

As many will know Hal and I travelled to Brisbane last weekend to meet with LinC affiliates and to support the opening of a new affiliate in Logan City on Brisbane's Southside. It was a busy time. We travelled to Wynnum on the bay side of Brisbane; to Pine Rivers in the north of Brisbane and Logan to the south. All of the groups were enthusiastic about the ministry they are performing in the community. Logan City will begin its work in the next couple of months so it was great to be able to encourage them in their preparation and planning. We left Brisbane on Sunday morning and travelled to Alstonville near Lismore NSW and both Hal and I spoke at the tenth anniversary of the establishment of LinC in Alstonville.

LinC began in the USA and was brought to Australia in 1990 by World Vision. The first LinC affiliate was in the northern Sydney suburb of Hornsby. Presently, there are 16, soon 17 affiliates in all states except South Australia. World Vision sponsored LinC until 2005 when they decided to pull out of LinC and invest their efforts in a programme called Kid's Hope. It was then that Hal Grix and his team which includes Sue Lee took over the management of LinC National, something that we at EDBC can be very proud of.

There are several lasting impressions I have of the trip; first, meeting people who feel a strong commitment to being the church outside the walls of the building. I spoke at each of the gatherings about LinC being the hands and feet of Jesus. We are about doing. But as the weekend progressed, both Hal and I realised that just being the hands and the feet is not enough unless LinC is also connected to the heart - the heart of the gospel; the heart of God's love and my own heart, the centre of my being. What I do must come from who I am and that is from the heart.

The second impression was the importance people in LinC placed on working together with other churches. Virtually every LinC group has representatives from most denominations. At Bayside we had dinner with members of Catholic, Baptist, Brethren, Uniting and Anglican Churches. When we went to Logan we added in Pentecostal and Presbyterian and in Alstonville the Seventh Day Adventists. It was exciting to see how those in the LinC groups celebrated this dynamic ecumenism.

There is a wisdom in LinC when people work together from an array of Christian denominations because they are coming together around tasks that are for the good of others, and they are not trying to get conformity on liturgical or doctrinal issues. I also think that it shows that most people in the church have a better idea about what is central to the Christian faith than do the leaders of the various denominations. While we clergy are building the denominational fences, declaring how we are different (read superior) to other faith groups, the lay person is living and acting out the Good News to both neighbour and stranger.

As I mentioned earlier we can be proud of our support of LinC in EDBC. It is a ministry that crosses many boundaries and brings the warmth of God's love to so many people.

*Christopher*