

Why are you still a Christian?

This was the question asked at the September Presbytery meeting. The meeting was held in Muswellbrook and the Rev Dr Ian Robinson (The Alan Walker lecturer in Leadership, Mission and Evangelism from the Uniting Theological College in Parramatta) raised this question when he spoke about "*How to find your own voice again*".

Rev Dr Ian Robinson made the point that the UCA is said to be dying, however, he believes it is not, claiming it is rich in four generations of God. He said, given the changing world we live in, it is wonderful that older people are still Christians and feels they have a great story to tell of why they are Christians and they need to share their story. Hence the title ***Finding Your Voice***. He challenges those in churches today of any age to ask and share their answer to the question ***Why are you still a Christian?***

He went on to say that a definite sign of a church in decline is a church that is clergy dependent compared with a growing church where lay people have found their voice and are equipping one another for works of service.

He discussed that there are four recognised ways that people have been influenced to come to faith. These are:

1. A media or big event campaign - a crusade, TV, radio campaign
2. An encounter with a full time Christian worker/clergy
3. A lay person in their life – family or friends
4. A *God drop* when some compelling experience occurs and a life is turned around.

Research says that **THE INFLUENCE OF A LAY PERSON** (family or friends) is the response for 85% of Christians today.

This means it is through the ordinary, everyday, garden variety, scared-to –try- it, don't –know-all- the answers Christians who are not paid to say that sort of thing are the reason most people come to faith.

It is through relationships with one another that a relationship with Jesus is shaped as His story is told. It is through the gifts that Christians give that people see and make a difference to people's lives.

These 7 gifts are;

The gift of time

The gift of listening

The gift of blessing – prayer

The gift of authenticity

The gift of community

The gift of respect

The gift of hospitality

*Therefore if you pay attention to each person fairly and kindly, and if you are doing something with your life that makes a difference, you demonstrate a real faith in a real God in a real world. If we want to ensure a church for the future then the challenge is for each of us is to **consider why we are still a Christian and share the reality with others** to ensure we remain a vibrant and living church in today's world. (from Burning Hope by Ian Robinson)*

I would like the congregations of NLMUC to consider Ian's challenge in the coming months and share together why we are still Christian?

If you would like to read more <http://makesyouwonder.yolasite.com/>