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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN



Oh, what a difference a family camp makes in the life of a church. Dawson Street, Ballarat, Vic's camp for young couples attracted over 60 people—story page 3

**Oh, What a Difference a
Tropical Window Makes
to a Small Church**



*How Tarpeena, SA, celebrated 100 years
of overseas mission—story page 3*

**Oh, What a Difference a
Tropical Cyclone Makes
to a Small Window**



*How Cyclone Betsy damaged a Banmatmat
Bible College classroom—story page 13*



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World Council of Churches

A New Statement on Unity

The WCC Seventh Assembly adopted this statement on "The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling"

The purpose of God according to Holy Scripture is to gather the whole of creation under the Lordship of Christ Jesus in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all are brought into communion with God (Ephesians 1).

The church is the foretaste of this communion with God and with one another. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit enable the one church to live as sign of the reign of God and servant of the reconciliation with God, promised and provided for the whole creation.

The purpose of the church is to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom.

The calling of the church is to proclaim reconciliation and to provide healing, to overcome divisions based on race, gender, age, culture, colour and to bring all people into communion with God.

Because of sin and the misunderstanding of the diverse gifts of the Spirit, the churches are painfully divided within themselves and among each other. Their scandalous divisions damage the credibility of their witness to the world in worship and service. Moreover, they contradict not only the church's witness but also its very nature.

We acknowledge with gratitude to God that in the ecumenical movement the churches walk together in mutual understanding, theological convergences, common suffering and common prayer, shared witness and service, and they draw close to one another.

This has allowed them to recognise a certain degree of communion already existing between them. This is indeed the fruit of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of all who believe in Christ Jesus and who struggle for visible unity now.

Nevertheless, churches have failed to draw the consequences for their life from

the degree of communion they have already experienced and the agreements already achieved. They have remained satisfied to co-exist in division.

The unity of the church to which we are called is a Koinonia, given and expressed in—

- the common confession of the apostolic faith;

- a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship;

- a common life in which members and ministries are mutually recognised and reconciled;

- a common mission witnessing to all people to the gospel of God's grace and serving the whole of creation.

The goal of the search for full communion is realised when all the churches are able to recognise in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness.

This full communion will be expressed on the local and the universal levels through conciliar forms of life and action. In such communion churches are bound in all aspects of their life together at all levels in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action.

Diversities which are rooted in theological traditions, various cultural, ethnic or historical contexts are integral to the nature of communion; yet there are limits to diversity.

Diversity is illegitimate when, for instance, it makes impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8); salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scripture and preached by the apostolic community.

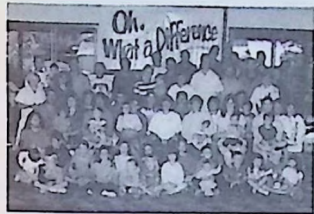
In communion diversities are brought together in harmony as gifts of the Holy Spirit, contributing to the richness and fullness of the church of God.



[Continued on page 3]

Family Camp

Strength of church found in its families



On the last weekend in February a family camp was held for the couples at the Dawson Street, Ballarat, Vic, church. It was restricted to young couples with no children or with children under 11 years deliberately—to create an atmosphere where people could share openly about their relationships with each other and their fears in bringing up children in today's society.

Over 60 attended, showing that the strength of this fast-growing church is found in its families. At the same time there is a strong recognition for the other groups as well. This year we hope to see also a camp for teenagers, for parents with teenage children and for singles.

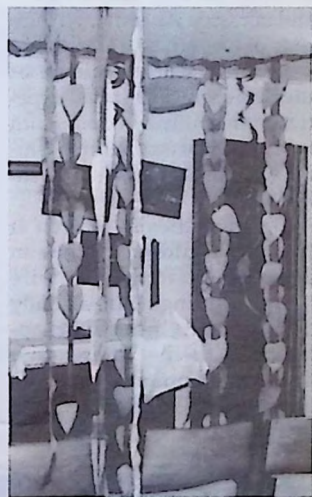
Stephen Templeton, Dawson Street senior minister, believes that the future strength of the church will come from establishing each group with its own identity.

Tropical Tarpeena

How a small church celebrated 100 years of overseas mission

Tarpeena, SA, church is a very special church. The original building was burnt to the ground in the Ash Wednesday fires and was rebuilt at the request of the community at Tarpeena as it was and still is the only church there.

It is a small congregation of three families who meet on the first and third Sunday of the month. On the second and fourth Sundays the Anglican church worships in the building. There are special services during the year, for example Sunday School services and carol services in which the whole community of Tarpeena and visitors from Mount Gambier join in worship.



Peter Munn, elder of the Tarpeena Church of Christ, spent time in New Guinea on two separate occasions working for the Uniting Church as a volunteer (to complete his Order of St Stephen). His wife Raelene joined him for a four-week holiday on the second of these occasions.

Raelene and Peter work together in the Sunday School and thought of an unusual way to celebrate the 100 years of overseas mission. Lessons centred on the theme of mission, and the church was decorated by the children in a tropical theme.

They made streamers with leaves attached to represent hanging vines, snakes made of

cardboard hung around the room and Raelene painted the windows (with some help from her daughter Hannah) showing tropical palms and banana trees.

There were even real live orchids to give colour and complete the tropical illusion. Peter and Raelene loaned some of their collected artifacts to add authenticity.

The overall effect was extraordinary, it was just like worshipping in a tropical atmosphere.

The children of Tarpeena will remember the lessons taught while celebrating 100 years of dedicated overseas mission by Churches of Christ missionaries.

Many things have been done and many remain to be done on the way towards the realisation of full communion.

Churches have reached agreements in bilateral and multilateral dialogues which are already bearing fruit, reviewing their liturgical and spiritual life and their theology. In taking specific steps together the churches express and encourage the enrichment and renewal of Christian life, as they learn from one another, work together for justice and peace and care together for God's creation. The challenge at this moment in the ecumenical

movement as a reconciling and renewing movement towards full visible unity is for the Seventh Assembly of the WCC to call all churches—

- to recognise each other's baptism on the basis of the BEM document;
- to move towards the recognition of the apostolic faith as expressed through the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the life and witness of one another;
- on the basis of convergence in faith in baptism, eucharist and ministry to consider, wherever appropriate, forms of eucharistic hospitality; we gladly

acknowledge that some who do not observe these rites share in the spiritual experience of life in Christ;

- to move towards a mutual recognition of ministries;
- to endeavour in word and deed to give common witness to the gospel as a whole;
- to recommit themselves to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, linking more closely the search for sacramental communion of the church with the struggles for justice and peace;
- to help parishes and communities express in appropriate ways locally the degree of

communion that already exists.

The Holy Spirit as the promoter of *koinonia* (2 Corinthians 13:13) gives to those who are still divided the thirst and hunger for full communion. We remain restless until we grow together according to the wish and prayer of Christ that those who believe in him may be one. (John 17:21)

In the process of praying, working and struggling for unity, the Holy Spirit comforts us in pain, disturbs us when we are satisfied to remain in our division, leads us to repentance and grants us joy when our communion flourishes.

Farewell and Welcome

One ministry ends and another begins at Asquith

On 16 February the Asquith, NSW, church farewelled its long-serving minister, Geoff Hall. Geoff first came to Asquith with his wife Lorraine, and three children (David, Bronwyn and Lindsay) in February 1983. In the course of this nine-year ministry Geoff became the longest-serving minister of the church's 50-year history. A large number of present and past members gathered for a special dinner to farewell the family.

During the course of the proceedings, a number of church

leaders and members expressed their appreciation for the work that Geoff and his family have done. Geoff took the opportunity to thank the church members for their support, encouragement and prayers. He also reflected on the aim of his ministry, which has been to help people come to know God personally through a relationship with Jesus Christ and to help them grow to be more like Jesus Christ in their everyday lives.

Geoff is not immediately moving into another pastoral



• Geoff and Lorraine Hall

A Century

100th birthday for Alfred Lewis

On 7 April Alfred Frank Lewis will celebrate his 100th birthday.

Son of the late Mr and Mrs D.A. Lewis, Alfred was born at South Yarra, Vic, and baptised in the church 85 years ago. He has been a loyal member of Churches of Christ ever since.

Coming to South Australia in 1914, he joined the fellow-

ship at Mile End and served as deacon, secretary, treasurer and elder for many years. He was Sunday school superintendent for 25 years and treasurer of the Mutual Benefit Fund for 42 years. Alfred served overseas for over four years during World War I, seeing action at Gallipoli and France.

He will celebrate his birthday on 5 April with a luncheon at the Marion church, which he now attends with his wife Mary.

Children David, Laurel, Milton and Rosemary, with daughters-in-law Eileen and Pam and sons-in-law George Moore and Barry Modra and their families invite all his friends to come and celebrate together.



• Eric Armstrong welcomes Norm and Margaret Carter

ministry. He is to undertake some postgraduate study in theology.

Asquith's new minister Norm Carter comes from a background of wide experience in both secular employment and ministry. An ordained minister of Churches of Christ and a graduate of the College of the Bible, Norm's varied experience in ministry equips him for the role of enabler in pastoral care, preaching and teaching.

His ministries have been at Bethany Children's Home in Tasmania (with his wife Margaret bringing up a family of 15 children), industrial chaplaincy with the Interchurch Trade and Industry Mission, minister of the Church of Christ in Port Pirie, SA, and youth

minister in the Uniting Church in Port Pirie, both on a half-time basis.

Margaret is a qualified and experienced teacher, having graduated from Toorak Teachers' College, Melbourne. Margaret's teaching experience ranges from kindergarten to high school, as well as in the areas of moderately to severely disabled young people.

Both Margaret and Norm have led studies and seminars on dealing with children and young people, as well as in the areas of grief.

The induction of Norm into ministry was performed by Eric Armstrong, an elder of the church. Greetings were brought by ministers and representatives of the various churches in the area.



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People

Dawson Street Intern

New and valuable part of the ministry team



• Rod and Sue Ratcliffe with minister Stephen Templeton

There are exciting things happening at the Dawson Street, Ballarat, Vic, church. The church is continuing to grow in faith as well as numbers. The appointment of Rod Ratcliffe as associate intern, for six months, has helped the church immensely in its attempt to take Christ to Ballarat.

Rod and wife Sue are both studying at the Institute for Contemporary Church Leadership in Wollongong, NSW. In the two months they have been at Dawson Street they have fitted in extremely well.

Rod has many responsibilities, including worship services and small groups. With a strong emphasis on discipleship, the church is already reaping the benefits.

Sue is gifted in the area of music and has already started a youth choir but is predominantly preoccupied with her ever-expanding band of singing students.

Rod and Sue are a valuable part of the ministry team at Dawson Street, which is anticipating an exciting year for the Kingdom.

Whitley College Suffers Great Loss

Sudden death of Dr Athol Gill

The sudden death on 6 March of Dr Athol Gill, Professor of New Testament Studies at Whitley College, represents a profound loss to Whitley College and the Churches of Christ Theological College, as well as to the wider Christian church throughout the world. Whitley College and CCTC are the two constituent colleges of the Evangelical Theological College and Dr Gill was a valued member of the faculty, deeply respected by his colleagues and the students of both colleges.

Athol was an internationally renowned Biblical scholar, writer and teacher, whose life reflected his total commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. He championed the needs of broken and disenfranchised people.

He will be deeply missed by his wife Judith and their two children Jonathan and Kirsten, by the Bunyip Community, his Central American friends, generations of students and the theological community of Melbourne.

Rebuilding Broken Worlds

Visit of Dr Gordon MacDonald

When Gordon MacDonald, well-known preacher from Trinity Baptist in New York City, wrote his best-seller *Ordering Your Private World*, Billy Graham responded, "I wish I'd read it years ago." Since then other books have been published: *Rebuilding Your Broken World* and *Forging a Real World Faith*. These books are honest and hard hitting as they examine some of the painful life experiences that we all pass through. His message: "Broken worlds can be rebuilt!"

Gordon MacDonald will visit Australia this year at the invitation of the ministers of Churches of Christ in NSW and Victoria. He will be speaking in Sydney, Wollongong, Canberra and Melbourne in the first two weeks of May.

In addition a seminar has been arranged for 8 and 9 May in Melbourne for the Christian community as a whole. Gordon, with his wife Gail, will lead a program on "Ordering Your Private World" at the

Nunawading church on the Friday evening and all day Saturday. The registration cost is \$20 and can be sent to the Ministers' Association at PO Box 549, Noble Park 3174.

Until recently Gordon MacDonald was president of InterVarsity in the US. He and his wife also speak at and are involved in seminars throughout North America.

He is sought after by business organisations to speak on motivation, excellence, personal growth and development, building teams and personal relationships.

It is of special interest to Australians that Gail MacDonald will accompany her husband. Gail has co-authored one book with Gordon—*If Those Who Reach Could Touch*—and has written two books herself—*High Call; High Privilege* and *Keep Climbing*.

More details can be obtained from Ron White on (03) 547 5112.

Welcome Home Hazel

Henley Beach pays tribute to long service in India

140 were in attendance at the Henley Beach, SA, church on 1 March to welcome Hazel Skuce home. Due to a family bereavement John Main was unable to lead the meeting, so it was ably led instead by Nancy Coleman, Deputy Chairperson of the Overseas Mission Board. A greeting was given by Gowan Pridham on behalf of the church at Henley Beach (Hazel's home church). Greetings were also given by Marj Dredge (on behalf of SA Conference), Barry Grear (on behalf of the Overseas Mission Board) and Shirley Burgar (on behalf of Women's Ministry).

Jeff May gave a prayer of thanksgiving and Julie Trinnick brought an update on Overseas Mission.

The congregation was entertained with a solo from Jim Orange, who sang "My Tribute". He was accompanied on the piano by David Smith (Sterling church).

The program then proceeded with an interview by Jeff May with Hazel and this was both enlightening and comical. The program concluded with afternoon tea, and a time for people to catch up with Hazel and other friends.

The church at Henley Beach, together with the Conference of SA and the Overseas Mission Board, thank God for Hazel's 43 years of service, wish her well in her "retirement" and know that God has more good things in store for Hazel in the coming years.

News

Dorcas Busy

Sewing group fulfils a long-standing need



• Standing: Margaret Sharman, Lorna Bagot, May Williams, Merle Grenvill, Noni McLean, Dulcie Pope, Enid Fisher. Seated: Val Geoffrey, Amy Frith

The Dorcas Committee of Churches of Christ has been busy fulfilling needs in city and country areas of Victoria. The present economic climate has brought requests for baby and childrens' clothing in particular. The Dorcas Committee meets at the rear of Lygon Street Church of Christ on the

third Wednesday of each month between 10 am and 3 pm. Ivy Funston (now retired) was a member for 45 years, and Lorna Bagot and Ann Frith have served 40 years and 38 years respectively and are still serving.

—Dorothy Quantrelle
(Superintendent)

New Committee

Chaplaincy to the services

The National Conference Council of Churches of Christ in Australia has appointed Dr Don E. Stewart, Executive Director of the Queensland Social Service Department, as the coordinator of the newly formed Service Chaplaincy Review Committee and as the Churches of Christ representative on the Federal United Churches Chaplaincy Board. The Service Chaplaincy Review Committee is responsible for the selection and pastoral care and support of Churches of Christ ministers serving as Chaplains in the Army and RAAF. The Federal United Churches Chaplaincy Board represents Churches of Christ, Baptist and Lutheran churches and the Salvation Army.

Other members of the Service Chaplaincy Review Committee are Ron Oostenbroek, an RAAF chaplain at Amberley, representing full-time chaplains, Bob Smith, an Army Reserve chaplain, representing part-time chaplains, Denby Holmes and Alan Fletcher, who is chairman of the committee. Both Denby Holmes and Alan Fletcher have had extensive chaplaincy experience in the services.

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Youth Ministry

The Spiritual Life of a Youth Worker

Rob Mason

The spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting and Bible study are an area of constant struggle for most Christians in the Western world.

We know it's vital for our spiritual journey and associated ministries, yet we don't do it—or it's a low priority in our busy schedule—or we simply do it out of obligation, seeking God's approval.

It is disturbing that in youth ministry we can offer outrageous programs for young people, be dynamic personalities, be popular with the kids and give hot youth talks and wise counsel yet be spiritually anaemic.

Worse still, your ministry gets results—yes, the youth group actually grows—and people hold you in high esteem, saying, "What a godly person." Yet is that a successful ministry?

Our call is more than producing fruit, we are to produce fruit that lasts, out of an abiding relationship with Jesus (John 15:1-8, 16). We can do nothing, apart from a loving and abiding relationship with Jesus. God has also called us to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and love God with all of our heart, soul and mind. (Matthew 22:34-38)

A renewed understanding of John 5:19 has dramatically changed my spiritual life and ministry. Jesus said, "The Son can do nothing by himself, he can do only what he sees the Father doing." (NIV) The Son speaks what the Father has taught him and therefore does what pleases the Father. (John 8:28-29)

Jesus humbled himself (Philippians 2:6-8) and was dependent on the Father and abiding in an intimate relationship with him. Intimacy with the Father was possible because of the Son's humility and dependency, from which ministry

flowed. Jesus' public ministry was therefore an overflow of communion with the Father.

Likewise, ministry is to be an overflow of intimacy with the Father, outwardly expressing what the Father is doing in our lives. For example, in preaching preparing the heart is just as important as preparing the sermon material.

On a practical devotional level, I'm working through Charles Swindoll's book *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life* and I am also studying John to gain an insight into the relationship of the Father and Son. My prayer life varies in content from day to day.

Sometimes, there will be extended moments of silence, waiting on the Lord or meditating on a verse of Scripture. Playing the guitar and singing worship songs to God is something I also value.

Occasionally, I will go for a walk along the beach with no set agenda, simply enjoying the presence of God. Other sources of inspiration come from listening to teaching tapes, reading books, meeting with other Christian leaders, being part of a prayer triplet and receiving wise counsel from my spiritual director.

For the minister to young people the temptation is always there to take the shortcut, to rely on one's own ability.

The key to Christian maturity is dependency upon the Father and that is costly. We need to strip off pride and self-sufficiency and seek the Father's heart with perseverance. Out of a response to God's enriching grace, may we humble ourselves and be like Jesus, allowing ministry to flow from intimacy with the Father. There can be no authentic ministry otherwise.

• Rob Mason is the associate minister (youth) at the Warwick, WA, church.

Tribute

Bruce Coventry remembers two fine missionaries

In *The Australian Christian* obituaries of 14 December were brief references to two of our finest missionaries involved in overseas work: **Harold Finger** and **Colin Thomas**.

Harold Finger came to college in my third year at the old COB and immediately impressed with his enthusiasm for overseas mission service. Because of the war there appeared very little opportunity for overseas service on our own fields. In view of this we wrote to another mission society seeking possible service opportunities with them, but the door there was likewise closed. Then changes took place both in Vanuatu (previously New Hebrides) and India enabling replacements to take up work even before the end of the war. Harold married Mary Clipstone of Kaniva, Vic, and together they commenced a lengthy period of service in Vanuatu. Later he was to join with Frank Beale in pioneering the work in PNG. During the years in Vanuatu we shared in a regular correspondence of encouragement and in stamp collecting.

The other reference was to our very dear colleague and friend Colin Thomas. Colin and his first wife, Jean, had returned to Australia in the early 1940s. By late 1942, especially after the "Quit India" uprising against the British and then the spread of the war in the Pacific and into Asia, further service in India appeared impossible in the immediate future.

However, in early 1943 a serious situation developed on the field in India when Reg Bolduan went down with severe pneumonia (at that time antibiotics were not available) and his future seemed very uncertain. Then the senior missionary Thomas Escott had a stroke, which meant a return to Australia when shipping became available.

Through a series of meetings and challenges between the Board Secretary, and Colin's

father, the then Chairman of the Victorian Overseas Mission Committee, Colin and Jean, and my wife, Patricia, and myself, it was agreed that we be sent to fill the gaps. We sailed together, secretly, from Melbourne, on a cargo ship laden with bombs, and no convoy, on 23 January 1943. The faith, enthusiasm, and humour of Colin proved a real source of strength to two young inexperienced travellers, journeying in the midst of war to an unknown and uncertain land. Already some Australian missionaries had lost their lives on ships sunk by the Japanese in the sea between India and Singapore. The passenger list on this cargo ship was just 11, including two children, Lois and Margaret Thomas.

A hallmark in Colin's life was, "We press on" (forward). This was to be experienced on a number of occasions during the next 12 years of missionary service we shared together. Our first night in Bombay could have ended in tragedy. The ship immediately ahead of ours in the dock was unloading incendiary bombs when a crate of them dropped and caught fire. Fortunately a ship's officer with quick action was able to extinguish it before it set the ship and others ablaze, but it did have the Bombay Fire Brigade roaring to the docks. Just four months later a similar incident took place and the entire docks were destroyed, plus all the ships and most of the Bombay Fire Brigade. The actual number who lost their lives in that explosion is unknown but it was put in the report issued after the war at 2,000. We thanked God often for our protection then.

Beside being one who gave himself to encouraging others and sharing the hope of salvation in villages, wastis, market places and special functions, he used his practical skills to great advantage. Motor vehicles during and after the war were both scarce and expensive, so Colin purchased a

CCTC Principal Suffers Heart Attack

Keith Bowes hospitalised

Readers will be sorry to learn that Dr Keith Bowes, Principal of CCTC, suffered a mild heart attack early on 28 February. Keith was rushed to the Dandenong Hospital and was in intensive care for a week. A series of tests revealed that his heart had suffered minimal damage but his doctor has prescribed a period of recuperation of at least six weeks. Provided he undertakes a lighter workload in future the doctors expect that Keith will be able to

return to full health and strength again.

Despite their own heavy responsibilities the college faculty have distributed Keith's load amongst themselves for the time being.

Get-well greetings have been received from around Australia. Keith and Robin deeply appreciate the prayers and concerns of so many. Keith is taking seriously the advice of his doctors and looks forward to a total recovery.

wreck of a vehicle and from an old rusty engine he worked to make roadworthy once again something others would have consigned to the scrap heap. The vehicle, a tribute to his skill and ingenuity, was to give several years of service till the Australian Churches of Christ provided finance for a new Chevrolet station wagon.

He loved people and was ready to drop what he was doing and sit and chat to those who came for counsel and advice. One of his last undertakings on the mission field was to design, pay for and supervise the construction of the assembly hall-cum-dining room, plus adjoining kitchen and store-room for the boys' home. Jean shared in the deep dedication that marked their married lives together both in India and at home till 1964. Following her passing what a joy it has been

for him to have Win (Walker) as his wife since 1966. She shared 10 years with the the Thomases as a missionary colleague from the mid-1940s.

Colin rejoiced greatly to have word almost two years ago that Vinayak Thorat had been appointed Superintendent of the Boys' Home, Baramati. Vinayak's father, Govind, had been the house father in the home for several years while Colin was the superintendent. Govind and Colin shared an evangelistic zeal together.

When my wife and I visited India recently, Vinayak, a former public servant, spoke so appreciatively of the influence that Colin and Jean had had on his life, especially emphasising the way this had played a vital role in enabling him to impart to the boys the strong Christian standard on which the home has been based.

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Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to 200 words

Congregational Names To the Editor,

While appreciating the further explanations by the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development on why congregations do not call themselves Churches of Christ ("AC" 14 December) I am still perplexed.

Is the Victorian Executive confident that our Constitution (5a) permits Conference membership for those which choose not to call themselves Churches of Christ?

While some use names which "have a nice ring" ("AC" 14 December) I am intrigued to find that in the Victorian situation it is because of "Asian custom". Obviously it doesn't apply to all Asians, for there is the "Richmond Vietnamese" and the "Korean Church of Christ" so what is the "Asian custom"?

Third, it is not clear that "all existing groups clearly use Churches of Christ in their title". If this was so then surely instead of Grace Church there would be Grace Church of Christ. Or instead of the Indonesian Praise Church there would be the Indonesian Church of Christ and the All Nations Church of Christ?

It appears to me that there are significant issues of our understanding of who we are

as Churches of Christ which need to be addressed.

What information is available to "ethnic" congregations in their own language: the constitution? history and role of our movement? And finally, could Conference Executive, for it surely is not just the responsibility of DMED, provide readers with some idea of the process by which groups can choose to be Churches of Christ but not call themselves by that name.

As a member of the Christian Union Department I can recall no occasion in which that department has been involved in such a process.

—Alan Matheson
(Camberwell, Vic)

Response

To the Editor,

Alan Matheson raises some key issues regarding our identity as Churches of Christ. His contribution to debate is always stimulating, however in this instance I must correct some factual misunderstandings.

1. There are no churches affiliated with our conference that do not fully include Churches of Christ in their title.

2. There is no reason why the common Asian practice of using a title such as Grace cannot be used. The church is actually Grace Church of Christ, and as it has had to relocate on a number of occasions, it has been

a title of convenience as well as a statement of faith.

3. Ministers with these churches have either been trained within Churches of Christ or are undertaking further study.

4. The constitution does permit us to include local churches with particular names other than the place name.

5. Information regarding Churches of Christ is available and distributed among our ethnic congregations.

—Ian E. Allsop
(Vic-Tas Conference Secretary)

Pascoe Vale Arrangements

To the Editor,

Thank you for your article "Region Closes" in the 22 February issue.

As you rightly say none of

the churches within the region have closed and Pascoe Vale is in the course of re-establishing a club for boys in the eight to twelve years bracket, and other friendly evenings and activities.

We are grateful indeed to James Pearce for bringing us a message at the evening services. However we wish to point out that pastoral care and arranging for the morning service message remains the responsibility of the Pascoe Vale congregation.

Anyone wishing to drop in on our services or other activities will be most welcome.

—Dorothy Thomson
(Secretary, Pascoe Vale)

Spiritual Climate

To the Editor,

I have heard people say they cancelled their subscription to

Letters from Tertius

Shattered Images

To the Editor,

Our minister keeps shattering some of my cherished sentimental images.

I used to think that "I know that my Redeemer liveth" in "The Messiah" was all about the resurrection of Jesus. But in a sermon he said that these were the words of Job, who was saying, "I know that my vindicator (God) is alive and will prove me right to my accusers." I went home and looked up my concordance hoping to prove him wrong. He was right.

One of my favourite verses was "Be still and know that I am God". It was like finding God in some secluded spot away from the world. And when we sing it as a chorus it is usually to quieten us down after some of the more boisterous clap-happy ones. But apparently God was saying, "Quiet! Listen, and you will see that there is a God who is a very present help in time of trouble!" Our minister says it's a bit like God saying to a world where every one is shouting at once, "Shut up and listen to me!" But I can't easily imagine God as saying, "Shut up!" It was a bad word in our home when I was a kid. But I wouldn't blame him if that's what he said.

On Sunday another sentimental balloon was burst. Every time I am in the mountains and excited by their beauty I think of "I will lift up my eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help." But it seems that in those days hill tops were places where people worshipped idols, and the psalmist was really saying, "Will I lift up my eyes to the hills? Is that where my help comes from? No! My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth."

So what will I do when next we have a mountain holiday? That text will have lost its meaning for me. Perhaps this is a good thing. For all their magnificence, the hills can't help me much when I'm in a jam, but the Lord who made them can!

Yours deflated(!),
Tertius

1993 Calendar

Photographs Wanted!

The Federal Literature Department invites readers to forward colour transparencies or slides for possible inclusion in the very popular Churches of Christ calendar. Photographs are needed from all states and territories of Australia and from PNG and Vanuatu.

Please forward slides to
Mrs E.M. Rankine, 5 Atkins Avenue, Glen Iris 3146
by 6 April 1992
Criteria for selection include photographic excellence,
variety of subject matter and the church year.

Letters to the Editor

The Australian Christian because they objected to some of the articles printed. I have paid mine for two years as I see the "AC" as a kind of thermometer measuring the spiritual temperature of the ministry of Churches of Christ in Australia.

Fifty odd years ago the C of Cs were called the "Second Coming Cranks". They used to sing "Throw out the Life Line to Rescue the Perishing" because "Jesus Is Coming Again" so "Watch and Pray" and "Go Labour on". Now they sing "This Is My Father's World, I Rest Me in the Thought". A much easier climate to live in.

Once upon a time Jesus walked among his churches and told them what he thought of them and what he wanted them to do about it. (Revelation 2 and 3) I don't think he would do that now. It would break his heart...again!

However he still says, "Thave brought you, you are mine," "I am preparing a place for you," "I will come for you," "You shall see my glory," and "Where I am there you shall be also." What a surprise some people will get when two are working together and one is suddenly caught up to meet the Lord in the air and the other is left gazing into the sky. (Acts 1:11)

For the "caught up" ones it will be "joy unspeakable and full of Glory" (1 Peter 1:8) but for the left-behind ones it will be devastating bewilderment and grief. So why don't we speak up? (Ezekiel 3:17-21) It may soon be too late.

Even so, come Lord Jesus.

—E.A. Barton
(Port Lincoln, SA)

Words Seasoned with Salt

To the Editor,

The speaker at the World Day of Prayer service reminded us that we Christians are the salt of the earth and pointed out that salt was used to purify what needs to be purified and to preserve what needs to be preserved. On returning home I opened the newly arrived issue of "AC" (7 March), and when I reached page 18 I was

disappointed, disgusted and dismayed at the blatant promotion of an expression which may be found in respectable dictionaries and heard in TV "soaps" and parliamentary debates. I appreciate, and agree wholeheartedly with, the point the writer makes, but I deplore the use of such language in the church's national journal—even if it is intended to make a provocative article more provocative. Who is it that advises us not to let the world squeeze us into its own mould?

It seems that *The Australian Christian's* salt has lost its potency, and Jesus tells us quite clearly what to do with such salt. Mr Editor, I request you to find a more effective disinfectant which will not allow such language to be used in our journal. After all the salt of the earth exists to uplift, not to degrade.

—Gordon R. Clark
(Bayswater, Vic)

That Heading

To the Editor,

It is with regret that we have need to write to you to protest in strong terms about the headline and drawing which appears on page 18 of the 7 March issue of *The Australian Christian*. The use of such an expression is offensive to us and does nothing in our opinion to enhance our Churches of Christ national journal, which we believe is generally a highly regarded publication.

Whilst the content of the article says something, it was unnecessary to use the expression as the last word of the text. There is an old saying, "You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear," after the content

of the article has been put aside, even maybe forgotten, the headline will still be remembered as being obscene and as something that should not have been printed in our national journal.

We are subscribers of many years standing and have read and enjoyed many of the articles and followed with interest the progress and news of many churches that we have been privileged to visit, or alternatively know the ministers, also have friends connected with other churches.

In conclusion we certainly hope that similar expressions will not appear again, even though we live in a permissive society in these days when anything seems to be the norm.

—Bob and Dorothy Staley
(Vermont South, Vic)

Bryan Mee's Article

To the Editor,

I was appalled not only by the very appearance of the "adjective" which formed the basis of Bryan Mee's article ("AC" 7 March), but also by the fact that the word appeared in the headline in the boldest print, and then again, in full, in the body of the article. Yes it did offend my "sensibilities". What sort of example do we set our young people, in particular, when a church paper can do no better than use language of this kind on which to base an article.

—Andrew Augustine
(Chelsea, Vic)

Plastic Religion

To the Editor,

That was a great little article by Bryan Mee in your last issue

("AC" 7 March). The church he writes about is a good model for others trying to reach out to the unchurched in their communities.

I hope that won't be lost in the inevitable reaction to your use of the naughty word. While I might have done it differently, I'd still defend your editorial decision to let Bryan's article stand as written. By doing so, you caused me to sit up and take notice. And it made me think about the moral implications of the use of language and the deeper issue of how much I let my sub-cultural values, which are not always integral to the gospel, get in the way of reaching out to others from another sub-cultural background.

It was very sad to read of Bryan's death; I would have liked to meet him. I'll be looking forward to the rest of his articles.

—Rick Lewis
(Telopea, NSW)

[We sincerely regret that the title of Bryan Mee's article in the last issue was offensive to many readers—Editor]

Last Word on Childlessness No Joke

To the Editor,

I was disappointed and concerned to read the first "joke" in "The Last Word" ("AC" 8 February). Disappointed that this paper considered the remark humorous and worth printing, and concerned for those who may have been hurt by its inclusion.

[Letters to the Editor continued on page 11]

Les Lawlor says...

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Music



Burning Feet

Melbourne-based singer, songwriter and keyboardist, Andy Sorenson, is finally ready to release his debut album, *Burning Feet*.

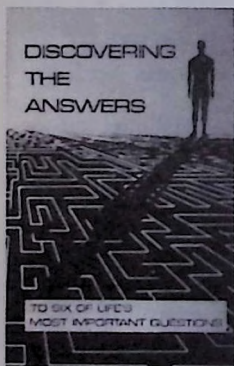
After months of fine tuning, mixing, re-mixing and editing, Andy now believes that the 13-track collection is "pretty close to what I aimed at originally". The cares and concerns that are part of Sorenson's distinctive songwriting talent are highlighted in at least four of his tracks, including the song, "Sexuality", which is sure to attract a great deal of attention in the Christian music scene.

Sorenson, who has just recently signed with Word Australia, only the third Christian artist to do so, has been around the Melbourne music scene for quite a while. During that time he has gained a reputation for his lyrical content—thought-provoking and intensely personal statements.

Musically *Burning Feet* is dominated by guitars, however the highlight of the album is Andy's unique keyboard style, which proves a remarkable combination with his highly polished voice. Andy's devotion to the Christian music industry has been invaluable so it is fitting that Andy has solely produced an album with so much potential and class.

To coincide with the release, Andy is holding an album launch at Truth and Liberation Concern, 265 Canterbury Rd, Bayswater, on 28 March at 7.30 pm. The night, which has some of Australia's hottest Christian musicians performing with Sorenson, promises to be a spectacle not to be missed. —Shaun White

Books



Discovering the Answers to Six of Life's Most Important Questions

by John F. De Vries (The Bible League)

This is a set of six studies designed primarily for group study but which could also be used for personal study. The purpose of this booklet is "to help you discover, on your own, how the Bible, one of the world's oldest and most respected religious books, answers the questions faced by every serious-thinking person in the world today".

The six questions raised are: Who Am I?, What Went Wrong?, Is There Any Hope?, How Can I Find Peace?, What Is True Love? and What Happens When I Die?

This booklet could be used with a study group examining the claims of the Christian faith. —CRA

Ears to Hear, Eyes to See

A Handbook for Christians Using the Media (AIO Press) \$14.95

In 1975 the Anglican Information Office in Sydney published *Getting into Print*, which was a very useful handbook for people wanting to become involved in journalism and publishing. That book has been unavailable for some time and there was a need for a replacement. With *Ears to Hear, Eyes to See*, the AIO have come up with a very adequate replacement.

This book is very practical. All of the authors are skilled and experienced communicators.

Topics include using the secular press, interviewing, writing features, editing newspapers and magazines, writing a news release, knowing your audience, publication design, desk-top publishing, writing for radio and television, using radio and reviewing books and films and there is a helpful article on the law and the media.

Available from most Christian bookshops or the Anglican Information Office, Diocese of Sydney, St Andrew's House, Sydney Square 2000. —CRA

EARS TO HEAR,
EYES TO SEE

A Handbook
for Christians
using the Media

The Shadow of the Galilean

GERD THEISSEN



The Shadow of the Galilean The Quest of the Historical Jesus in Narrative Form

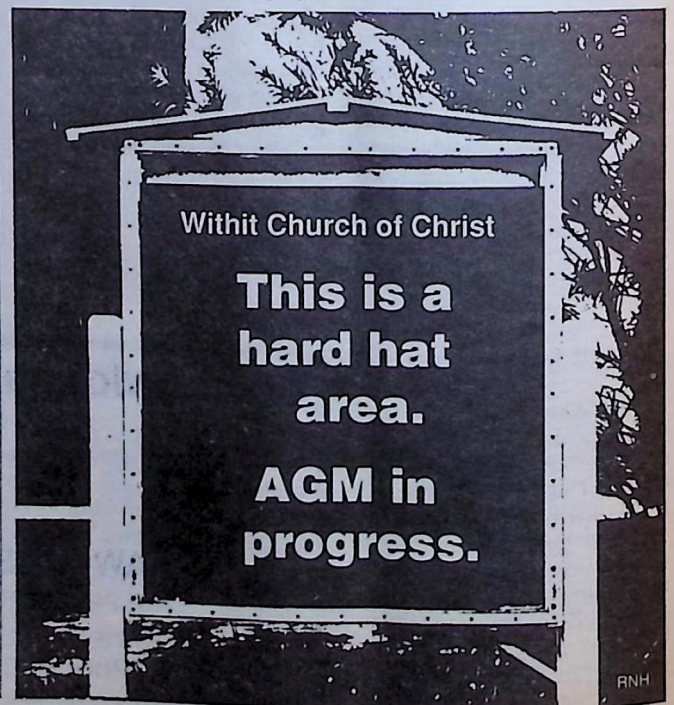
by Gerd Theissen (SCM Press) \$14.95

Gerd Theissen is a German theologian. In this book he examines the cultural, political and religious context of the ministry of Jesus in a narrative form. While he relies heavily on radical New Testament scholarship he presents an interesting picture of the effect of Jesus on people and a somewhat different interpretation of the teachings of Jesus than often comes from radical scholars.

This is not a scholarly book, however all the relevant references are given in note form at the end. It looks at the life of Jesus from the viewpoint of a reasonably religious Jew of the time. We never actually come face to face with Jesus but the protagonist seeks information about him from a wide variety of sources.

An interesting feature is a series of letters by the author to another New Testament scholar justifying writing about the life of Jesus in this form.

This book gave me new insights and helped me see Jesus from a different viewpoint. Highly recommended. —CRA



Letters to the Editor

No doubt, for those experiencing the traumas of infertility, this item joined a list of thoughtless and insensitive comments they have heard voiced within the Christian environment. My concern is that in many instances this hurt and the issues facing infertile couples today go largely unrecognised.

This remark reflected two other disturbing aspects: (i) the patronising attitude of "how lovely, they have a baby now and everything's fine", which sweeps all the issues conveniently under the carpet, and (ii) the innuendo that it is somehow immodest for a husband and wife to conceive a child. "Humour" at this level really gives the knife a twist, because such a couple would desire to be able to conceive a child privately and lovingly. If the modesty of this is questionable then I'm sure the people commenting would be less than impressed with the numerous invasive medical procedures necessary to establish and treat the couples' infertility—a process essential for modern adoption.

Thankfully there are a handful or two of good books dealing with this subject from a Christian perspective. Credit also to the *Christian Counsellor* (a CWR publication) and the Anglican Information Office and Social Issues Committee for their addressing of the issues (which I cannot address in this limited space).

I would welcome any submissions or case studies for some seminar and resource material I plan to prepare as a Biblical outlook on this topic and would commend Jenny Kearney for her work in the area of pregnancy loss.

—Valerie Williams
(PO Box 87, Bexley North 2207)

HIV-AIDS and Aborigines

To the Editor,

I commend Professor Fred Hollows for his courage in telling the truth about AIDS at the recent national conference on Aboriginal HIV-AIDS.

Not long ago Professor Hol-

lows was made Australian of the Year for his humanitarian work among Africans and Aborigines. As he points out, AIDS remains largely a homosexual disease in this country. Healthy heterosexual Australians, who do not have other sexually transmitted diseases, are generally at low risk.

Professor Hollows has been viciously attacked for telling the truth, particularly by AIDS councils who tell us that condoms will solve all our problems. But Professor Hollows points out that condoms and alcohol do not go well together. From his close personal knowledge of outback Aboriginal communities he warns that unless strict measures such as quarantine are undertaken, large numbers of Aboriginal people could be destroyed by AIDS.

In 1990, seven Aboriginal pastors travelled to Canberra to tell MPs that X videos and alcohol were contributing to the genocide of their people. X videos promote, among other things, anal intercourse between both sexes and other perversions previously unknown in Aboriginal communities. Since 1984 when the Hawke Government legalised X videos, they have been hired from Canberra by many outback communities where the rape, incest and domestic violence rates have risen alarmingly. The rape rate in the white Australian community has also risen markedly since 1984.

The Federal and ACT governments ignored those Aboriginal pastors. Will our governments also ignore Professor Hollows?

—David Phillips
(Chairman, Festival of Light, SA)

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News

Canberra's Radio One PPP

Christian journals on radio



• Alan Williams

Print handicapped people in and around Canberra can now listen to items from *The Australian Christian*, and other Christian newspapers and magazines, read to them on radio each week.

Every Sunday at 2 pm **Radio One PPP**, the Canberra outlet of the Australia-wide **Radio for the Print Handicapped (RPH)** network, broadcasts a three-hour program of special interest to Christians. News items, feature stories and devotional articles are read from some 25 publications from all denominations, many of which are donated by public-spirited publishers.

The program also includes personality profiles, testimonies, a noticeboard of coming events, interviews with people in the Christian news and serialisations of important Christian books. Another program on Thursday evenings is a repeat of the noticeboard and interview from the Sunday program. In addition, the station broadcasts a three-minute devotional message at the beginning and end of each day's transmission.

Radio for the Print Handicapped is a national public radio network, reaching 82% of the population. It was established to bridge the information gap suffered by people who are unable to see to read, are unable to hold a book or newspaper or have some comprehension difficulty hindering their access to information in print.

Radio One PPP broadcasts at 1620 kHz on the AM band. There are readings from the daily papers twice a day and at other times a wide range of magazines and books are read. There are also regular programs of service information for people with disabilities.

Broadcasts are conducted entirely by volunteers and the station is always in need of help with reading, announcing, program recording, office duties and maintenance of broadcast equipment, grounds and buildings. The administration manager would be happy to provide further information. Phone (06) 241 4076 weekdays 11 am–5 pm.

—Alan Williams (Supervisor of Christian programming)

Happenings

The special edition of "Songs of Praise" recorded in Melbourne in early 1991 and broadcast by the ABC last December is now available on videotape. Copies cost \$15, which includes postage and packaging, from Wesley Central Mission, 148 Lonsdale St, Melbourne 3000. Phone (03) 662 2355.

Inner Suburban Youth Mission is a refuge offering short-term accommodation for young people in need. It is based in a 3-bedroom house in Richmond, Vic, and is presently managed by 2 live-in, part-time workers. It offers temporary shelter and residence, and aims to provide guidance through counselling and referral advice in a caring and distinctly Christian environment. One of the 4 churches providing support is the Richmond Church of Christ. ISYM have found a large property in North Carlton that suits their purpose and are looking for support from readers. Details from Inner Suburban Youth Mission, PO Box 663, Richmond 3121. Phone (03) 429 2670.

A Gallup Poll in the US has found that 47% of those surveyed held to a strict creationist view that God created humans in their present form within the past 10,000 years.

Triple Seven Communication's second test broadcast closed on 1 March at 10 pm. This test broadcast took 18 months of preparation. The signal was 10 times stronger

than the 1990 test broadcast and was received as far away as Warrnambool. Around 2,500 phoned to say they loved the program, which featured a mix of secular and Christian "light hits", interviews, news plus Bible readings, "Godspots" and other features. The main aim was to reach the non-churching, using a pre-evangelism approach so that inquirers could be referred to off-air counsellors, or local churches if requested.

The only property owned by the Uniting Church's Tasmanian synod for its own purposes has been handed over to the church's Aboriginal ministry. The property, a house in Launceston, was handed over to representatives of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress at a service of thanksgiving and celebration on 29 February.

The prestigious Blake Prize for Religious Art will be awarded this year even though a sponsor has not been found. The prize is worth \$10,000 to the winner and costs another \$10,000 to organise. Since its beginning in 1951 the Blake has become one of Australia's best-known and most prestigious art awards, with some of the nation's top artists among its winners.

Some large US firms now find it cost-effective to fax handwritten notes to Hong Kong to be typed by workers who receive a fraction of US secretarial wages. After typing, the notes are transmitted back by com-

puter modem and printed in the US.

In a recent survey in New Zealand only 23.8% have "full trust and confidence" in churches. Respondents were asked to rate 16 key organisations, professions and industries on a scale from "total confidence" to "no confidence". Firefighters topped the poll with 78.2% and "full trust and confidence". The churches came 7th after the police force (53.7%), the medical profession (45.1%), charities (33%), the military (31.7%) and the courts (25.2%). Since the surveys were first undertaken in 1975, 22.4-32% have expressed full trust and confidence in the church.

The armed forces of the former Soviet Union are considering the future appointment of military chaplains.

The NSW Conference has organised a special seminar on "Revitalising Existing Churches". This is being held as a full-day seminar on 24 March at Carlingford College or a half-day seminar on 25 March at Wollongong. Speakers will be Alan Hirsch and Paul Creasey. The cost for the seminar is \$15, which includes lunch and details are available from Ross Wakeley on (02) 630 7533.

Moore's, a firm of solicitors in Melbourne, is hosting a seminar "Churches and Copyright", to be held at 7.30 pm on 14 April at a cost of \$20. For details of place and registration con-

tact Jill Magrath on (03) 898 0651.

Doug MacFarlane is to release a new album in May. He is currently recording with Southern Heartland Music, a new Christian record company based in Sydney. His debut album "Innocence" is now on CD format. It costs \$20 and is available from Doug MacFarlane Management, PO Box 2106, Wollongong 2500. Doug will be involved in a southern NSW country tour, a SA tour in June and a Queensland tour in August.

Zairean soldiers opened fire on thousands of Christians marching peacefully through the capital of Kinshasa, killing 15. The marchers were calling for the reconvening of a suspended national conference on the country's political future.

Christians involved in ministerial activities in Turkey report that the Turkish secret police is intercepting their mail, an effort they believe is tied in with a continuing strategy to track Christian ministries operating in that country.

The Melbourne City mission has started a project to identify the needs of Aborigines with intellectual disabilities, a first for the Aboriginal community in Victoria. Heading up the project is Joyce Smith, a prominent Christian leader in the Koori community.

Subject to endorsement at the next World Convention of Churches of

Christ and US immigration procedures, Lyndsay Jacobs from New Zealand will be the next General Secretary of World Convention. His wife Lorraine will be Associate General Secretary and in practice they will be job sharing. Lyndsay was President of World Convention when it was held in New Zealand in 1988 and is currently Principal of Darfield High School in New Zealand.

A coalition of 24 churches in Moscow has systematically hand-delivered gospel booklets provided by Every Home for Christ to 300,000 homes in Moscow, resulting in more than 60,000 testimonies of salvation and/or requests for Bible study materials. The response has been so tremendous that the churches involved have outgrown their current facilities and are scrambling to find schoolrooms and other buildings where they can hold worship services.

Staff and students at Pilgrim School, a Uniting Church school at Aberfoyle Park, SA, recently witnessed the baptism of two pupils, Melanie and Michelle Vivian, during one of the school's twice-weekly services. The baptisms were by full immersion.

in the "megacities" that are consuming half the world's population. World Vision's Area Development Projects are seeking to help young urban dwellers who are joining the countless numbers who call garbage dumps home.



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After the Earthquake

Many victims still scarred

An earthquake in October last year measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale, with its epicentre at Almerah in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India, left nearly 20,000 homeless and more than 1,000 dead.

Dorothy Holstein, who is based at Herbertpur Christian Hospital, writes:

"The earthquake victims remain in a sorry plight. The winter is severe and coping with rain and snow without proper shelter has been too much for



• Dorothy Holstein

some, who have died of exposure.

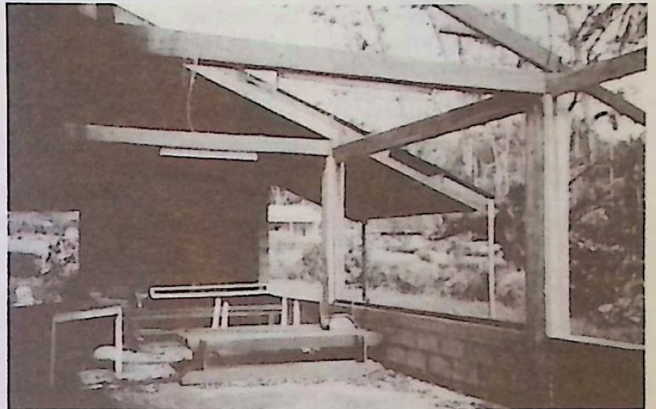
"The old, the very young and delivery mums are the most vulnerable. There are great cracks in the ground throughout the Uttarkashi area and a high possibility of landslides once the monsoon starts. Some people from that area are coming to the hospital at Herbertpur from time to time. A lot of them continue to be somewhat in a daze—others obviously under great mental tension. A lady whom we had picked up in the jeep on a trip up to Uttarkashi was at the Vikasnagar bus stand the other morning. I got such a surprise to see her. She has improved quite a bit from the day she was just wandering on the road miles away from home, but the scars of the trauma are still evident."

\$10,000 was given to TEAR Australia to assist with earthquake relief from the Churches of Christ Overseas Aid fund.

After the Cyclone

Repairs to Vanuatu Bible college

After Cyclone Betsy in January the task of cleaning up at Banmatmat Bible College, Vanuatu, was quite a problem. Then some volunteers from Santo and West Ambae arrived and the clean up began.



• The chapel had part of the roof blown off



• Where the roof landed—damage to a nearby classroom



• Pastor August Ben and some of the men involved in the cleanup. In the rear Jan Christensen talks with one of two men who arrived by helicopter for a brief visit to inspect the damage

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Finding Is the First Act

It never occurs consciously—but keeps surfacing in pastoral contexts—that is, the propensity for Christians to slide into assuming we somehow earn grace, to retrospectively “pay our way”. A brief parable, known as “The Buried Treasure”, forestalls this propensity. It is about a man working in a field who finds treasure, hides it, sells everything and buys that field. It has often been noted by competent commentators that this parable has overtones of dishonesty. The niggling question is this—if the treasure belonged to the finder, and not the owner of the field—why hide it and buy the field? Why not proclaim the find—then and there, if it is indeed a legitimate find? The parable creates a note of dissonance for the listener with its unethical overtones. What can this mean as a metaphor for the Kingdom? Why does a parable seeking to demonstrate the joy of discovering the Kingdom create dissonance for the listener with its twinge of deceit? It does not tell us enough. Will this man later become embroiled in a scandal? Unlike those metaphors that work as similitude, this parable as metaphor, like so many of Jesus’ parables, works to create dissonance—a burlesque rather than reassurance of “normal” expectations and behaviour.

“Finding is the first act,” said New Testament scholar, John Crossan, of this parable. And

indeed, narratives of finding treasure and things of great value occur with the finding as the “last act”, not the first—as it is in this parable. In traditional treasure stories, the finding, eureka, occurs at the end of a long search, an arduous journey, personal deprivation or hardship. This narrative structure is the basis of many of our story plots—in novel, movie and drama. It engenders a sense of “appropriate reward”, deserved in having persisted for so long. El Dorado only belongs to the persistent and clever. Treasure stories in which the finder either does nothing to find the treasure or does nothing to retrospectively justify an accidental discovery like giving half to charity or a noble cause, are rare. If they do occur, they are thought of as being in bad taste. But here is a “bad taste” narrative—where “finding is the first act”, and no subsequent justification of the find

is evident. Indeed, there is a lingering doubt as to the finder’s “moral right” to the treasure. It is an essentially open-ended narrative. It leaves us with questions unanswered. We can only conjecture as to the outcome. It only shows us that finding the Kingdom is the first act—which is grace, and is not contingent on anything we have done, or intend to do—to justify the serendipitous find. There is something subversive about that!

Treasure is an appropriate reward for human work and endeavour. It is the consequence of human skill, calculated risk, investment of time and energy. But in the Kingdom, finding is the first act. The parable is a metaphor for the joy of acquisition that occurs in response to “stumbling” on the kingdom. It suspends conventional perceptions of reward, either prospective or retrospective, and breaks down

the perception that finding is the last act by reminding us that in the Kingdom-finding is the first act. Beyond that is nothing but the joy of impulsive response to the kingdom, which is always an enigma, perhaps even “immoral” to normal human values and behaviour, as indeed the parable itself is an enigma of motivation and appropriate reward. Thankfully the parable forestalls any perception that the grace of God can be earned—either prospectively or retrospectively. Finding is the first act. The joy of impulsive response—a response which has no ethical or redemptive value—as in the parable, is the only appropriate response to discovering the Kingdom.

—Stephen Curkpatrick

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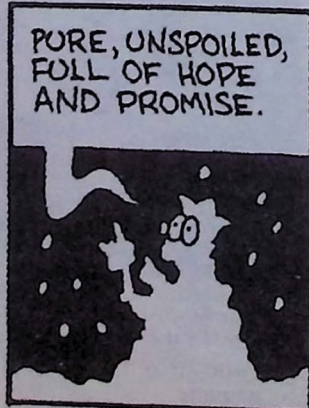
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Development

Correction

In the last issue of *The Australian Christian* (7 March) there was a letter “t” missing from Stephen Curkpatrick’s article “The Kingdom That Corrupts”. In the sixth line of the third paragraph the word “purification” should read “putrification”. This is unfortunate as it is directly opposite of what Stephen wished to say.

Pontius’ Puddle



Classifieds

BIRTHS

SCHULZ (nee McKELVIE) Peter and Kerry thank God for the safe arrival of Timothy Gordon, born 2.3.92. 7lb 6 oz. Little brother for Joel.

ENGAGEMENTS

DIGGLE—ALABASTER Janine and Ray, both of Mildura, Vic, are happy to announce their engagement.

100TH BIRTHDAY

LEWIS Alfred Frank. Love and best wishes for your birthday and God's richest blessing on a wonderful Christian gentleman. From wife Mary and family David and Eileen, Laurel and George, Milton and Pam, Rosemary and Barry, eight grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

HARRISON—CROOKS With thanks to God Peggy and Jim Harrison are happy to announce the 50th anniversary of their marriage on 25 March 1942 at the Norwood (SA) Church of Christ by the late Pastor A.J. Ingham. "At Home" to family and friends on Wednesday, 25 March, at Unit 1, 147 Peel Street, Summerhill, Tas. (No presents, please.)

DEATHS

MAIN Robert Douglas. At Kaniva 29.2.92. Loved husband and friend of Lillian. Loving and valued father, grandfather and great-grandfather of Beth and Keith, John and Valerie, Helen, Rich and Cris and their families. We say farewell to a good man. "Dei gratia." 2 Yarrock St, Kaniva, Vic 3419.

MEE Bryan R. Died suddenly on 20 February 1992, on mission in India. Pastor of Nerang Church of Christ. Beloved husband of Jenny. Loving father and friend of Catherine and Louis, Gillian and Tim and Simon, grandpa of Rachel and Joseph.

IN MEMORIAM

CHALK Doreen June. Called home

to be with her Lord 29.3.87. Although five years has now passed our memories of her will always last. Lovingly remembered by husband Graham and all the family.

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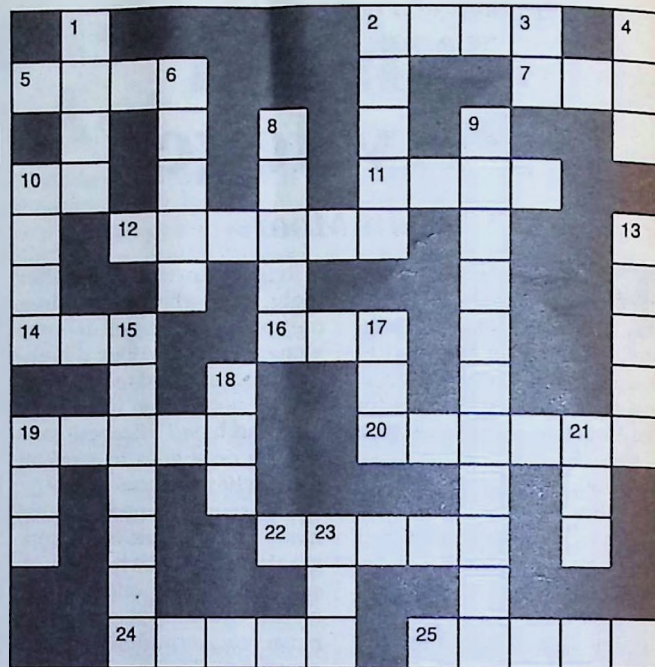
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Crossword



Across

2. Judah's father-in-law (Genesis 38:2)
5. Where the wise men went
7. What John had to use in 2 John 12
10. -- God had commanded Noah (Genesis 7:9)
11. Rhoda heard Peter outside but did not --- the door (Acts 12:13-14)
12. His final performance brought the house down!
14. God's foes used this to break up the Temple (Psalm 74)
16. Deborah used to --- under a palm tree (Judges 4:5)
19. Part of Ezekiel's vision
20. Sarah to Isaac
22. Jesus calmed a ----
24. Don't --- the front of your head in mourning (Deuteronomy 14:1)
25. Jetisoned because of Jonah

Down

1. Would have no dealings with the Samaritans
2. Andrew's brother
3. Town where Israel lost battle when they first conquered the land
4. Saying about this used when Jesus was asked for a sign (Matthew 16:1-4)
6. The Jews handed Jesus over to Pilate for ----
8. Great leader of the Jews
9. Land of the Tigris and Euphrates
10. Prophetess
13. A son of Kohath (Exodus 6:18)
15. The Lord prepares a banquet in their presence (Psalm 23)
17. Shortened form of name of disciple of Paul
18. High priest
19. What the world was in the time of Noah
21. "I am the first and the last, the beginning and the ---" (Revelation 21:6)
23. Bind

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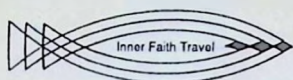
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Ambrosia

The Suffering Church

Recently I had an hour with Chris Woehr, who is Executive Editor of News Network International, a Christian news agency concerned with reporting on the church under restriction around the world. A quick tour of areas of concern:

Pakistan

Several leading Christians have been imprisoned under the Sharia (Islamic) law. A prominent Christian has been killed by fundamentalists and his killer has not yet been prosecuted under the law.

Columbia

The Colombian constitution is currently under review and many Protestant leaders and others are pushing to break the official links between the state and the Roman Catholic Church. While there is also still a concordat between the Vatican and the Colombian government the Roman Catholic Church enjoys special privileges and trouble may well occur for leading Protestants.

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Peru

The evangelical church in Peru is caught between two opposing forces. Many pastors and church leaders have been killed and it is never certain if the killers belong to the radical Maoist Shining Path Movement or to ultra-rightists death squads. The government has attempted to set up *rondas civiles* (civil patrols), which are armed and trained to keep order in non-government-controlled areas. If pastors and leaders participate they are attacked by the Shining Path guerrillas and if they refuse to carry arms then they are under threat from the ultra-rightists.

Saudi Arabia

In recent years there have been a proliferation of secret fellowships in Arabia. Many of these are among guest workers (mainly from Asian countries) however there are also converts among Saudi nationals. The fellowships are highly secret because of the activities of the state religious police. The fellowships have no official links with any outside Christian organisation or denomination although some have some very tentative links with individual Christians.

Recently photos of at least one group fell into the hands of the religious police, possibly in mail to an American Christian. Leaders of the group were beaten up and arrested and nothing is known of their current faith. Others have disappeared. The whole situation in Saudi Arabia could become very desperate for Christians who live there.

Africa

Nigeria is like a powderkeg that could explode at any moment. The nation is split between Christians and Muslims. Islamic groups have been pushing the country to adopt Shari law. However some Christians have been fighting back and this has led to riots and other tensions. A recent evangelistic campaign in a mainly Islamic area was cancelled after riots and civil disturbances.

Two other African nations in which Christians face suffering from Muslim extremists are Sudan and Mauritania (which has only 10-15 known local believers).

Asia

In northern India there are problems coming from militant Hindus, in Malaysia the rights of churches have been progressively limited over a period of years and in Burma there are problems related to political action and independence movements amongst various groups, some of whom have large numbers of Christians.

Former Communist Countries

I asked Chris Woehr which areas NNI are looking at where there could be problems in the future. Many of the new Cen-

tral Asian republics that were formerly part of the Soviet Union are largely Islamic and the church is starting to see restrictions on its activities. In some eastern European countries the various Orthodox churches are seeking to re-establish their former dominant positions in society. In some cases restrictions on evangelical and Protestant churches are being written into new constitutions that are more severe than under the former Communist constitutions.

Latin America

Growing Protestant (primarily Pentecostal) minorities seeking to break the nexus between the Roman Catholic Church and the state could cause problems in countries such as Costa Rica and Mexico.

Greece

The only country in Western Europe with potential problems is Greece, where again a dominant established religious group (Orthodox) seeks to retain its established dominant position.

China

The church in China still faces persecution. Many restrictions were eased in recent years, however there are still problems for many churches (especially the underground churches) and in certain provinces actions against the church continue.

—Chris Ambrose

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Voting with the Enemy

Church conference resolutions usually don't set the world alight. We submit them, debate them or reject them, then forget them. I'd like to drag one of them back from oblivion, although I had nothing to do with its presentation.

The motion seemed harmless enough. A decade or so ago it would have breezed through. As with motherhood, evangelism and missions, it would have produced a few sincere speeches, been carried on the voices and given way to next business.

Not this one! It did pass, but only by 55% to 45%. What was surprising was the subject. It was alcohol! The text was modest but six more votes against and it would have been thrown out. Next time it might.

The tame motion did not ask the delegates to resolve to do something. It didn't advocate prohibition or say nasty things about hoteliers and brewers. This is the relevant bit: "The Conference recommends that its members commit themselves to a lifestyle embracing voluntary abstinence from alcohol and other harmful drugs." The key words are "recommends" and "voluntary".

The close vote indicates that churches are moving towards a greater acceptance of alcohol. The Social Justice Committee of the Uniting Church of South Australia (1990) considered a response to alcohol and among its recommendations was the affirmation "that beverage alcohol is a gift of God's creation which may be accepted and enjoyed with thanksgiving". That is voting with the enemy! No other beverage has been more destructive of the life God created!

I recalled that 55 to 45 vote some weeks ago when, on prime-time TV, I saw a large group of Aboriginal women of Alice Springs. They were marching to encourage their family members to a lifestyle embracing voluntary total abstinence from the scourge that was destroying their menfolk, their own lives and their culture.

Would they receive only 55% support from the churches?

No-one really questions the damage done by alcohol. 100% of us would vote to deplore the dreadful consequences of alcohol abuse. According to an ABC "Four Corners" program last year one-third of all traffic injuries, one in five of all hospital admissions and one-half of all assaults are alcohol related.

The response of the 45% to these tragic facts, I guess, would be to point to my own word in the last paragraph and say that these evils are due to the abuse of alcohol. True, but alcohol, by its insidious nature, invites abuse.

Alcohol is an addictive drug. Associate Professor Bill Saunders of Curtin University said, "Alcohol is a drug, far more damaging than heroin, cocaine or the amphetamines." ("Four Corners") Not every person who drinks alcohol is a drunkard or is alcohol obsessed. Some of my best friends drink alcohol and I accept (without condescension) their lifestyle, as they accept mine. They have the freedom to make their choices and they have the right to defend those choices. I have the same freedom.

It is a matter of freedom. We are all free to make choices. Some of the choices that were once thought to be user-friendly have now been clearly demonstrated to be unfriendly. For example, sunbaking and smoking. We are also free to drink alcohol, and others are free to warn of the dangers and recommend avoidance of the beverage. Dr Alex Wodak of St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne states that one in ten of Australian male adults has some alcohol-induced brain damage. Maybe the 45% will still insist that it is only abuse that produces the harmful effects of alcohol. "There is nothing wrong with moderate and responsible drinking."

One of the sponsors claimed

for this view is Saint Paul himself! Good grief! It is a quantum leap in biblical exegesis to take a casual word from Paul and treat it as a divine endorsement of Seppelts and Fosters!

In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul told the younger man, "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." (RSV) We simply do not know enough about Paul to use him as an endorsement for alcohol. Paul may have no problem with wine. He may even have been offering to Timothy his own self-prescription for health. Maybe there was something wrong with the water. While on a three-day bus trip in Mexico I was told not to drink any water at all. If I valued my health I should stick to Seven-Up or Coca-Cola! Back in my North Essendon days, a doctor prescribed a small dose of whisky for an elderly lady in my congregation. There was no way she would ever be seen in a pub, so occasionally her minister would front up to the bar to buy the "medicine". I don't know if the whisky did any good but I can imagine the doctor almost quoting Paul, "Take a little whiskey for your health's sake!"

Whatever that casual word from Paul may have meant, it is quite irrelevant to the present discussion. This Paul who is claimed to support moderate and responsible drinking is the same Paul who said, "If meat is a cause of my brother's failings, I will never eat meat again, lest I cause my brother to fall."? You wouldn't have to be a genius to work out what Paul's response would be in the alcohol debate of today. He would be supporting the Aboriginal women of the Red Centre. The adverse effects of alcohol are accepted even by those who promote moderate drinking: brain damage, cirrhosis of the liver, acceleration of muscle and heart disease, foetal

abnormalities and a long list more.

In accepting this fact, the 45% would still argue that these are the consequences of abuse and would be avoided if alcohol were taken in moderation.

Now to be fair, I acknowledge that alcohol is managed by many people in a way that appears to maintain a lifestyle of decency and dignity. I have friends in this category. I don't agree that it is necessary to be a part of social drinking, but they have that right.

I exercise my right in arguing that society would be better off without this addictive drug, but as we can't get rid of it, we can at least recommend abstinence. When I am told that moderate and responsible drinking is the answer, I can only say that it is my understanding that every alcoholic, every compulsive drinker and every alcohol-brain-damaged individual is a graduate from the school of moderate and responsible drinking.

Prohibition is not being advocated. Example is! The church has been traditionally against the use of alcohol. Usually, it was a lone voice. But not now. It would be ironic if the churches changed course at a time when medical, governmental and social institutions are trumpeting the dangers of alcohol, even if not calling for abstinence. These institutions well know that a distressing percentage of moderate drinkers will become excessive drinkers and join the multitude of social misfits.

If there is a possibility that the church will surrender its caring role in this area of menace, especially in respect to young people, then we ought to be aware of what we are doing and what the consequences may be.

To set the vague benefits of alcohol against the many known adverse effects is no contest. I can't for the life of me see why we cannot recommend a lifestyle that abstains from alcohol and other harmful drugs.

To do otherwise is to vote with the enemy! —A.E. White

A Church ABC

Prospect is an inner northern suburb of Adelaide, 4-5 km from the centre of the city. An older and mainly residential suburb, the community has a wide range of socioeconomic levels.

The Church of Christ is well situated on Prospect Road, one of the main roads in the area. An attractive A-shaped cream brick building presents to the road; behind there are good facilities with plenty of space, built at various times in the church's long life. Next year Prospect will celebrate its centenary.

At present the membership is around 60 plus a large number of other regular attenders. There is a wide range of ages, from babies to eighty-year-olds. Starting this year there are now two morning services, the more contemporary at 9 am and the more traditional at 10.30. Average combined attendances range from 65 to 70. There is also an evening service at 7 pm.

One of the main aims of the Prospect church is to reach out to the real needs of the community around it. Three programs that aim to meet needs are worthy of mention.

Each Tuesday a friendship group meets at the church. A

social group and ostensibly for any age but in practice mainly retired people, this group is a good mixture of church members (including other denominations) and non-church people. Some of the people who attend are single and appreci-

ates the social contact. Activities include a cuppa and a chat, indoor games, bowls and craft activities, and a time of sharing—a poem, a thought or a selection from the Word.

On Tuesday evenings a program begun last year is held. "Living Waters" is an intensive restoration program on pursuing sexual wholeness that aims mainly to help people struggling with the issues of homosexuality, although it is broader than that. The complete course takes twelve months. Participants need to be Christians or open to Christian ideals. At present there are two groups meeting, one for men and the other for women, and demand is such that the church is planning to commence another group. In seeking to develop an approach to ministry that is needs centred, the church has the resources to address these

program runs from 5.30 to 7.30 and includes a light tea and the usual fare—games, Bible activities, craft and videos, and also community involvement. The children, most of whom are not from the church, are participating in the forthcoming Prospect Fair. They have built a float—a large fish of wire netting covered by bread bag tags (6-7,000 of them!) with a mouth wide open for Jonah to enter.

A significant project last year in the life of the church, indicative of their aim of meeting the real needs of the community, was the sponsoring (with other churches and organisations) of the setting up of a couple of houses for Teen Challenge, who are working to rehabilitate young drug-users. The response was overwhelming as people raised money in all sorts of ways to assist with the furnishing of the houses.

The church also has a camera club and an aerobics group.

The minister at Prospect is Stephen Schmaal. Stephen grew up in the country in SA, and has a Lutheran background. Receiving a call to ministry he began studies at the Bible College of SA. As his beliefs changed on the nature of New Testament Christianity he discovered Churches of

Christ had a theology that coincided with his own. He did his practical training at the Prospect Church of Christ and last year was called to the full-time ministry there. He has now completed his studies for a BTheol, but is still studying. Stephen is married to Tanya and they have two sons, Benjamin, 4, and Jakob, 3, and another child to come.

Prospect is in the process of turning around from a stable declining membership. However they are not preoccupied with numbers, but are seeking to put the focus on helping and sharing the good news with others.

They know that God is one who heals, who changes lives, not just through the miraculous but to a large degree through the Christian community sharing the love of Christ with each other.

Focus on Prospect



Growing Spiritually

A trip to the tip is a popular pastime in the national capital! Every weekend in the warmer months a stream of trailers wends its way to the rubbish dump as Canberrans try to tame their gardens or keep up with the rapid obsolescence of modern consumer items.

I can still remember my first trip to the local tip. As I turned into the main entrance I could not help but notice two large signs on either side of the road, almost adjacent to each other. The sign on the left boldly proclaimed, "Be Wise! Recycle".

The other on the right commanded, "Attention! Scavenging is Prohibited. Offenders Will Be Prosecuted".

I found these contradictory messages rather amusing and somewhat surprising—surely scavenging the odd item contributes to recycling and cuts down waste. After all, one per-

son's junk can be someone else's treasure!

As Christians, we have to take care not to convey contradictory messages to others. For example, what about the congregation that issues a warm welcome to newcomers who happen to attend church then ignores them after the service

because it feels more comfortable to talk to friends. Or the study group that seeks to provide care and support for its members but that finds it hard not to pass on the odd bit of hurtful gossip. Do we profess that "God is love" then fail to show it in our actions? We need to confirm our faith in both words and actions and to take care that we do not send mixed messages to others, both inside and outside the church.

• *Les Davies attends the Lyons, ACT, church and is president of the ACT Conference.*

Mixed Messages

Les Davies

Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Hockley, Doug

(24.2.92) 76 years. Doug was baptised in the Park St, Unley, SA, church by J.E. Webb and worked as an accountant with Wallaroo Fertilisers. He met Joan Dalton there and they married in 1941. Doug served with the RAAF in the islands and after the war began a career with British Tube Mills. He retired in 1977 as assistant analyst. He served the Edwardstown church with love and devotion in capacities as secretary, deacon, auditor, elder, recorder and steward. He was a devoted father to Libby and Carolyn and loved grandfather of seven and great-great-grandfather. He served as a volunteer at Flinders Medical Centre after retirement. He is remembered with deep affection for his integrity and dignity, sense of humour and strong Christian witness.

—Roger Brown

Main, Robert Douglas

(29.2.92) Our father died as he lived, with gentleness, acceptance and dignity. He was the only surviving child of Alexander and Violet Main. He grew up at Glen Iris (attending Gardiner church) where his father was principal. The day he died he and his wife, Lillian, were to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their engagement. They were married at Kaniva on 6.10.33 and together were actively involved in the church at Hamilton, NSW, while working with BHP. On moving to Port Kembla they were central in establishing a new church at Wollongong and later Warrawong. Many enjoyed their hospitality and warmth. Travelling

provided many new experiences and for a short while they managed a missionary guest house in India. In later retirement they moved back to Kaniva. Two weeks before he died he suffered a heart attack while at Robe, SA. Prior to a private burial we sat in our parents' home, prayed, shared Scripture and memories together. A thanksgiving service was held where Martin Goldup paid tribute to Robert's life. To celebrate his love for God his family presided and served communion to their wider family and friends. His children Beth and Keith (Wollongong, NSW), John and Valerie (Stirling, SA), Helen (Melbourne), Rick and Cris (Brisbane), 13 grandchildren

and their partners and three great-grandchildren join together to give thanks for his life and to surround our mother with love. She was the centre of his life. May his faith and grace continue to live through us.

—Helen

Mee, Bryan R.

(20.2.92) Late minister of Nerang, Qld, church. Died suddenly, aged 48, in India after three weeks ministry in the state of Kerala. Funeral service held in India and a memorial service was held at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Ashmore, Qld. The service bore witness to the peace and joy that comes from

knowing that Bryan is in heaven, that death is only temporal. Eulogy was given by pastor Louis Clun (son-in-law). Simon Mee, who was with his father in India, spoke of Bryan's powerful testimony there. Although always active in ministry (including a brief term as a missionary in PNG) Bryan's first vocation was that of a teacher. Gradually his focus shifted towards RE in schools and he became a school chaplain. He was also involved with the Queensland Department of Church Development and Education. Bryan was also a gifted preacher and in 1988 decided to enter ministry full-time. After completing a BTh and Dip Min through CCTC, he was ordained in November 1989. He was minister at Ringwood for a short time before becoming minister at Nerang. Bryan was a man of "good heart and sincere faith" who served the Lord faithfully all his life.

—L. Clun

Powell, Arthur Edward

Born 3.9.11. He was raised on a property at Inglewood and moved with the family to Wagga when he reached fifth grade. He continued in school until Year 7, taking up his first job with Wagga Motors. Arthur became a Christian at age 15. He was baptised 7.9.25. As a young working man he had a keen interest in sport and for many years played the first grade cricket competition. Arthur met his wife to be, Jean, when the Methodist Girls' Society joined the Church of Christ young people in Christmas carol singing. When Arthur was courting Jean he would travel to Young where Jean was training as a nurse. They married at the Methodist Church Wagga 25.9.37. They were to have five children—Richard, Marie, Keith (who died as a six-week-old baby), Barbara and Ian. During the war he became manager supplying parts to Kapooka army camp and the RAAF bases at Forest Hill and Uranquinty. In 1946 he began his own spare parts business and remained closely linked to the motor industry for the remainder of his working life. Arthur held the position of church secretary at Wagga for some 15 years and as an elder for nearly 40 years. His eldership, with Jean's tireless support, was characterised by prayerfulness, compassion for those in need, an exemplary hospitality and a recognised sincerity of heart and life. One of their finest contributions was their ministry to youth through CYF which they headed up for 12 years. Arthur and Jean had a committed gift of hospitality.

—Bob Whan

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Personal

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Coveney, Balaklava, SA • Darren Latta, Ascot Vale, Vic • Dawn Hannell, Melissa Van Sambeek, Kylie Beard, Donna Rice, Narelle Taylor, Deborah Hudson, Warwick, WA • Tina Marchant, Boronia, Vic

Marriages

• Jan Mullen to Noel Spencer,

Miranda Brown to Paul Dolman, Nicole Kourevellis to Michael Sandler, Jenny McCredde to Mark Pitman, Janine Kennedy to Rodney Hone, Wilma Graham to Kyri Sgardelis, Knoxfield, Vic • Letitia Hann to Darren Sanford, Mount Clear, Vic • Rebecca Laidlaw to Markus Freiverts, Ascot Vale, Vic • Andrea Douglas to David Weir, Preston, Vic • Rona Mills to Peter Milne, Boronia, Vic

• Linda Constable, Warwick, WA

Changes

Caringbah: Minister—Brian and Joan White, 10 La Boheme Avenue, Caringbah, NSW 2229. Phone (02) 540 1662 (home), 524 8849 (office). **Dulwich—Rose Park United Parish:** Minister—Roger Brown, 13 Hallett Avenue, Tranmere, SA 5073. Phone (08) 365 2906. **Liverpool Community Church of Christ:** Secretary—J. Olsen, 30 Murray Street, Merrylands, NSW 2160. Phone (02) 635 6860.

Deaths

• Mildred Smith, Balaklava, SA

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Church News

Qld

ANN ST, BRISBANE (W.J. Flett) Our new minister Bill Flett & wife Judy welcomed to Ann St ... Both brigades have recommenced. Girls attended special dedication service. Kylie Sims commissioned as officer. Opening activity held—barbecue under Story Bridge. Great time had by all ... Ann St hosted World Day of Prayer ... Congratulations to Lillian Fox on her 90th birthday.

MAROOCHYDORE (Geoff Risson) At the annual general meeting the co-operation of members was sought in the implementation of a church development plan to provide a positive direction for church growth ... Two church families have gone into missionary service & the church has pledged support through a Faith Giving Promise plan which also extends to Overseas Mission, the Bible Society & Gideons.

NSW

LIVERPOOL (Peter Raymond) Settling into new worship facilities ... Ladies group commenced on Friday mornings with great potential ... Sunday evening services commenced ... Very encouraged by Sunday morning & evening attendances ... Regret number of members leaving district, but pleased that others have come to take their places ... Mission focus for March–April "Youth Work" ... Last year 23% of offering went to missions.

TWEED HEADS (Richard Oakes) 13 home groups for 1992 ... Neville Muir, World Opportunity Mission, shared in morning service his ministry among deaf in Japan & Korea. Young Korean pastor to deaf also gave testimony ... Russell Austerbury, student from Kenmore, assisting with work among school age youth ... Several young people attended camp at Byron Bay ... Richard commencing sixth year of ministry for which we praise God.

MAITLAND (R.N. Hawkins) Sen-

ior Citizens Week marked with special services. Church parade by Friendship Group. Church stood as mark of respect for the aged (Leviticus 19:32) ... Philip & Jenny Bryce, Tahlee College, now partnership training with us ... Gail Johnston President Elect of Regional Conference ... Dinner date with Ken Simpson, ex-RAAF, accountant, cricketer ... ITIM Regional Coordinator, G. Dark, spoke & showed video.

Vic

KNOXFIELD (Rod Brown, Craig Allan, Brian Tunks) Plans for new church buildings will soon be presented to the congregation ... Fundraising efforts are well in place but Knoxfield still remembers its wider responsibilities—\$3,652 was donated to the Christmas Bowl, \$1,000 to the E.L. Williams Room at CCTC, \$62 to Community Care Christmas hampers ... Bruce & Sandra Anderson are conducting a series of courses on relationship skills.

WARRACKNABEAL (K. & R. Luttrell) Unity Church, Brim, held successful Harvest Thanksgiving 23 Feb. Goods distributed among local needy families ... Warracknabeal Harvest Thanksgiving 1 March also providing goods for local distribution ... Fellowship teas held once a month Brim & Warracknabeal ... Lay leadership training study series to continue ... Youth House project receiving wide community support ... Church looking forward to growth as five-year plan implemented.

UPPER YARRA Regular meetings have continued for six months ... Services are held in the Woori Yallock Primary School at 9 am each Sunday and draw members from as far away as Healesville & Warburton ... Montrose church continues to give oversight ... Average of 20 communicants over recent weeks.

HORSHAM (Harvey Clark) Church of Christ and Assemblies of God church combined to present "A Reach-Out Concert" with Wes Beavis, recording artist & musical director of Wollongong church ... Program to identify spiritual gifts to be run during March to encourage church members to use gifts God has given them.

MOUNT CLEAR (Dale White) Successful church fair attracted hundreds from community & raised over \$3,000 for various projects ... Record attendances during month of February. Now averaging over 120 at morning worship ... Team of eight members teaching CRE at

local primary schools ... Welcome dinner recently held for incoming students to Ballarat University College ... Music ministry continually improving ... Newly formed Young Mum's Bible study very successful.

YORK ST, BALLARAT (Jim Cunningham) Gary & Jane Berry farewelled after two years of ministry at York St ... Annual outdoor service held at Kirk's Reservoir prior to church picnic ... Special dedication service for those involved in church ministry ... Children's ministry training workshop & festival run by Kidsmin ... Endless Praise performed during evening service & held after-church concert ... Michael Janssen to commence part-time associate ministry.

ASCOT VALE (Ross Bourdon) Church surprised Ross with a Roast the Pastor evening to celebrate 10 years of ministry ... Church deeply shocked by death of Leeanne & Reda Boula's baby Isaac ... Dedication service held for Dale Bourdon ... Three of our congregation studying full time at Tabor College ... Darren Latta baptised at Brimbank Park ... Effie Boxhall suffered a stroke. She is living in Mt Royal.

PRESTON (T. Armstrong) After church on 15 March there was an open house at the manse for congregation to see the recent renovations. Tony & Lynette put on a luncheon for all attending ... Valerie Garth spoke to CWF on caring for our environment ... Tony Armstrong awarded a scholarship for this year, also the community diligence & development prize at CCTC Garden Party.

BORONIA (Keith Milne, Andrew Henley) Rebuilding of halls complex, destroyed by fire last year, has commenced ... Christmas Bowl offering \$4,062 ... Auxiliaries off to a good start, some with additional leaders ... Church School picnic held at Warburton ... Keith Milne continuing post-graduate studies at CCTC ... Shower tea held for Rona Mills & Peter Milne prior to their marriage, which took place the following week.

NORTHCOTE (F.B. Alcorn) CWF commenced year with party for two 90-year-olds, Arthur Withers & Netta Twentymann ... Still much sickness about. Jack Timmins in hospital with heart attack, is out & making slow progress. His wife Win also not well. Lil Nation who has been in hospital with a leg problem that required rest making slow progress ... Church hall cleaned & renovated.

REDCLIFFS (G.R. Sharrad) New blue carpet laid throughout church recently ... "Care-N-Share" group had talk & slides on Rhodesia at last

meeting ... Kids' Club numbers increasing again with new year ... Visit from S. Mackie on 1 March ... A number of visitors with us over picking season.

THE PATCH (Mike Folland) Anniversary service well attended—over 100. Marj Buckingham guest speaker ... Sunday School growing ... Elaine & Mark Northe's baby Katelyn dedicated ... Church appreciates ministry & outreach of Mike & Ruth Folland ... Mike commenced service marketing subject at Chisholm, tutoring Biblical studies at CCTC & interviewed on local radio. He, Ruth & Fiona Lynch take RI classes at local primary school ... New young adults group commenced.

OAKLEIGH (W.J. Edwards) Reports submitted at AGM show work to be in good heart ... Vivienne Taylor elected as deacon ... Recognition was made of work of Margaret Sharman, former Bible School Superintendent & deacon. Margaret donated a lovely communion cloth & cover. Distance now prevents her attendance ... Appreciation was expressed to Alison Walpole (treasurer) & to Freda Fraser & Dorothy Nash (church visitors) ... Minister holding pre-Easter Bible studies.

TOOTGAROOK (M. Giezendanner) Visiting speakers Conference President & Frank & Rose Johnson, whom we support under KAM. \$200 given to Frank after service. His talk much appreciated ... Seven new members by transfer ... Kath Forster undergoing treatment at Peter MacCallum ... Open Door recommenced with 88 attending ... KYB recommenced for year with new members ... Good holiday attendances.

SA

BALAKLAVA (Graham Lawrie) Excited to have Edith Parker chosen as Balaklava's "Citizen of the Year" ... Study groups, house churches, Kid's Club, Sunshine Centre, youth groups, Bible School all actively busy 1992 ... Northern District's Women's Project sent \$185 to Port Hedland, WA ... Counsellors in training for Bond mission ... Church working toward \$15,000 gift for bedroom at Mulgrave College ... Ian & Charlene Shepherd working in Fiji.

DULWICH-ROSE PARK UNITED PARISH (Rob Williams, Roger Brown) Conference President Robert Leane was morning speaker & conferred with members ... Many later attended an "At Home" afternoon at Roger & Judy Brown's newly acquired home at Hallett Ave, Tranmere ... Manse released for

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Church News

rental ... Sympathy extended to family on death of Mrs Thelma Drew, pioneer Dulwich member. **GLENELG** (J.T. Tilson) "Jesus" video well accepted ... Good attendances Happy Days 31, Kid's Club 51, craft group 91 ... CWF enjoyed picnic in Partridge House gardens & Overseas Mission with Rae Thompson ... Sunday School progressing to 15. Children enjoying lessons ... Youth group to commence in two weeks ... Good attendance AGM ... Our twinning church is Waikerie where Mr Tilson has preached twice ... Prayer chain has commenced.

Tas

HOWRAH (Allan Blyth) Congregation rejoiced in the baptisms of Matthew Rushton (December) & Jason Noble (February) ... Commitment by 17-year-old college student immediately after service ... Colin Ashby raised \$1,758 for Bike for Bibles ... Average attendances up 13% for 1991 ... Holiday attendances up 30% ... Electronic keyboard purchased ... Blackout blinds installed in hall ... Building subcommittee formed ... Loan fully paid. Hallelujah!

CAVESIDE (John & Colleen Harrison) First combined churches evening worship for 1992 held at Deloraine Anglican Church 23 Feb ... Business meeting appointed lay visitation team & decided on kitchen renovations with additional bench space ... World Day of Prayer service held at Mole Creek Presbyterian Church ... Members encouraged to participate in Life Style Evangelism Seminar 27-28 March.

LAUNCESTON (R. Foster, C. Spaulding, D. Tobler) Regular church suppers being held in members' homes ... "Light Factory" holiday club had 30 children attending ... Joy Robinson & Jeanette Foster appointed co-ordinators of the Opportunity Shop.

WA

EASTERN HILLS (Maurie Ashworth) Good start to new year ... Under 40s group started in Sunday School ... Youth groups now have intermediate group ... Girls' Brigade increase in numbers ... 22 at prayer breakfast. Hans Bohm, Christian Blind Mission International, speaker ... Study on ABCs of Christian Faith starting 11 March ... Music fund for purchase of organ & piano started ... Cans being collected, proceeds towards bus.

CARNARVON (Don Bone) Bert Spratt commenced studies with Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship

in Perth ... Special meeting decided to change format of evening meetings & invite Baptist & Uniting Church groups to meet with us monthly ... Know Your Bible group commenced ... Muriel Holt will resign from FAB service at the Olive Laird Hostel in May due to ill health. **ROCKINGHAM** (Keith Ware) Numbers increasing in all age groups of youth participation ... Family weekend camp planned for mid-March with L. Randall study leader ... Five home study groups meet weekly ... Playgroup have over 200 mothers attending ... Church expressing sympathy to dear sister

A. Weston on recent passing of her loved husband ... Church enjoying messages from 1 Corinthians, also visiting speakers.

WARWICK (G. Sublette, B. Eagles, R. Mason, S. Kelly) George Sublette, acting senior minister on exchange from US, settled in well & ministry greatly appreciated ... Graham & Freda Carslake thoroughly enjoying time in Indianapolis ... Shaun Kelly appointed sports minister for 1992 before commencing ministry in Queensland ... Team of young people who visited Korea reported on marvellous cross-cultural experi-

ence ... New building extensions providing new offices, administration areas & extra teaching spaces progressing.

FREMANTLE (D. Good) Life in Focus given food from Harvest Thanksgiving ... Adrian van Leen spoke about New Age sect at Bible study group's annual barbecue ... Updates of work of FAB & Christian Union Committee given by Ric Maxwell & John Somerville ... Geoff Maxwell presented audiovisual of life & work in PNG ... AGM held 8 March ... Guest speaker at church's centennial celebrations to be G.R. Stirling.

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Reflection

Insignificance

Neil Marsden



Unlike so many childhood heroes,
We don't have the power to travel
Back in time to fix the things we might
have broken.
Neither can we travel forward
To see what will happen next.
Even pondering on either is useless,
We can't change the future or past by
thinking about them—
I certainly can't.
All we get from the past is a teacher;
All we get from the future is a mystery.

No matter what dreams we have,
No matter what we "think" will happen,
It makes so very little difference in the end.
Sometimes the future can look so good,
But when we get there
Things don't always work out as we think
they should.

I suppose there's no point preparing for a
tomorrow,
Which may never happen—may never
even arrive.
If only we could imagine and feel eternity
Where time means nothing!
Earthly times will always change,
They will never last forever.
Friends will come and go; meetings will
cease;
Phone calls will stop; letters won't last
forever.
Even the immortal men who fought and

died for us
Will be forgotten.
It's all so inconstant.
Our wills and desires even change,
And our strength to carry them out comes
and goes.
The future is unknown until it becomes
The past—and then it becomes so clear, yet
completely
Untouchable.

We should consider the past and future:
not be ruled by them.

We should, instead, put our faith in God,
for the

Past, present and future are his;
He is the beginning and the end.
"Put your faith in me," he says,
Not in financial advisers, politicians or
doctors.

The future is as much a mystery to them,
As it is to us.

All we have to remember I guess,
Is if we die (whichever way; whatever
time),

There is another future already prepared
for us.

Perhaps on that our minds should be set—
Not on an earthly future which can always
end.

Perhaps for that we should be excited,
Because we get a new life—another future,
Despite our timeless insignificance.

• Neil Marsden is a member of the Hurstville, NSW, church.

The Last Word

Envy shooteth at others and
woundeth herself.

—Thomas Fuller

Two hunters had been out several hours and
one of them had been growing uneasy.
Finally panic overtook the hunter: "We're
lost! What shall we do?"

"Keep your shirt on!" said the other. "Shoot
an extra deer and the game warden will be
here in about ninety seconds."

Hunter: "Is there much good hunting in
these parts?"

Native: "Sure, there's plenty of hunting but
very little finding."

"I've swallowed a cricket."

"Should I call a doctor?"

"No need. I've taken some insect powder."

A child who watched as his parents buried a
cat that had been hit by a car said, "It won't
do any good. It won't grow."

"Dear me," said the tourist on a visit to the
mountains, "look at all those rocks. Where
did they come from?"

"The glaciers brought them down," said the
guide.

"But where are the glaciers?"

"The glaciers," said the guide with a weary
voice, "have gone back for more rocks."

Father: "We have a new baby in our house."

Friend: "I bet he reigns as king in your family
now."

Father: "No, Prince of Wails."

A handyperson was putting up a knotty pine
wall in the living room. A young child came
along and said, "What are those holes for?"

"They're knot holes," replied the worker.
"Well then," said the child, "if they're not
holes, what are they?"

In biblical days, it was considered a miracle
when a donkey spoke. Listening to that
speaker you couldn't help but realise how
times have changed.



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might be willing to forgive my
debts as I forgive my debtors.



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