

MUSTARD SEED

NEWS FROM UNITING FINANCIAL SERVICES



“An incredibly powerful statement about the glory of God”: Kon Parris’ significant contribution to the Uniting Church.

PHOTO: ROB HARDING

Sealing donations will secure a revelation

For the past seven years, artist Kon Parris has been volunteering his services on a Uniting Church — and possibly Southern Hemisphere — first.

His Parramatta studio currently houses a mammoth work in progress. He has finished 18 of the 20 panels needed to complete a 300 square metre ceiling mural depicting scenes from Revelation.

When eventually installed in the ceiling of Newtown Mission chapel it will be one of the largest ceiling murals in the Southern Hemisphere.

Though a massive project, the mural has simple beginnings: while walking through the chapel during a restoration

process, Kon looked up and said, “I see murals up there.”

It was a vision strong enough to accompany him through seven years of dedicated work, where his hours averaged a normal working week — even if they weren’t 9 to 5.

“Sometimes I start work at 4 am,” he said. “It’s a labour of love. I believe that there is a very real place for art in the church. It allows a visual experience that enhances teaching.”

First, to-scale sketches had to be constructed and approved by church council. Then Kon spent the next six

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Spread the word and the benefits

There’s a growing group of professionals behind the Uniting Financial Services name, working hard to look after your money.

Inside this issue you’ll meet some of the new (and more familiar) faces who have been brought in to find out what you need and develop products and services you’ll find useful.

On page 4 you’ll meet our Relationship Team — people who understand your financial needs and want to help.

We are also excited to welcome Sam Vorn back into the fold as our new Investment Analyst.

It’s all about helping you, your group or your organisation maximise funds for your own good work while contributing to the valuable work of the Uniting Church.

When you invest with us you are investing in higher values, underpinned by the strict and long-standing principles of the Ethical Investments Policy of the Uniting Church.

Spread the word and the benefits today.



INSIDE ■ **UNITING CHURCH INVESTMENT CONFERENCE**
Combating the credit crunch

■ **ADDING HOPE**
Open hearts at Open Hearth

■ **HIGHER VALUES ONLINE**
Offering investors convenient, 24 hour access

uniting
FINANCIAL SERVICES
invest in higher values

BY LYNDA IRONS

years creating charcoal drawings on the three by five metre panels.

Kon has found inspiration in his personal faith and the writings of John, which he has tried to depict without interpretation.

Though he doesn't define himself as a religious artist, Kon has hung works in churches before and drawn on biblical writings for themes and settings in his work.

Principally a portrait painter in oil, Kon has over 40 years experience in art practice. He believes his Revelation work has been a significant milestone in his career.

"I've never been to this place before," he said.

"The largest thing I've ever painted before this was maybe a metre by two. I was amazed that I took

this on. Everyone was telling me I was crazy but there's been a driving force that is still at work. I can't explain it. It's just been inspirational."

Those involved with the project at Newtown Mission are equally surprised by the scale and scope of Kon's vision.

"Everyone I mention it to is really quite taken by it," said Rob Harding, Chairman of the project steering committee at Newtown Mission.

"When you tell people what he is doing they are genuinely shocked, amazed and in awe. There will be large numbers of people who want to see it when it's up."

Even with Kon donating his expertise, materials and installation are expected to cost \$75,000.

Newtown Mission is inviting individuals and groups to sponsor a square metre to help install the work and hopefully to provide a modest fee for Kon Parris' lengthy and committed effort.

Uniting Financial Services is supporting the venture.

"The project wouldn't have been possible even this far without people's generosity," said Mr Harding.

"We are dependant on people's generosity and extremely appreciative of it. If they can and want to sponsor it, we are eternally grateful."

It is a substantial amount of money to raise to complete the momentous project, but so far nobody involved has any doubts.

Mr Harding says the mural will be an asset to the

congregation and the wider community. "I think it is going to be an amazing art work in its own right," he said.

"It is an incredibly powerful statement about the glory of God. It will also be a way of engaging with the community, having a dialogue with them and getting them through the door.

"We've got a big old church that people like to come in and look at even without anything on the ceiling. Having this artwork will take it to the next level."

With a little more help, Newtown Mission hopes to have the work installed and open to the public by the end of 2008.

To donate to the Revelation Ceiling Project, go to newtownmission.org.au or call 9519 9000.

FEATURED PRODUCT

Higher Values Online Investment

Uniting Financial Services offers you a high-yielding, at call investment with online access.

Higher Values Online offers personal investors the convenience of transacting over the internet, with easy access to funds and with a good rate of interest.

There are a number of substantial benefits:

- Minimum opening investment \$5,000;
- Good interest rates;
- Interest calculated daily and paid in June and December;
- No transaction or maintenance fees; and

- Online access via www.unitingfinancial.com.au.

Features include:

- The flexibility to invest or withdraw 24 hours, seven days a week;
- Withdrawals must be made online using Uniting Online or Uniting by Phone; and
- Arrange to have periodic payments or direct credits/debits made to or from your Higher Values Online Investment (available to personal investors only).

It's a great feeling, knowing that, while your money is working for you, it's also working to support the caring work of the Uniting Church.



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Prudential Management of Assets

I understand that volatility and uncertainty in the investment markets over the last few months may have caused concern for some investors. Although I can't control the market, I can assure you that all of our staff at Uniting Financial Services are dedicated to protecting your investments and making the best informed decisions to safeguard and protect our long-term financial security.

The board at a strategic level, and the management of Uniting Financial Services at an operational level, have the policies and controls in place to manage this difficult time in the market. Our comfort lies in the composition and quality of our investment portfolio.

We operate a very conservative and ethical fund: our major allocation is to income-producing assets such as cash, loans backed against quality income-producing properties, and commercial property. This has definitely reduced our exposure to risk in the current market.

We have, and will always continue to hold, strong, quality assets within our portfolio.

One of the most significant decisions we made several years ago was to avoid investment in more risky assets, some of which you may have read about in the press.

The other critical factor is that we have only a

small investment in the Australian or international share markets. These investments have been outsourced to two very skilled, experienced and respected fund managers who, while not immune from the present short-term losses, have minimised those losses by not investing in more speculative stocks.

Accordingly, I am very confident of the ability of the board and management of Uniting Financial Services to continue to prudently manage the assets of Uniting Financial Services.

I hope you find it reassuring that Uniting Financial Services adheres to the

values and ethics of the Uniting Church and that the surplus it generates helps to fund Uniting Church activities (such as mission work, education and caring for those in desperate need), reducing the financial burden on individual congregations and Synod.

Our Relationship Team under Cathy Tunbridge looks forward to discussing with you your existing financial needs and ways we can further assist you. That's why we're here. Please call us on 1300 133 673.

Tony DiMauro,
Chief Executive Officer

Conference equips delegates to face the future

Around 60 delegates gathered at the Wesley Conference Centre in Sydney in March for the biennial Uniting Church Investment Conference, hosted in 2008 by Uniting Financial Services.

Continuing longstanding national cooperation between the investment entities of the church, delegates heard an impressive set of speakers present papers on topical issues based around the theme "Is your fund surviving the credit crunch woes?"

Representatives from all Uniting Church Synod investment bodies attended, alongside delegates from UC Super, the Uniting Church Beneficiary Fund, UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families Services and the New Zealand Methodist Trust Association.

Uniting Financial Services Chief Executive Officer, Tony DiMauro (pictured right with Sue Furlong from conference sponsor the Commonwealth Bank), said that the conference was an excellent opportunity for similar investment entities to gather in one place and talk about common issues, problems, challenges and hurdles they may face.

"The Uniting Financial Services staff and management who attended will walk away with new ideas and new contacts and with comfort in the

knowledge that they are keeping up-to-date with current trends and investment markets," he said.

"We had great presentations by economists, managers and professional management consultants. Delegates left well-equipped to take on the future."

The conference was generously supported by major sponsors the Commonwealth Bank and Perennial Investment Partners, who helped to make the event memorable by providing extracurricular entertainment and a welcome dinner.

The next Uniting Church Investment Conference is scheduled for 2010 in Brisbane.



BY LYNDA IRONS



Putting the "L" in "relationship": Liesel Reville, Linda Johnson and Linda Hopwood headed by Chief Operating Officer Cathy Tunbridge (back).

"We are available for all our investors," said Cathy.

"It's about looking at how we do things and how we could do them better. We want to make it easy, keep it at low cost or no cost and still deliver the best return based on the financial market place."

Cathy put a lot of thought into recruiting the right people and feels confident handing over many of her former responsibilities as she takes on a more strategic role.

Liesel Reville (profiled in the summer issue of *Mustard Seed*) took over many of Cathy's responsibilities in September 2007 when she stepped in as Senior Relationship Manager.

Linda Johnson joined Uniting Financial Services in August 2006, following a long-term career with the Commonwealth Bank. She was promoted to Relationship Associate from the Service Team in February this year, due to her strong skills in investor support and service.

The departure of Chris Field earlier this year left space for another Senior Relationship Manager to join the team, and Linda Hopwood arrived in May 2008 from her role as Business Developer Manager at Bank West.

The Relationship Team is now available and keen to make contact with Uniting Church entities who are interested in undergoing analysis to improve their current situation.

To contact the Relationship Team, call 8267 4317 Monday to Friday.

Stronger relationships take service to the next level

There is a distinct set of traits that distinguishes the newly-expanded Relationship Team at Uniting Financial Services: strong skills in service and analysis of church entities, an impressive background in financial service ... and a name that starts with "L".

Under the management of Chief Operating Officer Cathy Tunbridge, Linda Hopwood, Linda Johnson and Liesel Reville are taking "service" to the next level — matching products and services to the ever-changing needs of Uniting Church organisations.

Government subsidies, monumental growth in services and continual consolidation are just some of the factors at work, making Uniting Church finances ever more intricate.

While the existing Service Team will continue assisting with day-to-day inquiries, the key role of the Relationships Team is to cultivate a detailed knowledge of church entities in order to become familiar with their specific financial needs and objectives.

Investors can then be matched to new and existing investment solutions offered by Uniting Financial Services from their suite of products and services, tailor-made for internal church needs.

If a suitable product is not currently available, Uniting Financial Services looks into developing a product that fits.

Cathy believes one of the many benefits of the larger team will be an individual focus on specialised

portfolios, including education, congregations and aged care services.

"The Uniting Church has a whole range of industries that aren't necessarily 'church'," said Cathy.

"UnitingCare Ageing is the largest aged care provider in Australia. UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families Services is also a significant provider. These organisations are part of an industry and they face industry challenges.

"It's a bit more sophisticated than 30 years ago when they first set up the investment arm of the church."

The new team also reflects a greater emphasis on valuing and deepening the relationship between Uniting Financial Services and investors.

Sam returns to growing business

When Sam Vorn left his job as an Operations Clerk with Uniting Financial Services in April 2006, he never managed to stay too far away.

During his time there, he formed a strong bond with the ethics and people behind the financial group.

Even though he spent working hours elsewhere, he still found time to stay in touch with the people who had influenced his early professional development, attending Uniting Financial Services social functions when he was able.

Sam originally left to build his skills as a Settlement Officer in Operations at the Commonwealth Bank, but was lured back when a position was created to work with Portfolio Manager Matthew Moore, his mentor at Uniting Financial Services.

When Matthew and Chief Executive Officer Tony DiMauro decided that investment growth substantiated the employment of a new specialist team member, Sam was an obvious

choice to be the new Investment Analyst.

“Sam seemed like the perfect person for the job because we know he fits in well here and I knew he was just about to finish his degree, a Bachelor of Business (Economic and Finance).”

Sam returned to Uniting Financial Services on January 7 this year, excited by the possibilities of his new position.

It is an arrangement Matthew believes is working out exceptionally well.

“His new experience tied in with what I’d seen him interested in during those couple of weeks we’d worked together previously. He has taken up the role of managing our fixed income fund.

“Because the business has grown so much — we now have \$1.2 billion in assets under management — we’re focusing on product development. I saw this as a great opportunity to get somebody in to help me out because we are growing

and we need to think long-term.”

Sam sees his appointment as a great opportunity too.

At the time of writing, Sam is currently preparing to sit his final exams and the future beyond university is prominent in his thoughts.

His new role puts his study into practice and will allow him to grow as his skills expand.

“Sam’s starting off in fixed income but he is getting exposure to a whole set of different assets and how we are managing our portfolio overall,” said Matthew.

“He can build his portfolio skills in fixed income and then grow into the bigger picture as well.”

While Sam’s appointment has freed up time for Matthew to take on a more strategic role in overall portfolio management, he expects Uniting Financial Service investors to notice the benefits soon too.

“I think you’ll see a greater range of products in regards to how you can invest and hopefully within time it will lead to a better return for other church organisations that are looking to put money with us,” he said.

The comeback kid: Sam Vorn (left) returns to work with his mentor, Matthew Moore.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What can I do once I have Uniting Online access?

You can do almost anything. Here is a list of examples:

- Transfer funds between Uniting Financial Services At Call Investments;
- Transfer funds from Uniting Financial Services At Call Investments to loans;
- Transfer funds to another financial institution;
- If more than one authoriser is required, transaction or batch files can be “stored” for authorising by second authoriser at a later time (not available for altering of Periodic Payments);
- Establish, alter or delete periodic payments;
- Request cheques;
- Upload CEMTEX credit files created in MYOB and Quickpays for payment of salaries;
- Manually load Multitrans files for salaries;

- Stop cheques (Church Organisation Cheque Facilities only);
- Amend and update your address, telephone contact numbers and email address;
- View total interest received and paid for current and previous financial years;
- Customise or alter your Login and Access codes;
- Send Uniting Financial Services a secure email via Uniting Online (attachments are not allowed);
- View balances, transactions and interest earned;
- Print transaction listings for investments and loans;
- Download transactions for importing into Quicken, MYOB and so on.

Some options not available to investments that require two signatories to authorise transactions.

Investing made easy

For Jim and Alison Croft, the recommendation that they invest in higher values came from quite high up.

They'd heard good reports about the service and products provided by Uniting Financial Services from fellow congregation members, but they were especially impressed by a talk Jim Mein presented at their church during his term as Moderator of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT.

It's a recommendation they've passed on themselves.

"We were very impressed by his talk and the work he has done with Uniting Financial Services," said Jim Croft.

"I'd recommend it to anyone. We try to let people know."

The Crofts have been using Uniting Financial Services products for around four years; first as a means of managing their personal finances and also to help with the monetary side of a community service provided by Katoomba Uniting Church.

The Open Hearth Community Meal Program has been providing light meals for Katoomba's low-income population every Tuesday for around 30 years.

Jim and Alison assist with the service.

"Last Tuesday there were 24 people there — quite a few meals to provide!" said Jim.

Open Hearth has been a longstanding feature of the church — and the community — in Katoomba.

For Jim and Alison, the decision to place funds with Uniting Financial Services just made sense.

"We are members of Leura Uniting Church and we heard very good reports. They certainly make investing very easy."



Guests at Open Hearth enjoy the hospitality provided by volunteers like the Crofts.

Hope for rural communities



PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM LAYTON

The Sydney Male Choir's goodwill tour brought much-needed cheer to drought-affected towns.

The transition to winter means a few adjustments for most people. But for farmers, this winter will be a testing time indeed.

In his work as Rural Mission and Evangelism Consultant, Ross Neville hears about the problems confronting people on the land.

Erratic summer rains have led to flooding, death of fish in some rivers, mould and stock losses. Now people are anxiously waiting for autumn and winter rains to plant crops. Many will have to borrow to repair rain damage, eliminate weeds and plant winter crops. Meanwhile, chemical, fuel and fertiliser prices have doubled.

Uniting Church members have long recognised the importance of the ministry of people like Ross, rural chaplain Kel Hodge and Flying Padre John Blair, and they support it through their Living is Giving contributions and by investing with Uniting Financial Services.

John does pastoral care and counselling work with people in remote and isolated areas. "Many of these folk are really tired," he said. "Some of them are really in debt, some of them are really confused about what they're going to do if the rain doesn't come."

In September 2007, the Board of Mission partnered with the Country Women's Association to support a goodwill tour of rural New South Wales by the Sydney Male Choir.

Jim Layton, president of the choir and a long-time Uniting Church member himself, said the idea for the tour came from Ross Neville.

"He was desperately concerned about the drought and its impact on rural communities," he said. "The high levels of depression and suicide were chief among those concerns, but he was also concerned about the breakdowns in community life that he felt might be helped — even a little — by a visit from our choir."

By contributing to Living is Giving and investing with Uniting Financial Services you can help make sure this good work continues. For more information on Living is Giving, contact Mele Akau on (02) 8267 4475 or visit www.livingisgiving.uca.org.au

Interest Rate Schedule



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Personal, Company Trust and Other Entities

At Call Investments – Interest paid half yearly	
\$0 – \$9,999	\$10,000 – \$49,999
6.75%	7.25%
Overdrawn Investment (debit interest rate) 11.30% Effective 1 April 08	
	\$50,000 plus
	7.50%

Higher Values Online Investment – Interest paid half yearly	
\$0 – \$4,999	\$5,000 and over (Personal investors only)
7.00%	7.75%
Overdrawn Investment (debit interest rate) 11.30% Effective 1 April 08	

Fixed Term Investments – Interest paid 6 monthly and at maturity			
Term	\$2,000 – \$9,999	\$10,000 – \$49,999	\$50,000 – \$249,999
6-11 Months	7.55%	8.15%	8.25%
12-23 Months	7.50%	8.25%	8.35%
24-35 Months	7.35%	7.90%	8.00%
36-47 Months	6.95%	7.50%	7.60%
48-59 Months	6.75%	7.40%	7.50%
60 Months	6.65%	7.20%	7.30%
Rates for investments less than 6 months or for amounts greater than \$250,000 are available by calling 1300 133 673.			

Fixed Term Investments – Interest paid monthly			
Term	\$20,000 – \$49,999	\$50,000 – \$249,999	
12-23 Months	8.05%	8.15%	
24-35 Months	7.70%	7.80%	
36-47 Months	7.30%	7.40%	
48-59 Months	7.20%	7.30%	
60 Months	7.00%	7.10%	
Rates for investments for amounts greater than \$250,000 are available by calling 1300 133 673.			

Self Help Investment – Interest paid quarterly	
Nil (forgo interest) or 6.25% – Effective 1 July 2008.	
Overdrawn Investment (debit interest rate) 11.30% Effective 1 April 2008	

Funeral Investment – Interest paid Half Yearly	
5.75% (Personal investors only)	Maximum capital investment \$10,000 as at 1 January 08.

Uniting Church Organisations

At Call Investments – Interest paid half yearly	
7.00%	

Cheque Facilities – Interest paid half yearly	
\$0 – \$9,999	\$10,000 – \$49,999
2.50%	4.00%
	\$50,000 plus
	5.00%

Fixed Term Investments – Interest paid 6 monthly and at maturity				
6-11 Months	12-23 Months	24-35 Months	39-47 Months	48-59 Months
8.15%	8.25%	7.90%	7.50%	7.40%
Minimum \$2,000				
Rates for investments less than 6 months or for amounts greater than \$250,000 are available by calling 1300 133 673.				

Self Help Investment – Interest paid quarterly	
Nil (forgo interest) or 6.25% – Effective 1 July 2008.	
Overdrawn Investment (debit interest rate) 11.30% Effective 1 April 2008	

Loans and Other Facilities (Debit Interest rates)	
Uniting Church Loans	Effective 1 April 2008
Overdrafts (approved)	Effective 1 April 2008
Overdrawn Investments	Effective 1 April 2008
Self Help Loans	Effective 1 April 2008
Minister's Housing Loans	Effective 1 May 2008
Minister's Car Loans	Effective 1 April 2008
Minister's Furniture Loans	Effective 1 April 2008

This schedule forms Part 2 of the Product Information Brochure and Product Disclosure Statement. All interest rates, unless otherwise stated are effective from 2 June 2008. All interest rates quoted are per annum and are subject to change. Conditions apply. Please ask for a Product Disclosure Statement and a Product Information Brochure to assist you in making your product selection.



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