethically — doing to others as we would have them do to us.

As Coretta Scott King observed, “The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace and a soul generated by love.”

We have the choice to live this Christmas in the generosity of Jesus Christ or the mean and fearful grasping of Dickens’ Scrooge. Which Christmas Carol will *we* choose to sing?

On behalf of the Uniting Church Synod of New South Wales and the ACT I wish you a happy and generous Christmas.