



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Synod of New South Wales and the ACT**  
Uniting Church in Australia

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### **Feeling blessed this Christmas? Why not share it?**

*In his Christmas message for 2011, the Moderator of the Uniting Church Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, the Rev. Dr Brian Brown, suggests broadly applying the principle of generosity — to those in detention centres, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, to rural communities anxious about the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.*

“How does who I am and what I do add to the common good?”

This is the fundamental question I hope the people of Australia will be moved to ask ourselves in this season of goodwill.

It’s a question inspired by the centuries-old Christmas tradition of generosity of spirit, based on God’s generosity to us and Christ’s openhearted self-giving.

It stands in contrast to the attitude that if a person is onto a good thing they should keep it to themselves.

Sharing those things with which we have been blessed has a wide range of applications in both the personal and community realm. For example, if our family happens to be in a “good place” over Christmas, we could ask ourselves in what way that special blessing could be shared with someone who is lonely or grieving.

Sadly, even in our largely affluent society there are too many for whom the season is anything but jolly, be it due to financial, relational or health deprivation.

The principle of generosity can also be applied more broadly to just about any issue facing our nation. For example, what would it mean in practical terms if the spirit of Christmas was applied to make life easier for those languishing in our detention centres — or will we settle for punishing people for their will to live rather than just survive?

How would generosity of spirit play out in relation to taxation of super-profits and super-salaries, or the health and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? Could generosity of spirit come into play in helping the nation and the Church find a resolution in the midst of the current debate on marriage in Australia?

Generosity of spirit would mean that the cost of reducing irrigation quotas from the Murray-Darling river system would be borne by the whole community instead of just the irrigators and the people of the towns, whose economies will suffer from reduced food production.

Reconciliation often begins when we pause from asserting our own position and start listening to the other person’s story.

**more ...**



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Good theology emphasises the grace and generosity of God. At Christmas, we celebrate God's love for the world (not just the Church) in the giving of Jesus so that compassion could transform our personal and communal lives.

If we know that transformation for ourselves we should share it. Those who do not will be blessed in the sharing.

Happy Christmas? Don't keep it to yourself!

**For more information, contact Stephen Webb, Media Officer, 0423 259 945.**