

Mr. W. J. Jones

THE AUSTRALIAN Christian

NATIONAL WEEKLY REPRESENTING CHURCHES OF CHRIST

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MAKING THE LAST SUPPER LIVE

R. J. Tully, Doncaster, Vic.

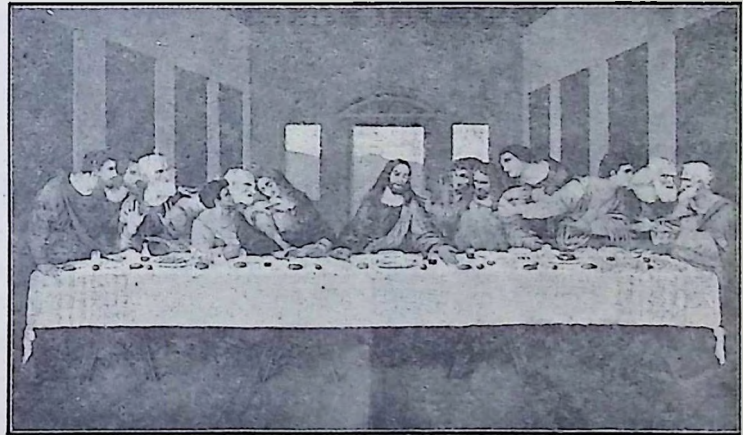
During an American trip last year, Mr. and Mrs. Tully had a most interesting experience, which suggested the following Lord's Table talk, presented by Mr. Tully to his home church at Doncaster.

Just a few months ago, on a clear summer evening, we were at Laguna Beach in California. Here we attended the Festival of Arts, which is a famous annual event, and it is about a rather unusual feature of this Festival that I would like to tell you now.

In a small valley, set between high hills, had been built an open-air auditorium, at the lower end of which, almost right across the valley, was a huge bowl or stage.

On this stage, on the evening we attended, were displayed, in perfect detail of color and form, real-life copies of famous paintings and statues. Famous works of art by well-known great masters, such as Gainsborough, Joshua Reynolds, Pierre Renoir, Van Dyke and many others, were beautifully portrayed. Each was introduced by an unseen commentator, while appropriate music was played by a splendid orchestra. Each in turn was applauded whole-heartedly by the huge audience.

At this function it is customary to conclude with a well-known painting



on a religious topic. The one chosen on this occasion was Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. As the huge curtain lifted, we saw Jesus and the twelve apostles gathered at the Table in that Upper Room. The commentator read quietly, "Now when evening was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve, and as they were eating, he said unto them, 'Verily I say unto you that one of you will betray me,' and they were exceeding

sorrowful and began each to say unto him, 'Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I?' And Judas said unto him, 'Lord, is it I?' . . . And he said unto him, 'Thou sayest it.'"

For several minutes the vast crowd of several thousand people watched in silence as the figures stood or sat in their respective positions. Then, as the curtain fell, they were still silent. There was no applause for this picture. The moon shone out over the hill, and the audience dispersed in hushed reverence. There seemed to echo round the hills and in my heart the question, "Lord, is it I?"

I have partaken of the Lord's Supper many times and in many places, and know his promise to be true, that he is in our midst, and yet, somehow, that night this ordinance took on, for me, a new and even deeper meaning. Was it because my mind is small and my faith so weak that I must see before I really feel his presence? "Lord, is it I?" I asked, and knew that his answer could so easily be, "Thou sayest it."

Here again, today, we sit with him around this Memorial Table. Do we ever betray him, fall short of what we should be as followers of his? Let us ask again, "Lord, is it I?" and, feeling his presence with us, find the depth of his love and the knowledge of his forgiveness. His body was broken and his blood shed on Calvary that even we, who betray him so often, can find eternal life through his redeeming Grace.

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NOTES FROM THE READINGS

as Suggested for

Sunday, May 24

DEUTERONOMY 11: 18-28.

Israel is urged to remember and keep the Lord's commandments, and promised that such obedience would lead to complete possession of Canaan. The solemnity of the choice faced by the nation is emphasised in vv. 26-28.

"bind them for a sign" (v. 18). — Verses 18-21 repeat the teaching of 6: 8, 9. The Jews interpreted these injunctions literally, and such visible reminders of the need to observe the Law tended to serve as a substitute for real observance. Note Matt. 23: 5.

"ye shall possess" (v. 23). — "Again the appeal to materialistic motives! Let it be remembered, however, that the appeal is to the nation as a whole, and that perhaps the most impressive way to present the worth of goodness to a nation is to emphasise its concrete and material results. After all, there is truth in the saying that sound morality and pure religion are good economics" (Scott).

"utmost sea" (v. 24). — The western sea — i.e., the Mediterranean.

ACTS 6.

After indicating the situation which led to the Church's appointment of the Seven, the chapter proceeds to tell the story of the work and arrest of the best known of that group — Stephen.

"Grecians" (v. 1). — Greek-speaking Jews, traditionally despised by the Hebrew-speaking Jews. The Church had adopted the Jewish custom of providing relief for their widows, and there soon arose complaints that those who belonged to the Greek-speaking group were being neglected.

"full of the Holy Spirit" (v. 3). — As essential for men handling the Church's business affairs, as for its spiritual leaders.

"they chose" (v. 5). — Note that the Church does the choosing — not the apostles. The names given here are all Greek, and Macgregor suggests that "the Seven were to be for the Hellenists (Greek-speaking) exactly what the Twelve were for the Hebrews" — not altogether convincing.

"the Libertines" (v. 9). — Descendants of freedom — former prisoners of war.



M. J. SAVAGE, Lake-st., Perth, W.A., bids us work for Christian Unity by . . .

"Getting Down to Grass Roots"

Preaching for the B.B.C. in London on Aug. 17, 1958, in a sermon to mark the 10th Anniversary of the W.C.C., Dr. Visser't Hooft, General Secretary of the Council, said:

"Paul's words (Phil. 1: 27) are addressed to one single local congregation. That reminds us of the fact that the battle for the unity of the Church of Christ is going to be lost or won in the life of local churches in Little Rock, in Beirut, in Budapest, in Johannesburg, in Moscow, in London and thousands of other places. Whether the World Council will go forward and fulfil its aim depends finally on the convictions borne in the hearts of individual church men and women, who long for a Church more truly worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

"We will never make real progress toward unity, if our church members are lukewarm or only vaguely interested in it, and leave these difficult questions to bishops and moderators."

These words place before us three things with which this study is concerned, viz. — The Present Position, Our Greatest Difficulty, and Getting Down to the Grass Roots.

(1) The Present Position

When Max Warren in *Partnership* (S.C.M., p. 61) says, "The ecumenical action of the Church is still a movement from above downwards, it has not yet struck roots," he is pointing the way to his real criticism further on (p. 68) where he declares:

"For it is hardly an exaggeration to say as things stand at the moment, the Ecumenical Movement appears to have reached something of an impasse. At the highest level the theologians have marked out the agreements within their disagreements, and are now pursuing their semantic wranglings by searching for disagreements in their agreements. At the lower level, where Christians co-operate, they are continually frustrated by radically different understandings of what is meant by co-operation and what goal, if any, lies beyond co-operation."

All of which just means, in colloquial language, that the Ecumenical Movement is in danger of, if indeed it has not already so happened, being "bogged down."

The simple truth, of course, is that, like so many other proposed courses

This tutorial lecture, on a subject which should certainly provoke thought and action, was delivered by Mr. Savage (formerly of New Zealand) at the Sixth Annual Conference of Christian Youth in W.A. earlier this year.



M. J. Savage.

of action, while a certain amount of time must be spent in discussing, proposing and explaining the action to be undertaken, the moment must inevitably arrive when "something must be attempted, something done," or the whole thing will collapse for the sheer want of translating ideals into realities. If Christian unity is ever to be achieved, then somewhere and sometime soon an attempt to demonstrate it, or at least to experiment towards it, must of sheer necessity be undertaken. The alternative of leaving it as the mere talking point of a few (comparatively speaking, of course) interested top-level experts is to doom it to an academic curiosity.

Obviously, what has been described as "the rise of the horizontal fellowship" hasn't yet become horizontal! What was meant to be an "out-reach" has largely remained a "down-reach." What is the remedy?

The answer which suggests itself is the encouragement of those adventures and experiments in ecumenism at the local level — in short, the widening of the circle of those concerned for and with Christian unity, and particularly so at the place and circumstances in which Christians already live and worship. Unfortunately, like most readily recognisable solutions, this one is easier to recognise than apply. The reason for this is what now concerns us as:

(2) Our Greatest Difficulty

The very place at which the ecumenical spirit and relationship needs to be manifested is the most difficult. There are various reasons for this, and some of them ought to be looked at closely.

(a) One is the involvement of individuals in the commitments and obligations their own local church lays, and rightly so, upon them.

To most of us "the Church" really means the place where we worship, the people we meet there and the responsibilities that church calls forth from us. The entrance of another and often competing loyalty, with its demands for time, attention and service could, unless these are properly related to the other, cause division, confusion, and in certain circumstances, ineffectiveness. It ought not to be, but none the less it sometimes is, that "ecumaniacs" are not notably loyal in their support of, and even attendance at, their local fellowship.

(b) A step further in this same line of reasoning is the very real sense of appreciation and pride many church people have in the history and distinctive position of their own particular denomination.

Again, this is quite understandable, and in most cases highly commendable, but no one will deny that, as a factor in itself, it does not readily make for ease in ecumenical relationships. Even the most Christian of Union advocates are apt to become upset and difficult if practices dear to them and doctrines peculiar to their fellowship seem to be under close scrutiny, let alone criticism. One of the peculiar things about ecumenical conversations seems to be the ability they have to put one on the defensive even about things and ideas of what, in other circles, you have yourself been critical!

(c) Closely associated with the above reason is our mistrust and intolerance of that which is strange, new and difficult.

Even in these days of wide ecumenical relationships and readily available material it is amazing and deplorable how great is our ignorance of each other's faith and practices. This can only be explained fully by at least recognising some antagonism (we hope unconscious) to what is "not of our way." Let it be confessed with honesty that, like the disciples of old, we are all too ready

to say, "Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy Name, and he followed not us and we forbade him, because he followed us not."

(d) Lastly, we may mention the natural and understandable shyness and reticence many people have to mingle freely and on intimate terms with those who in many ways may be very different from them.

If it be true that people gravitate to those most like and congenial to them in other spheres of human activity, we ought not to be unduly surprised if the same is true of them in religious associations. And into this assessment must be taken many other factors, such as age, sex, occupation, sport, etc., all of which have a good deal of influence (perhaps more than we recognise) in deciding to whom we give ourselves in friendship and co-operation.

So much, then, for Our Greatest Difficulty, i.e., just the art of getting on together and the reasons for it. Now we must look at

(3) Really Getting Down to the Grass Roots

"Grass roots" is of course an Americanism, which means applying anything at the lowest level, i.e., the place where the rank and file are. We are interested in this study of putting ecumenics into practice at these "grass roots." There are two ways in which we can do this:

(a) From below upwards.

This is strictly limited in its effectiveness, and consists in getting more people interested in and attending top-level ecumenical gatherings, conferences, camps, etc. Because only a certain number can go, or have the ability to go, this method, while it should be advanced to the widest possible extent, must always fall short of the desired result. Not everyone can go, or is fitted to go, to a W.C.C. conference, or even to a local W.C.C. gathering, yet they may be vitally interested in Christian unity.

(b) From above downwards, and especially outwards.

This would involve exploring and experimenting in ecumenical relationships on a very wide local basis. Some things which have been attempted may be briefly enumerated here:

- I. United social fellowship within the parish. A local church entertaining other local churches in a programme of "getting to know the Christian folk in our area."
- II. Combined study groups of those interested, meeting regularly to discuss some ecumenical publication suited for this particular purpose.
- III. Joint youth activities, such as camping together over a long weekend, united Bible classes

over a period, regular Youth Fellowships.

- IV. Meeting of all office-bearers in area for session on My Church, and How It Works; i.e., study of local church polity.
- V. Ladies' groups to act in co-operation for either devotional fellowship, or to undertake some united project of missionary or ecumenical nature.
- VI. Prayer meetings of joint membership and participation. These might be worked in several sections of the district on the cottage prayer meeting basis.
- VII. Sharing in worship. Not just the exchange of pulpits, but the exchange of portions of the congregations, i.e., a part of one congregation visiting and worshipping with another congregation on selected occasions.
- VIII. Joint approach to appeals such as Remembrance Bowl, Inter-Church Aid, World Youth Project, etc., in which the whole local area could work together in canvass, etc.
- IX. United Evangelism in survey of district and census of church affiliations, plus invitations to "attend church" and "send children to Sunday School."
- X. Featuring World Wide Communion Day in local churches, with an after-church fellowship hour and emphasis on the W.C.C. and its work.

The aim of all these suggestions (all of which have been tried in the area where the writer of this paper was stationed) is to give opportunity for getting to know each other, and thus to appreciate each other as fellow-Christians working for the one end of the advancement of Christ's Church in the whole world.

The words of Dr. Visser't Hooft may fittingly close the study as others of his appropriately opened it:

"We need a real ground-swell of passionate conviction that the Churches are called to demonstrate in a divided world that Christ overcomes all human division and gathers his people into one from the ends of the earth. The World Council is only an instrument to be used by the Churches for this purpose. Let us pray to Almighty God that it may truly be used for the building up of the One Holy Church."

Questions

1. "Refugees, who are not sure where they are going, block the roads in front of the advancing army. The better part is to pay the price of knowing what is involved . . . and to act in the spirit of the long line of Christian pioneers who have said: 'We have dared, and God has justified our dare.'"

Do you think the time has yet come to stop talking and do something about unity, or do you think we ought to wait till the issues are clearer?

2. "The parish, it needs no saying, is the proving ground of all theories, the graveyard of most ideas, the maternity ward of the Church of Tomorrow."

Discuss this in the light of ecumenism at the local level.

News of British Churches

During recent weeks some concern has been felt regarding the safety of the missionaries and their families in Nyasaland. The Mission is staffed by six missionaries, with 34 evangelists. Latest reports speak of troubles in the area, but no serious outbreak in the Mission. Missionary children are being escorted to school and no missionary personnel have been involved as yet in any disorders.

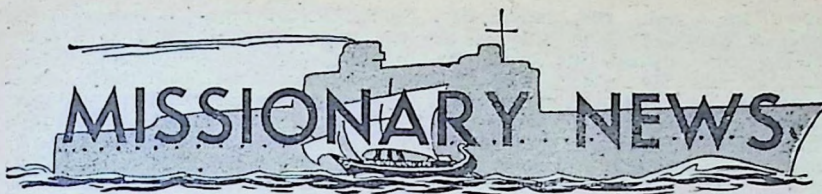
Women's Conventions have been held at Largs (for Scottish women) and at Swanwick (for women from churches in England and Wales). Scottish women heard lectures by Mrs. Mechie (Church of Scotland), Mrs. Ikomi (British Cameroons), and Mrs. Williamson (formerly of Edinburgh).

At Swanwick the chief speakers were Mrs. Charles (Nottingham), Miss Littler (Hartlepool), and Mrs. E. Smith (Birmingham).

The Free Church Congress, regarded as the "Free Church Parliament," has been held at Southend-on-Sea, and was attended by representatives of our churches. The new Moderator is a Methodist, and in his address from the chair he spoke of Churchmanship and Freedom. No progress could be reported on the question of Free Church unity. Member Churches have not yet appointed their delegates to a Commission. Negotiations have been conducted between representatives of the Free Church Federal Council and the Minister of Education regarding the demands which are being made by Anglicans and Roman Catholics for an increase in the grants paid for new schools, and for improving existing schools. Free Church opinion is being mobilised to counteract the pressure which it is felt is being put on the Minister of Education.

Moseley Road church, Birmingham, is making special efforts to meet the needs of a growing colored population in the vicinity of the chapel. A Jamaican service was recently held, conducted by two Jamaican preachers who are members of the church.

Overdale College students held their usual Easter vacation Crusade. This year a team of men and women conducted a mission at Evington Road, Leicester.—G. J. Hammond.



(Notes supplied by A. Anderson,
Sec. F.M. Board).

Current Notes

Harold Finger, who returned home to his family at the end of February, has had a period of rest, and then some visiting of churches in Queensland. At the end of April he left his home State to come to Adelaide for discussions with the Board, report progress, and advise concerning the immediate future of the work in New Guinea. The things discussed by Mr. Finger and the Board will be along the mind of the N.G. Field.

During his period in S.A., visits will be paid to some of the churches. On the return journey a period will be spent in Victoria, including the Brighton Centenary, and the final weeks before the Annual Offering will be spent in N.S.W.

After a further break it is anticipated that Mr. and Mrs. Finger will undertake work in one of our home churches.

Their splendid contribution to the work in the New Hebrides, and the pioneering work carried out in New Guinea have earned for these workers an honored place in the brotherhood.

Jim Dow, having helped considerably in the building projects in New Guinea, is planned to leave Tung on May 27, in time to contact the Bulolo, which is due to sail from Madang on June 3. This will have meant over eight months away from Australia. His friends on the Field are going to miss his cheery companionship and the hard work put in to have buildings ready on time to commence the work. He, too, has been a pioneer in the real sense, and has made considerable financial sacrifice in devoting this time to the Mission.

New Guinea Transceiver

We can report that, after the missionaries had waited many months for this unit to arrive, it finally did arrive, and with joy and anticipation it was set up for service. Unfortunately some defect developed, and in the words of Mr. Beale, "The transceiver arrived. It operated for one hour and gave up the ghost. The defect may only be slight, but it means sending the unit back for check-up." This unit has been supplied by the C.M.S. groups in S.A.

As previously reported, an engine and generator were sent forward to enable the transceiver batteries to be charged, and water to be pumped up from the valley. Again, unfortunately, the equipment arrived safely but had to be carried inland, and the bearers had to cross several streams. Commenting on this, Mr. Beale adds, "A log bridge broke on the way in, and the carriers and the engine went into the water. I was able to fix up the engine, but the generator refused to go and had to be sent back to Madang for repairs. Once we have it operating we can be reached by telegram."

Story of an Indian Lepers

Leprosy has never really worried us. We have assurance, from those who know the disease, that we have little chance of catching it. We have many lepers who come to the dispensary at Bhigwan.

Today the children came running in to say that there was a very sick bal outside. Though she was dressed in a ragged sari, she was the picture that comes to mind of the little shawl-draped old lady, fearfully peering up and down a busy street, wondering how she would cross.

Our little old lady was tearful. I noticed she unconsciously hid her hands. The fingers had become contracted till they formed little squared ends to her thinning arms as the nerve-starved tendons shrank. Her finger nails and bones stuck out past the point where flesh used to be. She was a leper.

What caused us so much alarm was that this was the first case we had had that we had known before there were signs of leprosy in her body. That is, here was someone who in the time we have been in India had seemed to be non-leprous, and now was in the state of advanced leprosy.

We are beginning treatment, and we will attempt to arrest the disease in the point that it has now reached. We cannot give her back her fingers or her flattened nose, but we can by God's grace prevent its advance further. — Bruce and Billie Jean Munro.

THE MINISTRIES OF OUR



**THE CITY OF THE
"TOP END"**

Mrs. R. Vincent, Darwin.

Not so long ago Darwin was proclaimed a city. Perhaps it is the beginning of a new phase in the colorful life of this port at the "top end" of the Northern Territory.

Darwin is unique. Although it has something in common with Canberra, in that a big proportion of its population consists of public servants, in other ways it is quite different.

This tropical city has an interesting and varied life of its own for those who care to look, and who do not become wholly immersed in the suburban life not unlike that of the cities "down South."

Race and Color

No other community in Australia has such a variety of racial groupings. Perhaps no other community will face such problems in the future because of these racial ingredients.

The Chinese form a big proportion of the permanent merchants and shop-

keepers of the city. They are an intelligent and highly respected group, but only a small proportion have Christian affiliations. Quite recently, with exciting colorful oriental celebrations, the Chinese joss house was reopened, for the first time since it was bombed out during the war. It was a sobering thought to realise heathen idols were being set up, to become the worship centre for an influential section of the community.

The numerous part-colored group is one that has peculiar problems. Under Northern Territory law, anyone with any white blood has equal citizenship with whites. They are not regarded as natives. The part-coloreds, of course, vary tremendously — from the "little yellow baby" found in a native camp, living as a native, to the smartly dressed competent typist working in a Government office. Missions of various denominations work among the neglected and abandoned children of this group. However, I have not observed any significant participation by the adult part-coloreds in the church life of the community. (please turn leaf)

The full-blood aborigines, extremely dark skinned, are a familiar part of the life of the city. Many of them were drawn away from their tribal grounds during the war. They tasted the doubtful delights of civilisation around the Army camps. Now they are town dwellers, living in a Government settlement, with a slight veneer of civilisation covering primitive instincts and superstitions — not yet assimilated into the white man's way of life, but rapidly losing their native dignity and skills. The new generation coming on causes thinking Christians concern. What will be their role in society in the future?

United Church in Action

The church life here has also been very interesting. A few years ago the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches decided to join together as a United Church in North Australia. The constitution is based on that of the United Church of Canada. The Church Court has the responsibility for the spiritual oversight of the Church, and the Committee of Management is concerned with the organisation and business arrangements.

Communion is celebrated twice a month, and an open invitation is extended to all believers to participate. The active workers of the church are

drawn from many Christian bodies. Recently the town and suburbs of Darwin were divided into twenty-six districts, and lay leaders were appointed to have the oversight of each district. Their duties include regular visitation of all members and adherents in that area, and contact of newcomers. Their reports to the two ministers help them to do essential visitation. Among those selected as lay leaders were Baptists, Church of Christ and Plymouth Brethren.

Sunday School work is well organised and the school is growing rapidly — the latest record attendance was 247. A Sunday School at Nightcliffe, seven miles away, was opened recently. Land has also been selected for other suburban activities.

Girls' and Boys' Clubs are run for children from eight to twelve years. A "Teenagers' Club" caters for the 13 to 16 age group and a Young People's Fellowship for those over that age.

A children's choir is used in the Sunday morning service, and a senior choir at night.

The church also runs a hostel for High School children forced to board away from home. There they may live under Christian guidance and control.

Adjacent to the church building is

a buffet (built for the troops during the war), which is used as a community centre, and is staffed by voluntary workers from the church. It is open every week night from 7.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. Many single young people in Darwin, who live in big Government Hostels, are glad of a spot, other than an hotel, where they can meet friends, play games, read, etc. Cool drinks and confectionery are sold. Every Sunday night a cup of tea is served there after the evening service, for any who wish to stay and have fellowship together.

From our first Sunday in Darwin, we, as a family, have been made to feel at home and among friends. We value greatly the richness of the Christian fellowship that has been offered to us.

The organisation of the United Church is not perfect by any means. It has the worries and difficulties that beset all churches. But it is trying to tackle a very difficult situation with imagination and courage. The shifting population of Darwin — many come here for a two or three year term — would make it very difficult for a number of denominations to establish effective witnesses. The United Church is a valuable example of Christian co-operation, and we are glad to be having the opportunity of sharing in its fellowship.

Hundredth Anniversary of Protestantism in Japan

On May 2, 1859, the first Protestant missionary arrived in Japan. As the centennial observance of this historic event gets under way a host of special evangelistic activities has been announced.

Dr. Bob Pierce and team will conduct the Osaka Crusade in the Festival Hall of Japan's second largest city during the month of May. Unprecedented co-operation by more than 400 churches, 1,700 registered trained counsellors, and more than 2,000 prayer groups across the nation gives promise of great things.

The Fukuoka Crusade, Sept. 16 to Oct. 4, is to be held in the 6,500 seat Sports Arena; the Crusade has the backing of all of the city's 38 churches, who have invited Evangelist Dave Morken, Far Eastern representative of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, as speaker. From Fukuoka, Mr. Morken will conduct five other Crusades in major cities.

The Japan Protestant Centennial Committee is sponsoring a series of missionary and pastors' conferences with Dr. Oswald J. Smith.

Evangelist Koji Honda and other Japanese evangelists are planning campaigns.

Evangelist John Rhoads, of the Navigators, is scheduled for six city-

wide Crusades in the Western part of Japan.

Dr. Fred Jarvis will hold campaigns in Ycnago, Matsuyama, etc.

The World Literature Crusade has given \$10,000 to inaugurate the second Every Home Crusade, and is seeking to place tracts in half of the homes of Japan during the centennial year.

Life Messenger, The Bible Meditation League, Dr. Norman Harrison,

John R. Rice, and others, are also contributing generous sums for literature for the centennial.

Evangelist Greg Tingson, from the Philippines, as well as Dr. Timothy Dzaio, of Indonesia, will be coming to Japan also during this year.

In 1956, the New Life League, in co-operation with pastors of all evangelical faiths, launched a 3-year, 100,000 soul Crusade which is culminating in the centennial year. Already 330 requests from 110 cities for evangelistic meetings have been received. The League sponsored a Kick-Off Rally at Tokyo Chapel Centre on May 1, where missionaries and pastors of all groups gathered for a Centennial Evangelism Conference, followed by a night of prayer, ending on May 2, the date of the arrival of the first Protestant missionary in Japan a hundred years ago.

During the first 100 years of Protestant activity in Japan, the total efforts of the Christian Church have resulted in bringing less than one-half of one per cent of the population to a Christian profession. This startling fact has doubtless spurred the various groups to greater unity of endeavor and more prayer concern than at any other time in recent years.—Far East News Service.





Theme for the Week:
**"FATHER, SON, HOLY
 SPIRIT"**

Sunday, May 24

Psalm 103: 1-13.

Thought Text: "Like as a father pitieth his children . . ." (v. 13).

This is one of those tenderly revealing insights into the nature of God which help to make the Psalms immortal. Jane Stoddart has told how Dr. R. W. Dale, famous Birmingham preacher towards the end of last century, wrote while recovering from a serious illness in 1892: "Years ago, when death came to me first, and took a child, the anguish was great; watching her while she lay dying, I learnt for the first time what is meant by the words, 'Like as a father pitieth his children.' Only so could I be taught the pity of God. And I learnt, too, at the same time what God must feel at the loss of his children."

Does God seem as near to me as that today?

Heavenly Father, keep me from ever doubting the fulness of thy love and keeping care. Help me to share thy concern for the lost and needy. Amen.

Monday, May 25

Psalm 103: 13-22.

Thought Text: "He knows what we are made of" (v. 14, Moffatt).

Despite all man's vaunted greatness, the Psalmist is not impressed. He would be even less impressed today, when the "thing" that man has fashioned threatens to annihilate the world. "He blooms like a flower in the meadow," says the Psalmist soberly, "at the breath of a breeze it is gone."

Man's only real hope of immortality lies in the God who made him and understands him, and whose love and loyalty never fail. Working in and through our lives, he can do the impossible, even with the most unpromising material. Only he knows

WHEN SOARS the SOUL

**A Week of Daily Devotions, Based on Readings
 Suggested by the "Book of Family Worship"**

what we are made of — and what we can become!

O God, we thank thee for the patient understanding with which thou hast so often guided us through our mistakes and fears. Give us, in our dealings with others, a love like thine — "always hopeful, always patient." Amen.

Tuesday, May 26

Psalm 139: 1-12, 23-24.

Thought Text: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me" (v. 1).

It is a staggering claim — that the infinite Creator should be probably concerned about the details of our little lives. But the Psalmist believed (as Moffatt translates v. 3) that "I am scanned by thee, and all my life to thee lies open." The thought can be distorted, until all that we can see is some giant Accusing Eye focussed on our littleness. The Psalmist thought of him rather as the Surgeon of the soul, who not only detects, but deals with, the hidden source of evil in our lives.

Surely there is hope for us in the fact that the only One who knows us fully — better than we know ourselves — is a God of justice and love.

May I live this day, O God, aware of thy guiding eye upon me. Amen.

Wednesday, May 27

Jeremiah 2: 1-13.

Thought Text: "I remember the devotion of your youth" (v. 2, R.S.V.).

Israel had fallen far from its promising beginning, but in the midst of his judgment on a people who had "changed their Glory for a useless thing" (v. 11), God still recalled the high hopes, the pure devotion of earlier days.

Words like these remind us of William Cowper's plaintive query: "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul-refreshing view of Jesus and his Word?"

Are we in danger of making a poor finish after a good beginning?

Lord, when I am tempted to settle for the easy compromises of time, keep alive in me the memory of the vows I once made to thee — and meant! Amen.

Thursday, May 28

Jeremiah 3: 19-24.

Thought Text: "I would treat you like a son" (v. 19, Moffatt).

It has been pointed out by J. P. Hyatt that the pronoun "you" in this verse is feminine in Hebrew, so that Israel is here thought of as a daughter

to whom God wished to give an inheritance like that of sons, contrary to normal Hebrew practice.

In a similar way, Paul later rejoiced even more in the extension of God's grace to Gentiles. "You really are his sons," he wrote to the Galatians, "not servants any longer, but sons!" He assured the Romans that such a relationship meant that there is no limit to what God is eager to do with and for those who are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ!"

Father, may I do nothing this day to besmirch the name I wear as thy son. Amen.

Friday, May 29

Mark 1: 6-11.

Thought Text: "There cometh one mightier than I" (v. 7).

The Baptist never wavered from that testimony. It was more than humility, though that was typical of the man who, as William Barclay says, "asked nothing for himself, but everything for Christ." Coupled with that humility was his conviction that God's promised One would come; God would not fail.

So, with an insight born from both conviction and humility, he could cry to seeking men, "Behold the Lamb of God!", when Jesus passed by.

"All true greatness," comments Halford Luccock, "consists in pointing to Someone beyond," and he bids us ask ourselves, "Do we ever remind people of Jesus?"

Bless thy servants, O Lord, around the world, who serve thee, asking no higher reward than that they should point some seeking souls to thee. Amen.

Saturday, May 30

Matthew 16: 13-20.

Thought Text: "Who do you say that I am?" (v. 15, R.S.V.).

What other men think or say about him may be a spur or a challenge to our own thinking, but the crucial question will always be, "What think ye of Christ?"

He wants something more from men than the casual guesses of an inherited faith. These men had lived with him, talked with him, watched him at work. They knew something about him; the big question was: had they really discovered him? Have we, who know so much more than they about him, really discovered him for ourselves?

Lord, I long to know thee better day by day, but what I DO know make me ready to share at every opportunity. Amen.

HERE AND THERE

A telegram received on May 4 from F. H. Griffiths, minister of the church at Kalgoorlie, W.A., reports: "Bond-Fitch mission entering 4th week; 25 decisions. Interest growing, prayers appreciated."

Melbourne choristers are asked to note that practices of the Victorian Churches of Christ Choral Society will be held in future at the Churches of Christ Centre, 217 Lonsdale-st., commencing on Thurs., May 21, at 8 p.m., and fortnightly thereafter. New members will be welcome.

Amazing scenes have been reported from the Graham Crusade in Sydney, which concluded on Sun., May 10. After only 17 of the scheduled 26 meetings, the total number of decisions had reached 35,137, which exceeded the total number of decisions of the twelve weeks' London Crusade. Three meetings later (up to and including May 3) the total had risen to 43,469. The Crusade's estimated cost had been covered by offerings received up to May 2, and it was decided that remaining offerings would be used to finance a £25,000 Australian Crusade film.

The chapel at Moreland, Vic., was packed for all services of May 3, the 50th anniversary of the church. The day commenced with an early morning prayer session. At 11 a.m., 300 were present, and E. J. Miles (former minister) addressed the church. An afternoon musicale was arranged by the Central C.M.S., presided over by J. Turner, B.A. (former minister). Almost 200 attended the fellowship tea, at which W. Gale (former minister) and several other visitors spoke of their experiences in the work of their home church. The first secretary of 50 years ago (J. Holloway), was present and cut the birthday cake, also speaking of the time when the land was purchased and the building commenced. Photos of various groups were on display in the hall, bringing back happy memories to all. R. V. Amos was guest speaker at the evening service. After-church fellowship brought to an end a day of thanksgiving, reunion and inspirational fellowship.

The church at Rockdale, N.S.W., announces that C. J. Mackenzie, minister at Hamilton, N.S.W., has accepted a call to the ministry at Rockdale.

One of the largest Y.M.C.A. buildings in the Middle East will be erected in Nazareth. This is one of 168 capital development projects in

38 countries now being undertaken by the Buildings for Brotherhood campaign, sponsored by the International Committee of Y.M.C.A.'s of the United States and Canada, in co-operation with national movements.

Latest ventures in the Christian Centre Campaign among our W.A. churches have included a visit by 30 brethren to all metropolitan churches on April 5, followed by home visitation since, urging all to share in establishing the Centre. The May issue of "The Western Christian" reports that "of the £45,000 required to be in sight to authorise calling tenders, the total reported on April 25 was £29,650 in cash and commitments."

Visit of Churchmen to Russia and China

In view of the announcement made by Dr. A. H. Wood through the Melbourne Press, that Principal E. L. Williams would join a delegation of churchmen to visit churches in Russia and China, the Vic.-Tas. Social Service Department desires our churches to have some information

At the Conference of Vic.-Tas. churches held in April, 1958, a motion sponsored by the Department in co-operation with the Executive was carried, as follows:

"This Conference authorises the Conference Executive, if and when the opportunity offers, to co-operate with the appropriate committees in other Churches in arranging

The Methodist Church in Finland is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The Finnish Church has 3,200 members, 25 ordained ministers and 30 congregations.

Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Randall were honored at a church tea and farewell evening on the conclusion of their ministry at Springvale, Vic., on April 11. The church expressed sincere appreciation for the faithful and devoted service given so freely by both Mr. and Mrs. Randall. Presentations were made from the church and auxiliaries.

"We must admit that so far we have achieved very little in the field of atheist propaganda," is the conclusion of a Communist youth leader reporting to the third Congress of the Czech Youth Union. Published in the Czech paper, Mlada Fronta, the report expresses regret that most students in Czechoslovakia still cling obstinately to their religious conviction, showing a regrettable "bourgeois mentality" and being indifferent toward politics. — E.P.S., Geneva.

reciprocal visits between Christians in Australia and those in other countries, particularly Eastern Europe and China."

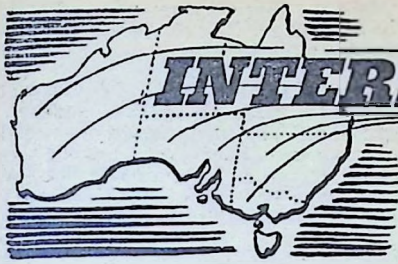
An invitation was received by Dr. Wood (of the Methodist Church) from the Orthodox and Baptist Churches in Russia and the Church in China, for a delegation to visit the two countries. As far as our Social Service Department is concerned, the matter is only in the planning stage. On April 17, the Secretary, W. T. Atkin, wrote to Dr. Wood, as follows:

"My Committee is exploring ways and means of making it possible for one representative from our churches to join the delegation. We are very keen that those forming the delegation should be men of outstanding calibre and generally acceptable to their respective Churches. We have a man in mind, but before plans are finalised, will submit recommendations to our Conference Executive."

Principal E. L. Williams, who has been invited by the Social Service Committee to consider joining the delegation, unofficially spoke to Dr. Wood regarding the time factor and other matters, but has not yet accepted the invitation. It is hoped, however, that if everything is in order from the point of view of the Social Service Department, College of the Bible, Conference Executive and Mr. Williams, that it will be possible for him to represent our churches in such a delegation.—W. T. Atkin, Secretary, Churches of Christ Department of Social Service.



Principal E. L. Williams.



INTERSTATE CHURCH NEWS

Marriage

Joan Winstanly to Kenneth Munday, Springvale, Vic.

Jean Whale to Hector Douglas, Drumcondra, Vic.

school hall; it is hoped an early start will be made. Consideration is also being given to buying radio time on one of the local stations. Preacher is giving helpful studies at Wednesday evening meetings.

Discipleship

Stan Bowers, Jennifer King, North Williamstown, Vic.

Lynette and Terrence Albrecht, Leo Higgins, Loxton, S.A.

Alison Guest, Graeme Mason, John Goldsworthy, Brian Bowering, Mile End, S.A.

Mrs. Ambler, Mrs. Thompson, Helen Carnaby, Pam Wheatland, Margaret Fuss, Edwardstown, S.A.

Miss A. Mansfield, Maryborough, Qld.

R. Walmsley, Mr. and Mrs. J. Bowron, Beth, Shirley and Grace Bowron, Mrs. G. Bowron, Mrs. N. Willis, Mrs. G. Weedon, Margaret-st., Launceston, Tas.

Pat Maskill, Robert Potter, Hornsby, N.S.W.

Mrs. Williamson, Fremantle, W.A.

Geoffrey Bird, David Allen, Brian Sneddon, Mark Scott, Howard Chandler, Ronald Thompson, Ian Bourne, Roger Russell, Stephen Manallack, Margaret Hunter, Dawn Miller, Boronia, Vic.

W. Martin, Mrs. Travill, Peter Vines, Colin James, Glen Salman, Gail Fletcher, Eileen Blythe, Mr. Thomas, Northcote, Vic.

Glenda Harris, Mrs. L. McDonald, Warragul, Vic.

Ken Tregloan, K. Staton, Susan Bennett, Cheryl Gavin, Georgetown, N.S.W.

Perry and John Clayton, Mrs. Clayton, G. Douglas, Mrs. Hughes, Springvale, Vic.

Mrs. L. Berry, Eric Clarke, Hilton Bourke, Dan Maiden, Canberra, A.C.T.

Pat Saywell, Hurstbridge, Vic.

Membership

Mr. Twose, from Burnley; Mrs. Twose, to Hawthorn, Vic.

Mrs. Laurie, from Alma to Henley Beach, S.A.

Mr. and Mrs. Banks, from Colonel Light Gardens to Mile End, S.A.

AUST. CAPITAL TERRITORY

Canberra (G. R. Stirling, B.A.).—Church supported meeting of Dr. Graham at Manuka Oval on April 27, and relays from Sydney on succeeding nights. Decisions referred to church number 32, including some affirmations of faith and restorations. Membership training classes for Y.P. are being organised by minister. On May 3 church youth organisations paraded at morning service, total attendance being 180, with 112 present in evening, when a lady and three men were baptised. 128 communed during day.

TASMANIA

Margaret-st., Launceston (C. J. Robinson).—During April there were marked increases at all services, and nine decisions. C.M.S. meetings were well attended. Men are planning to travel to Devonport and conduct services there in near future. Av. B.S. attendance for April was 101, with two new scholars enrolled. Annual meeting of teachers decided to grade school into inter. and junior divisions, with a separate supt. over each division, senior supt. to have oversight of whole school. On 7th, C.W.F. entertained 45 ladies from the City Mission; speaker was Miss Bourn, to whom a quantity of clothing was given for use of mission. Ladies held business and devotional meeting on 22nd, when Mrs. J. Sykes was speaker. Y.W.F. members had profitable evening on 6th, when guest speaker was most helpful on *How to Prepare and Present a Devotional Address*. Other meeting for April was a progressive night. C.Y.F. members have readily entered into planned devotional exercises each week to fit themselves for more active parts in church services. Appeal has been made to young folk in 13-15 age group to form new Inter. Society. I.C.E. meetings have been conducted mainly by an older group of teenagers, who will transfer their interests to C.Y.F. when new group is formed. Church officers plan to extend present chapel vestries and

QUEENSLAND

Maryborough (S. W. Vanham).—At recent annual meeting, A. Popp and H. Oakley were re-elected sec. and treas. Keen discussion centred on erection of new chapel. Church social was enjoyed on April 14; C.Y.F. arranged programme and C.W.F. served supper. Parents and children enjoyed combined picnic on 18th, when 120 children from Maryborough and Baddow eagerly joined in all activities. C.Y.F. paraded at gospel service on 19th, during which congregation witnessed baptism of a C.Y.F. member.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Fremantle.—S. G. Taylor has been appointed to pastoral work, and G. E. C. Hughes as preacher for evening services while church is without minister. Av. attendances for April were: a.m., 94; p.m., 70; breaking bread, 94. Official appointments for coming year: elders, G. E. C. Hughes, S. G. Taylor, A. Johnson; deacons, S. R. Thomson (sec.), C. W. Sagers (treas.), W. Robartson, E. Whelan, D. Cressie, D. A. Plenty, A. H. Coleman, F. Verco. B.S. attendance has reached 160, and training session has been introduced in monthly teachers' meeting. Training class has also been commenced for those assisting in morning services and as auxiliary leaders, first study being *Reading the Word of God*. Church has accepted challenge of Graham Crusade, with large number attending counselling classes. Buses have been booked for each meeting of Crusade. Visiting speakers during month included Messrs. Wesley, Morris (Christian Centre deputationists), Edwards and Smith. Joy Robartson is home after several months' nursing in Melbourne. Tennis club won B grade shield in church comp., defeating Cottesloe.

Bassendean (J. Sutton).—K. Green (Graham Crusade Team) was morning speaker on May 3, when 85 attended. Marion Kelly, young native girl from Carnarvon Mission, who is in the R.P.H. Shenton Park Annex, needs our prayers and personal visitations. Sis. Lawson is holidaying in