

**Spiritual Guidance as Pastoral Care:**  
**an examination of the spirituality**  
**of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley**  
**and their guidance to people of their own generation**  
**as these relate to pastoral care**  
**in congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia.**

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## SUMMARY

This research examines the spirituality of Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley and the way in which it related to their understanding of pastoral care among the communities they established. These two men reflected on their own spirituality, acted as spiritual guides to people of their own generation and set up structures that provided pastoral care for people growing in faith.

This has implications for the Uniting Church in Australia. In particular this thesis addresses the ways in which the Uniting Church fulfils its responsibilities of exercising pastoral care as ‘an expression of the fact that God always deals personally with people’,<sup>1</sup> and of providing an environment in which people ‘grow together into Christ, [and are] strengthened for their participation in the mission of Christ in the world’.<sup>2</sup>

Foundational to the research is the assumption that the sixteenth century in Western Europe and the eighteenth century in Great Britain were defining moments for the Christian church.<sup>3</sup> Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley were influential leaders in the transformations of the church in their respective times. It is further assumed that this current era (late twentieth and early twenty-first century) may justifiably be identified as a similarly significant time in the church’s history. The Uniting Church in Australia has an important role (albeit, along with other fellowships in the Christian communion) in identifying the ways in which faith in Jesus Christ connects with and has an impact on the lives of people and communities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Basis of Union*, paragraph 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Basis of Union*, paragraph 8.

<sup>3</sup> As a general rule, in this thesis the word “church” is capitalised only when it refers to a particular denomination.

This study examines the lives and written legacies of Ignatius and Wesley – particularly the *Autobiography*, *Spiritual Exercises* and some of the letters of Ignatius Loyola and the *Journal*, *Sermons* and some of the letters of John Wesley. There is an explanation of how each man came to an understanding of himself as a disciple of Jesus Christ and grew in his own faith, and the study identifies the ways in which each one reflected on his experiences. These reflections, and their understanding of the needs of the people of their times, led each man to identify ways in which their own insights could benefit the people with whom they and their companions lived.

The thesis appraises the results of these reflections. It makes connections between the culture and needs of the people of their times and the situation in which the Uniting Church finds itself in the twenty-first century, and it considers ways in which the awareness and understanding Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley had of spiritual guidance and pastoral care can be influential within the Uniting Church as it continues to participate in the ministry of Christ in the world.

## **DECLARATION**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.



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