The Uniting Church was formed in 1977 by the union of the Congregationalist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches in Australia. The liturgical provisions of these three churches continued to be used, along with new experimental forms until the Uniting Church published its first authorized worship book, *Uniting in Worship*, in 1988. It was followed in 2005 by *Uniting in Worship-2* which updated some services and provided some new ones.

No provision was made in the previous traditions for the commemoration of saints. Because of their association with relics and their invocation in prayer, most of the Reformers abolished the sanctoral cycle, with the advantageous result of allowing the Lord’s Day to claim its rightful priority in the week. There is also a Reformation and Puritan suspicion of any but ordinary Christians bearing the biblical title, though each church recited the Nicene Creed with its affirmation of the communion of saints. Most reformed churches retained the major Gospel feasts of Christmas, Easter and perhaps Pentecost under the English guise of Whit Sunday, but until relatively recently, the liturgical seasons themselves were seldom observed.

The 20th century ecumenical and liturgical movements raised these churches’ awareness of the ‘great cloud of witnesses’. The *Basis of Union* of the Church acknowledged that the modern ecumenical movement had given birth to it; it also stated ‘that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries, and to this end, [the Uniting Church] commits herself to seek special relationships with the Churches in Asia and the Pacific.’ The subsequent liturgical work of the Uniting Church has certainly drawn on contemporary ecumenical scholarship, showing little of the conservatism which often follows church unions. Thus the first Commission of Liturgy began to contemplate the possibility of adapting or composing a calendar of saints for a ‘new’ church, in a part of the ‘new world’. Anglicans had made a start in *An Australian Prayer Book*.

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1979, with an expanded calendar of observances. It was obvious that most current such examples had large numbers of saints from biblical history and the first four centuries of the church; and that there were many names drawn from European church history. The northern hemisphere predominated, as did male exemplars.

These reflections bore fruit through the work of the Rev. David Brown for the first *Uniting in Worship* in a section entitled ‘A Calendar of Other Commemorations’. Its introduction states, ‘[T]he church also celebrates the lives of particular people or particular events in christian history. In some denominations, this list of commemorations is called a *Calendar of Saints’ Days* or a *Sanctoral Cycle*.’ It also notes the distinction between ‘greater’ and ‘lesser’ days in such lists. The Uniting Church provision is then described: ‘[it is] a single table; it calls to mind a representative group of people from the communion of saints, that great company whom no one can number, who have been the servants of Christ in their day and generation. It makes no attempt to be all-inclusive, and has limited resemblance to similar calendars prepared by other denominations. [It] includes some saints’ days which are of great antiquity and wide observance. But it also includes a representative list of the names of men and women across the centuries, from East and West. Some of the names give a particular emphasis to our christian heritage in Australia and the Pacific.’

There are ninety five commemorations in nine groupings, naming some 121 individuals, including 28 women (apart from those in groups like martyrs or pioneers). The borderline between the categories is somewhat arbitrary. Appropriate biblical readings and collects are offered for each classification.

- Apostles
- Christian pioneers
- Christian thinkers
- Faithful servants
- Martyrs
- People (a person) of prayer

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2 This is part of a section of resources including the Liturgical Year with collects, the lectionary (in 1988 the *Common Lectionary*, now the *Revised Common Lectionary*). The Year includes All Saints’ Day.
3 *Sic*. Capital letters were recovered in 2005.
4 It then adds, ‘Synods and presbyteries, parishes and congregations are encouraged to add to this calendar the names of significant christians and of important events.’ This introduction remains unchanged in *Uniting in Worship*.-2.
5 In 1988 these are printed in the book; in 2005 they are found in a CD which comes with the purchase of the book.
Roughly calculated across time, there are 31 biblical saints, and a further 24 in the first millennium; in the second millennium, there are eleven pre-Reformation and thirteen in the 16th and 17th centuries; the 18th century provides seven, including two Wesleys, the 19th, eighteen and the 20th fifteen. It is appropriate that the Protestant Reformers are there in strength, whatever their antipathy to hagiolatry might have been. Equally the Protestant missionary era is well represented, not least marking the efforts of men and (unnamed) women in places in the Australian hemisphere. The more modern names are largely the heroes of the first generation of the Uniting Church, who died in the 1950s or 60’s (Flynn, Kagawa, Barth, Hammerskjold, Martin Luther King) and only two more recent, D. T. Niles (to gain an Asian theologian, 1970) and the first Aboriginal to be ordained, Lazarus Lamilami, died 1977. Nevertheless, it might be observed that David Brown largely lists saints who had been in their graves a discreetly long time. This changed considerably in the next list.

The specifically Australian commemorations are the following:

- First Christian service in Australia, Sydney Cove 1788
- Caroline Chisholm (Renewer of society, 26 Mar.)
- John Flynn (Christian pioneer, 5 May)
- Lazarus Lamilami (Faithful servant, 21 Sept.)

The first service on Australian soil was held at Sydney Cove in 1788 at the arrival of the First Fleet, and was led by the Church of England chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson. This event is also commemorated in the Calendar of the Anglican Church in Australia.

Caroline Chisholm was a philanthropist born in Madras and became a Roman Catholic on marriage. She emigrated to New South Wales and became involved in helping stranded and penniless women. Later she helped families of convicts join their members in Australia.

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6 In almost all cases, of course, the missionaries were born in Britain.
7 The first Congregationalist service was the Lord’s Supper, led by William Crook, a lay presider – acceptable within that tradition but criticized by the Anglican chaplain (1810); the first Methodist service was conducted by the Rev. Samuel Leigh in 1815. The Rev. John Dunmore Lang arrived for the Church of Scotland in 1823.
The Rev. Dr John Flynn, ‘Flynn of the Inland’ and the Rev. Lazarus Lamilami are referred to below where we assess the Australian representation. In addition, seven missionaries in the regions served from Australia, chiefly in the Pacific, are listed in 1988 under Christian pioneers, with the exception of martyrs. 8

Amongst other resources there are provisions for national days and for the Inauguration of the Uniting Church in 1977, occasions which are strictly neither liturgical nor hagiographical. 9

So much for the first commendable effort. There is not much evidence of widespread use of this provision, and it did not help that there was no publication which provided leaders with material for use in worship. In this, the Anglican practice of listing names with a brief identification (including date, location and principal work) is of more initial value, though Anglicans – and Roman Catholics - have many other resources to hand, and are comfortable with consulting them. Many names in this new section remain a mystery to Uniting Church readers, including relatively modern ones belonging to Australian church history.

The Uniting in Worship-2 revision

The process of compiling new material and revising the first book began around 1997. The ‘Working Group on Worship’ was now based in Brisbane rather than in Adelaide, but with consultants across the nation. In this massive work, with few liturgical scholars available in the Uniting Church, the revision of the calendar took a low priority (David Brown was no longer able to undertake the task); nevertheless, some attempt was made to deal with its perceived inadequacies. The result indicates that it would be worth doing much more definition and research to achieve a really useful end.

The 2005 book retained the nine categories of ‘special commemorations’, but the increased allocation of names exacerbated the problems of their design. Some 38 new names were added and several adjustments or re-allocations were made. There are now 43 women in a total of 142 names.

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8 See below, in the discussion of the 2005 edition.
9 Australia Day, 26 Jan.; ANZAC Day, 25th April; Inauguration of the Uniting Church, 22 June.
Since the issue of categorizing the biblical and ancient saints is a universal question, we need not spend much time on it here. The modern church sees the ancient honour paid to martyrs, virgins and even confessors in a different light (though there are increasing numbers of modern martyrs and confessors). The arcane science of ranking the saints in order to decide the correct level of their liturgical commemoration seems anachronistic and foreign in a democratic age. The process by which Roman Catholic saints are discerned and proclaimed has little appeal beyond that church, though the Uniting Church has embraced the first Catholic candidate for sainthood, Blessed Mary MacKillop (8 August; Christian Pioneer; beatified 19th January 1995).

Yet how does the contemporary church honour the great witnesses to the faith, including those who have given such witness unto death? We will return to this question later in this chapter. It remains a fact that most Christians are prepared to give special honour to the saints of the biblical story, though those of the Hebrew scriptures have been excluded for far too long (in the west). The disturbing factor in the Uniting Church list is probably not so much that the categories imply any difference in status as that a strange mixture of names occurs together. ‘Apostle’ is a difficult category evenbiblically, so having expanded it beyond the Twelve it is a pity than no women’s names were included. Some biblical women are ‘Witnesses to Jesus’ (which could be rightly translated ‘martyrs!’) and others are ‘Faithful servants’ alongside Christians born much later. Stephen is listed under ‘Martyr’, the only New Testament example there. Attempting to recover the breadth and depth of the witness of women is a prime example of how a later age recognizes an inadequacy in the tradition, which then needs renewal.

It is no surprise that names might also be reclaimed from the Reformation. The appearance of a sprinkling of Celtic missionaries is recognition of a cultural heritage (Scottish and Irish) rather than anything to do with reformed witness. Thomas Cranmer joined Luther, Calvin and the usual suspects as ‘Reformers of the Church’ in the 2005 edition, but nothing has relieved the androcentrism of the late middle ages. Dr Peter Matheson has introduced many to Argula von Grumbach10; and one should not discount the wives of several Reformers, but consciences will need to be examined before due weight can be given to the importance of women’s roles in that turbulent time. The Methodist tradition is

embraced under this heading too, with John and Charles Wesley (but not Susanna, their mother) and William and Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army.

One characteristic note of the Reformation was its accent on faithful learning; almost all the leaders were doctors of divinity. One wonders if a category like ‘Teachers of the Faith’ might have been useful. ‘Christian Thinkers’ is a very lame title. The great theologians, ancient and modern are there, from both East and West, though Catherine of Siena\(^\text{11}\) is a ‘Faithful servant’ rather than a ‘Christian thinker’.

Presumably the idea of groups like Christian Pioneers (who might equally have gone under ‘Reformers’), Christian thinkers, People of prayer, Renewers of society and the catch-all of Faithful servants was meant to move beyond ancient and formal categorizations to embrace the ‘witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries’ of which the Introduction speaks. The list facilitates this reorientation both in time and space. It is remarkable for its ecumenical scope. Therefore it properly challenges any suggestion that ‘reformation’ occurred only in 16\(^\text{th}\) century Europe, opening up some new visions: through Anthony of Egypt (d.356) the founder of Christian monasticism\(^\text{12}\) (to which one might add George MacLeod of Iona, Roger of Taizé and Soeur Geneviève, founder of Taizé’s sister Community of Grandchamp, and others who have led the recovery of monasticism within Protestantism) we might consider the importance of places of prayer and retreat for a healthy church; through Fr Paul Couturier (d. 1953, founder of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity) and Pope John XXIII (d. 1963, and the aggiornamento (‘updating’) of the Roman Church) linked with Willem Visser T’Hooft (d. 1985, first General Secretary of the World Council of Churches), the continuing challenge of the ecumenical movement and its problems is reinforced. Lesslie Newbigin (d. 1998, one of the first bishops of the united Church of South India and a former Presbyterian) might have found a place here, translated from Christian thinkers.

Christian thinkers, whose teachers we have briefly considered, include some modern writers: Monica Furlong (14 January, d. 2003), Dorothea Soelle (28 April;  

\(^{11}\) Catherine (d. 1380) was made a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1970, along with Teresa of Avila and the ‘mystical doctor’ John of the Cross. Teresa and John are in the Uniting Church list of ‘People of Prayer’ (15 Oct.).  

\(^{12}\) Benedict, founder of western monasticism, is under People of Prayer, 11 June. Francis and Clare are Faithful Servants (4 October); Dominic does not appear, but the friars did reform monasticism in their time, as did Ignatius Loyola (Person of prayer, 31 July).
d. 2003), C.S. Lewis (22 November; d. 1963), Karl Barth (9 December; d. 1968) and Catherine Mowry LaCugna (3 May; d. 1997). The prodigious Albert Schweitzer (4 September; d. 1965), beloved hero of former Protestant generations, theologian, musician, philosopher, and physician, appears as a Christian pioneer: whether the latter is his greatest claim to fame is now under challenge; a thinker and important theological scholar he was. In this group Schleiermacher, Ritschl, von Harnack and Kierkegaard appear, looking like a bibliography of a 1960’s course in modern theology; and Bonhoeffer is there too (not as a martyr). Of course, one must wait until a candidate is dead, but this list also raises the question of how long a time is required to judge someone worthy of wide recognition. The Uniting Church wants to reclaim the local reference of such a calendar, knowing that there were many local saints whose memories were kept in small communities or single nations in the early centuries of the Church. These were forgotten in the universalizing tendencies of later ages and a dominant church. But what of those who are ‘local’ to the late 20th century and a modern world of communications? Were there not thinkers who provided alternative views to those listed above who happen to be held in high regard in recent Uniting theological education (both radicals and conservatives)?

There are some interesting hints at a wider category of creative thinkers and practitioners in the present list. So we have George Herbert (27 February, d.1633) poet, Andrei Rublev (29th January, d. ca 1430) iconographer, Ann Griffiths (12 August, d. 1805) a Welsh Methodist laywoman, poet/hymnographer and poet, Isaac Watts, George Frederick Handel and Johann Sebastian Bach (25 November) a poet/hymnographer and two composers of great theological acuity. We might add Charles Wesley, a poet but not a composer (to the surprise of many Methodists). There are some fruitful possibilities which might enrich the church’s anamnesis of art dedicated to the glory of God: Dante Alighieri, early poets in English (perhaps including Chaucer), and Fra Angelico come to mind, in addition to names on the list like Ephrem the Syrian (9 June), Hildegard of Bingen (17 September), John of the Cross (15 October), Dag Hammerskjold (18 September), and other perhaps less traditional church-related arts. Of course, artists, even in service of religion, do press the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in church – but is this still a list of ‘saints’?

Renewers of society is another disappointing category, the shortest in the calendar with nine names in seven observances. All could be respectfully moved to other groups. There is an unintended dichotomy between sacred and secular implied here, which provides yet another point at which the new wineskins devised by David Brown are threatening to burst.
Faithful servants defies any common theme between its members, excepting, most properly, their baptism in Christ.\textsuperscript{13}

One ancient rule has been interpreted flexibly in this exercise: the commemoration of a person on the day of their death. Curiously, in the case of most recent names, the rule has been followed, at least within a day or two. Variations seem to be to avoid clashes with an old saint already in position, but there are (in 2005) several places where two or more commemorations do fall on the same day. This presumably implies a choice in the mind of the later editor, and a different assumption as to how such commemorations might be observed. In a few cases, both the 1988 and 2005 lists feel free to vary the date, or the combination of names (such as placing Matthias with Simon and Jude on 14 May), which are also celebrated by other churches, losing something of the ecumenical possibilities of joint celebration.

These considerations must be faced by anyone anywhere in the world who is pondering a revision of the \textit{sanctorale}. What then, has been achieved by 2005 in the Uniting Church’s desire to mark its Australian and Asian/Pacific contexts?

The Inauguration of the Uniting Church itself on 22 June 1977 is a Principal Day, alongside the biblical feasts of Christ, Presentation, Annunciation, Transfiguration, and All Saints Day. The first service of worship held on Australian soil is also marked on 3\textsuperscript{rd} February (1788) (see above, footnote 8). The early 19\textsuperscript{th} century then comes into its own in the mission field.

Under Christian pioneers are ‘Joseph Henry Davies & missionaries in Korea and Japan’ (5 February).\textsuperscript{14} As an Anglican lay teacher, he founded Caulfield Grammar School in 1881 in Melbourne, but was then ordained a Presbyterian and left for Korea, where he died in 1890 of smallpox after only six months. A Korean Pastor, Joo Ki Chul (21 April) was killed in 1935 amongst those Presbyterians who refused, in the tradition of ancient Roman Christians, to bow down at the imperial shrine. He is by no means the first Christian to die in Korea; the story of massacres under Korean, Japanese, imperial and communist regimes is truly horrendous. A Methodist name would be the Rev. Lee Yeong-Han, who died in Haeju Prison for the same reason. These are Korean citizens: Australian

\textsuperscript{13} The final editor for 2005 missed an accidental additional category: ‘Faithful witness’, which is uniquely given to northern Australian preacher Alan Mungulu on 20\textsuperscript{th} March. The intention would seem to have been to place him in ‘Faithful servants’, but there were, of course, other possibilities. See below.

\textsuperscript{14} In 1988, he appeared as ‘Herbert Davies’ with the same company.
Churches were active amongst the earliest Christian missions, but no name of an Australian is yet offered amongst the missionaries. Medical missionaries would give several worthy (female) names.

More numerous are those usually British-born missionaries who served in the Pacific and Papua New Guinea. John Geddie (Canada), his wife Charlotte McDonald, and John Paton (Scotland; with Geddie, 14 December), and his first wife Mary Ann Robson, who died of tropical fever, served in New Hebrides (Vanuatu); the Rev. Dr George Brown covered a wide area in his superintendence of missions coupled with academic research and advocacy, for the Methodists, as did the Rev. John Thomas (1 September) and his wife Sarah. ‘John Hunt & Pacific Martyrs’ (20 September) appear under the separate list as Martyrs, though Hunt was not a martyr: he died of dysentery at the age of 36, and is buried in Fiji. His wife Hannah Summers survived him. James Egan Moulton (9 May), of a distinguished and learned English Wesleyan family, served, with his wife Emma Knight, in Tonga and died in Sydney in 1909; he is listed under Faithful servants. Thought might be given to adding a London Missionary Society (Congregationalist) minister like John Williams (1796-1839), who arrived in Hobart in 1817, with his wife Mary Chauner, where he held the first Protestant Service in Tasmania. They left for the Society Islands (Tahiti) later that year, via Sydney. He was martyred in the New Hebrides on 20th November 1839.

In each of the above cases, a wife deserved to be named as well, and many unmarried women teachers and missionaries gave up their lives in service in such distant places. Too many have left no memorial. One might say that everyone who left home for the Pacific and south-east Asia in that century was a martyr.

Finally, in terms of martyrs, Anglicans mark the death of twelve of their number who were martyred in New Guinea during the Second World War, but 15 Lutherans, 24 Methodists and 188 Roman Catholics died in the same conflict. Indeed, the Anglican calendar sets aside several dates over the year for saints and martyrs from various parts of the world: Asia (in addition to Japan, New Guinea), Africa (Uganda), the Americas, Europe, and Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

A group closer to home are those who have served the indigenous communities of ‘outback’ Australia. James R. B. Love (19 February, d. 1947) was a Presbyterian missionary in Mowanjum, 15 kms. from Derby in the West Kimberley, north
west Western Australia) and Ernabella in far north-west South Australia. He worked particularly in language and social customs of the people. Alan Mungulu (20 March) was described as ‘a paraplegic and steady rock at Mowanjum, near Derby, in the 1960s and 70s’, a Presbyterian lay preacher and elder. Diane Buchanan (5 March, d. 1993) and Dr Christine Anne Kilham (11 August, death date not known at this writing) were Bible translators on Ngayawili (Elcho Island), off the north coast of Arnhem Land. Kilham also worked at Aurukun on Cape York Peninsular and as a linguistic consultant in various academic centres. Both are under Christian pioneers. The Rev. Leonard Neil Kentish (4 April) was Chairman of the Methodist District of Arnhem Land during World War Two and was beheaded after severe mistreatment by the Japanese on 5th February 1943 at Dobo on the Aru Islands (now part of Indonesia) (Martyr). His case was the subject of a War Crimes Tribunal in 1948.

There are two Presbyterians and a Methodist who became national figures during the 20th century: the Rev Dr John Flynn (5 May; Christian pioneer, d. 1951) was founder and superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission which served the peoples of the outback for many decades; to his honour board must be added the (later Royal) Flying Doctor Service. His successor, the Rev. Dr Fred McKay (31 March; Faithful servant, d. 2000) carried the work through from 1951 for 23 years and was active in retirement until his death at age 92. The Rev. Dr (later Sir) Alan Walker (29 January; d. 2003, Faithful servant) was Superintendent Minister of Wesley (formerly Methodist) Central Mission in Sydney (1958-78), became a national figure his innovative evangelistic campaign, Mission to the Nation, in the 1950s, and was founder of the telephone crisis counselling service, Lifeline in 1963, now an international organization.15

The Uniting Church owes a special debt to Charles Harris (Faithful servant, 7th May), a long term campaigner for Aboriginal rights, and the chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, established in 1985 as the autonomous indigenous arm of the Uniting Church, which was largely his vision.16

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15 His profile as a Methodist who was not entirely convinced of church union, and as an evangelist in the revivalist tradition needs to be balanced by the theological depth of his social thought. Professor Brian Howe has opened the latter in a lecture published in the Proceedings of the Uniting Church Historical Society, Synod of Victoria, vol 12, No. 2, December 2005, pp. 44ff.

The calendar also recalls the first woman ordained in the Congregationalist tradition, Winifred Kiek (23 May; d. 1975, Christian Pioneer), and the first aboriginal Australian to be ordained in one of the Uniting Church’s previous traditions, the Methodist, the Rev. Lazarus Lamilami (22 September; d. 21 September 1977, Faithful servant). A Uniting Church ordination is recognized in Liyapidiny (31 August), surnamed Marika, a woman ordained at Yirrkala in 1991. She was a nurse prior to training for the ministry at Nunaglinya College in Darwin. She was described as ‘petite...quietly spoken and unassuming [but with] a fierce determination’. She was ordained at Yirrkala on 14th December 1991 and died in September 1998. No record is made of the earliest Presbyterian minister ordained in Australia. Given that the Uniting Church is engaged in the ‘renewal of the diaconate’ promised in the Basis of Union, para. 14 (c), and of a unique kind, it is a loss that more is not made of the historic deacons Stephen and Laurence (26 December, 10 August; Martyrs), Phoebe (27 January; called diakonos, ‘a deacon of the church at Cenchrae’ at Romans 16: 1-2), Macrina of Nyssa (18 July; d. 379, eldest sister of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, and referred to by the title in annals of Byzantine history) and Francis (4 October, Faithful servant) who remained a deacon to avoid the dignity of priesthood.

Apart from those mentioned, there are only three other ministries which connect with the Asian region: Gladys Aylward (3 January; d. 3 Jan. 1970), of the film The Inn of the Sixth Happiness (the name was changed by Hollywood from the name of her hostel in Yuncheng, Shanxi Province in China, where she cared for ‘foot bound’ girls); Daniel Thambyrajah (D.T.) Niles (17 July) (Faithful servant) (1908-1970), Sri Lankan evangelist, ecumenical leader and hymnwriter (two of his hymns appear in Together in Song);17 and finally Toyohiko Kagawa (22 April; d. 23 April 1960), the Japanese Christian reformer, labour activist and author. He was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.18

It remains to consider the sober fact that no Australian, Asian or Pacific names yet appear under the categories Christian thinkers, People of prayer or Reformers of the church. One source for the first and third might be the distinguished theologians and leaders who served on the Joint Commission on

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18 The author acknowledges that much more research needs to be done to expand, and even to verify all that has been claimed in this chapter; I have had to leave some names unlisted because I have not been able to find adequate information. The need for this to be done is obvious and urgent. I am grateful to my colleague Rob Bos for his assistance.
Church Union from the 1950s; again, the church’s university colleges and theological halls could produce some scholars of world standing. An unrecognized scholar-pastor is the Rev. Dr Edward Holdsworth Sugden (d. 1935), first Master of Queen’s College, University of Melbourne, a Wesleyan Minister, editor of Wesley’s *Standard Sermons* in a critical edition, bibliophile and collector, patron of the arts, exponent of contemporary science and archaeology, musician and composer, conductor of children’s choirs, Shakespeare scholar, much sought-after preacher and public speaker, and a man of great personal piety as well as charm. Whether such a man should be in this kind of list depends on one’s judgement of its purpose. If a Christian Queen qualifies, Salote Tupou III of Tonga (1900-1965) is an attractive regional possibility as a Person of prayer (but much more\(^1\)).

Before a further revision occurs, the authorities in the Uniting Church will need to do further work on the theology and practice associated with this list. It would appear that the main objective is to educate, to broaden the vision of the church from its traditional source of heroes of the faith, the 16\(^{th}\) and 18\(^{th}\) centuries. In a strict sense, the list is not a *sanctorale* at all. Perhaps it would be better to adopt the equivalent title of a list in the 2006 *Book of Common Worship* of the Church of South India: ‘Common Forms for Commemoration of Notable Christians’. The Uniting Church has accepted a wider observance of the Christian Year than ever before, but it has developed little sense of a living connection with the saints. The anniversaries associated with John and Charles Wesley, and John Calvin, which have fallen in recent years, are marked by thanksgiving and celebration of a theological and spiritual tradition – traditions now redefined in a real sense in the union. Some members suspect a certain recidivism on such occasions; others simply share the modern ignorance of history and its significance. Where members have discovered through reading an historic person who seems to be a soul mate, is it possible for them to talk to God about them? To talk to them in imagination (as in, for instance, Ignatian spirituality)? To ask their help? Some members are sufficiently distant from ancient disputes to explore these avenues afresh.

Perhaps the day most likely to be adopted for these purposes is All Saints Day. In *Uniting in Worship*-2, there is a section in the much expanded Funeral Services entitled *Resources for a Service of Remembrance on All Saints Day*. \(^2\) It is intended to provide an opportunity for congregations ‘to remember together their loved

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\(^{1}\) See Dr Elizabeth Wood-Ellem’s paper in the *Proceedings of the Uniting Church Historical Society, Synod of Victoria*, vol. 5, no. 1, July 1998, pp. 6ff.

\(^{2}\) *Uniting in Worship*-2, pp 489, from which all the quotations indicated in this paragraph are taken.
ones, especially those who died in the previous year. There is time for the sharp grief that follows a death, but there is time also for recalling names, contributions and events in the ordinary cycle of life. It is further observed in the Notes to the service that Uniting Church people have begun to extend the strict focus of All Saints on the notable holy men and women to those ‘unknown and ordinary saints who have built up the faith in their local community’. All Souls Day is also mentioned, and it is acknowledged that there is a combination of elements of both days in what is proposed: ‘the accent is not to much on remembering individuals as affirming the Church as a company of the faithful, with the promise of eternal life, confident in God’s mercy, waiting and living in resurrection hope’. The eucharist, ‘the great act of Christian remembrance’ is commended as appropriate. At the Prayers of the People (intercessions) there is provision in a rubric for the naming of those who have died, followed by ‘the Prayer of Faith’, a responsive prayer based on Revelation 7: 9-10, 14b-17, ‘Behold a great multitude which no-one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and the Lamb…’ For alternatives, worship planners are referred to other prayers from the Funeral service and from other published sources for All Saints Day. Here is a liturgical piece which intends to be ‘permission-giving’. It requires teaching people that ‘remembrance’ in the Jewish and Christian traditions means a great deal more than mere recall of the past; it is a ‘lively’ remembering, a recalling of the acts of God in Christ in times past in such a way that their benefits are claimed for the present, and depended on in hope for the future; in short, the New Testament word anamnesis needs to be explained and appropriated. Our understanding of the eucharist itself has been revolutionized, and old disputes settled, by discovering this.

Over the weekend of All Saints and All Souls days in 2008, a ground-breaking ecumenical gathering was jointly sponsored by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the (ecumenical) monastery of Bose in northern Italy. The topic was ‘A Cloud of Witnesses: Opportunities for Ecumenical Commemoration’, and involved participants from a wide range of Christian traditions, both east and west. It places the work we have been discussing in a truly global perspective. The message of the symposium21 begins by observing that the biblical word ‘martyr’ has a much wider meaning than a

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21 A Cloud of Witnesses: message to the churches from a symposium at the monastery of Bose, http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=6443, the website of the World Council of Churches (Faith and Order Commission), accessed 3 January 2009. All quotations in this section are from the ‘message’.
person who died violently for their faith, ‘a death freely accepted for Christ’s sake but not sought out as an end in itself’. They reaffirm the original meaning as ‘simply one who, Christ-like, witnesses to the truth of the gospel to the end’. Their listening to the stories of the prophets and holy men and women of the Scriptures led them to a positive conclusion: ‘We began to see that what and who we remember can keep us apart, but our common remembering draws us together. This act of remembering can serve as an act of confession that opens before us a way of reclaiming together past witnesses.’ One thinks of the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in preaching, prayer and piety in the practice of different Christian traditions. ‘Repentance and forgiveness for past acts of inter-confessional violence are more likely to occur when we reflect together on those who in dying forgave their persecutors’.

It was sharply felt that martyrdom continues into our own times, and that these names belong to us all (think, for instance, of the statues which were recently erected on the west front of Westminster Abbey). They can be claimed for the whole Christian community as the saints of the first centuries are. The emphasis on individuals is balanced by the statement ‘Holiness is never solely as individual matter. Witnesses are shaped in discipleship in a particular community of faith. By affirming together their faithfulness, we celebrate the church that will be but is not yet’. It is not a simple matter to discern the ‘witnesses’: ‘our pilgrimage of faith requires us a willingness to recognize ourselves as victimisers as well as victims - as sinners as well as holy people united with the Son of God… They invite us to cross over to where Christ is, to the place where violence is endured and overcome’. Common commemoration calls us to ‘repentance and to a deeper conversion to Christ and to one another in Christ’. It is recognized that churches have different ways of commemoration, and some of these are still matters of dispute, including questions concerning the intercession of the saints, canonisation, veneration of saintly relics, and the practice of indulgences’. Yet (addressing the Uniting Church amongst others?), ‘the lack of formal recognition of even more of a clear place in the liturgical life of some churches, has perhaps led them to undervalue the witnesses of the past’ but new ways are being explored ‘in ecclesiastical calendars, liturgies, books, catechetical materials, memorials, pilgrimages and celebrations’.

So the Uniting Church stands with many other churches across the world as they explore the ‘special commemorations’. The anamnesis of the saints is part and parcel of the conversation which should be had between local churches of different traditions. They could form the basis of common services of worship, and common days of sharing faith. They may be part of formal dialogue. The
Bose symposium concludes, ‘This work, undertaken together, can help heal the
wounds of the past as we discover in the lives of the witnesses to the faith a
determination to reflect the image of Christ’. Problems about ‘mere stained glass
saints’ fall away as we reflect together, across time and space, on the mystery and
the miracle that God in Christ is truly revealed in the lives of the courageous and
the remarkable, and also in ordinary men and women, some of whom we have
known.

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