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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

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Guest Editorial

Chaplaincy is Ministry

Trevor Lawrie



Chaplaincy is yet to be seen by some as the important work that it is. When it was known that I was to take up the work of chaplaincy with the SA State Retirement Services, some people wanted to know why I was leaving the ministry. I am really enjoying my new "congregation"! I enjoyed my 30 years with local congregations even with the demands and frustrations. Yet there is something new and challenging in this work that excites me. While there are many Christians in our homes, there is considerable opportunity to meet and share the faith with those on the edge of the Christian church.

My "congregation" of 500 residents and 300 staff plus family and friends is ever changing. Death and movement of staff see up to 150 new faces per year. They bring with them more family and friends and with them new opportunities for pastoral care. What a privilege it is to be there as one who represents Jesus, not to "Bible bash" but through kindness, sensitivity and love be invited to share the faith.

It is so important how we use these opportunities. Often we are given only such a short time to convey the positive message of faith in Jesus. Death can strike in such a tragic way, but for the old it is usually a blessed release and in the mystery of death a quiet confidence can ensue that helps loved ones to find solace in what can be offered from the staff and from the chaplain who "knew my Mum (or Dad)". What a joy it is to see the responses from these who believe, but have given away the church through being hurt, or careless, or because they never understood it. No need to preach at them. The Scriptures, the words of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit reach into these lives with the power to convict.

In one of our homes I have a group that meets monthly to listen to the Scriptures and Christian music. One day a man who hadn't been before was sitting with the group when I arrived. He asked, "What are we going to listen to?" "The Scriptures," I replied. "I would rather listen to a

game of the Crows," was his response. Not long after he was asked why he seemed so distressed. He replied, "I remember hearing these things when I was a young altar boy." What he heard had moved him to tears. He had given up the church 75 years ago. Now he comes to listen to the Scriptures.

Our work covers six sites. Two are overseen by local congregations. In each of our four home complexes we have a part-time chaplain.

The team works very well. A number of residents are allocated to each chaplain. I have overall pastoral care including that of the staff.

We are there to serve the people. The fact that we are known by and care for people opens the door to many opportunities. I received an early morning call from one of our Directors of Nursing to go to the Flinders Medical Centre (southern areas hospital). There in the intensive care was the husband of one of our staff. I didn't know the lady very well but she was pleased to see me. The husband died 10 minutes after I arrived. He was 60. In the awesomeness of the moments that followed there wasn't much to be said except for a reaching out to each other. Some time after, as we left the hospital, she turned to me and said, "Trevor, I don't have a minister. Would you be my minister?"

The church has a ministry to the world. Serving others in our retirement homes gives us an acceptable reason to be there with people. This is no religious con-job, a way to "get at people." Its a place where we can offer those on "the edge" the hope of a loving Father, the presence of a caring Lord and know that what is said will be heard!

Trevor Lawrie is just completing his first three year term as Chaplain of Churches of Christ Retirement Services in SA. He studied At COB, Glen Iris, and has had ministries at Barmera, Victor Harbor, Mildura, Dulwich and Magill. He is married to Glenise and they have three sons. Both Trevor and Glenise enjoy caring for their Athelstone home and garden.

Mile End's 85th Anniversary

Pentecost Sunday celebrations



• Enjoying a meal and some memories

The Weather Bureau forecast a day of showers for 30 May, the day the Mile End, SA, church was to celebrate its 85th anniversary. Fortunately, apart from a few light falls, there was nothing to interrupt people's movements.

Barry Benz, who as a young man went from Mile End to train for the ministry at the Woolwich Bible College in NSW and now ministers at the Gatton, Qld, church, was our guest speaker. Barry and his wife Elka, who brought two messages in song at the morning service, have always been deeply appreciated for their love of the Lord and desire to serve. His messages at each of the services were relevant and challenging.

The afternoon and evening services saw 120 in attendance. Former members and friends came from many suburban churches to share in the celebrations.

Among these were some who had had connections going back 70 or more years. One was Frank Lewis, who recently celebrated his 101st birthday.

During the light tea fellowship hour he and Miss Rona Smith, a current member and office bearer at Mile End, together shared in cutting the birthday cake. Rona's association with Mile End is the longest of any of the present membership, going back to the 1920s.

Much of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon was given over for former members to share highlights of experiences at Mile End. Roger Brown, who made his decision for Christ as a young man, eventually going to Glen Iris College, was the leader of the service. He is, at present, one of the ministers at the Dulwich/Rose Park Uniting Church.

Keith Averay, church secretary for many years and an elder, highlighted aspects of the early years. He mentioned churches which had been founded by Mile End, with members agreeing to branch out and become foundation members at Cowandilla and, later, Brooklyn Park. The parents of Pat Coventry, the present minister's wife, Mr and Mrs Fred Western, were not only baptised at Mile End, but became two of the foundation members at Cowandilla. Several other churches were financially supported by Mile End in their early days.

Hazel Skuce brought a much appreciated missionary focus on the Bible Correspondence work in India during the afternoon session.

Sixteen young people have gone from Mile End to one or other of our Colleges, and three are still active in the ministry: Steve Thomas in NSW, Barry Benz in Qld, and Roger Brown in SA.

On The Grow

Who cares about the cold?

Things are on the grow at the Devonport, Tas, church, in more ways than one, and there's plenty to rejoice about!

Sixty-six took part in a family camp at Camp Seaview, Bicheno, at the beginning of May. A great time of fun and fellowship was had by all, highlights included a concert—"Noah's Follies", outdoor worship, and a baptism in the picturesque setting of Apsley Gorge, a short distance from camp. This was the first of 12 baptisms since then.

Although another Tassie winter is well on the way, five young people braved the cold, choosing to be baptised in the chilly waters of the Forth River, a short drive from Devonport. It was a special time for all who attended, the rain stopped and the sun streamed out from behind the clouds just as those being baptised walked out into the water.

Four members of the Benjamin family were baptised during the morning service a couple of weeks ago. Follow-

ing their baptism, Emmanuel Benjamin gave a powerful testimony and the whole family sang "Your Loving Kindness".

A number of others are currently participating in baptism preparation classes, which have been held weekly over the past couple of months.

It is exciting that just on half the congregation are now involved in small groups, ranging from discipleship, singing, pastoral care, young singles, youth to various Bible studies.

All this "people growth" has led to some necessary building alterations. Recently, the back wall of the chapel has been removed and replaced with roll-doors allowing greater flexibility and increased seating capacity for worship services. Thanks to Ellis McCulloch (a carpenter and full-time WEC worker, home on furlough), and a team of dedicated volunteers, the extensions have now been completed and were officially "opened" and dedicated on 27 June after the morning service, with a BBQ lunch.



• Braving the cold waters

Following the afternoon service, the women provided a light sit-down tea. Over 100 shared this meal in the small all-purpose hall and annex room. Today, the original church building is used by the SA Community Care Department.

The evening service brought to a close some weeks of planning, along with a real sense of

gratitude to the many, for all they had done to make the day a success. Fittingly, the celebrations were on Pentecost Sunday with messages around that theme. Could it be that we are about to see an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all at Mile End, that we too will once again see church growth and outreach right here?

—Bruce V. Coventry

Share Your Best Ideas

Resources for ministry

Exciting things are happening in many churches around Australia. We frequently read about them in *The Australian Christian*. Many ideas, insights, programs or concepts may work or apply just as successfully in other situations.

We are giving ministers of all churches, small, large or medium size, the opportunity to share an idea which God

has used in your situation with churches and ministers around Australia, at National Convention 5-11 September 1993, Melbourne.

Take a few minutes to write a report (no more than 500 words) of such a program in your church. An appropriate photograph will help others see how the idea will work for them. We will endeavour to

compile a folder or booklet of as many transferable concepts as possible, to be available at National Convention.

You may also like to include details (title, author, publisher) of the three most helpful books

you have read over the past two years. Response should be sent to Keith Milne, Minister, Boronia Church of Christ, PO Box 245 Boronia 3155. Replies should reach him no later than 28 July.

Leadership 2000 invades America

Perspectives on leadership and evangelism

On 21 June, the United States was invaded by a group of 30 ministers from Australian Churches of Christ, who will be sharing in a training program, organised by a senior minister's group and Christian Projects.

The program will expose the group to a variety of larger churches and their staff in Los Angeles and San Diego, and will give them a chance to meet some leading church consultants. Speakers will include Bruce Larson, Carl Ortiz, Dr Medford Jones, Carl George and Graydon Jessop. Experienced ministers from Australia will also be sharing perspectives from their own church life, and will be addressing such issues as team ministry, forward planning, leading a church through change and leadership dynamics.

After the Leadership 2000 program some will be sharing in conventions and evangelism seminars organised by the Christian Church (both Independent and Disciples). Barry McMurtrie, Wollongong, will be speaking at both these events. A group will also be visiting the significant Light of the World Church at Indianapolis (a black Disciples of Christ congregation).

Those attending include Bill Addison (Mandurah, WA), Graham Agnew (Marion, SA),

Bruce Armstrong (Toowoomba, Qld), Jay Bacik (Northside, NSW), Allan Blyth (Howrah, Tas), Rod Brown (Knoxfield, Vic), Brian Bruce (Narellan, NSW), David and Debbie Buesnel (Warragul, Vic), Paul Cameron (Doncaster, Vic), Chek Chia (Grace Church, Vic), Ron Elbourne (Glen Waverley, Vic), Mike Folland (The Patch, Vic), Tim Hanna (Berwick, Vic), Alan Hirsch (South Melbourne, Vic), Stephen Kearns (Burwood, NSW), Ted Keating (Nunawading, Vic), Darren Kittel (Kensington Park, SA), Barry McMurtrie (Wollongong, NSW), Milton Oliver (Sunbury, Vic), Ross Pelling (Noarlunga, SA), Paul Potter (Belconnen, ACT), David Ratten (Mildura, Vic), Ray Smith (Gisborne, Vic), Stephen Templeton (Dawson St, Ballarat, Vic), John Sweetman (Bendigo, Vic), Phil Webber (Brooklyn Park, SA), Jeff Weston (Hobart City, Tas) and Carol Wilson (Northside, NSW).

This is the second Leadership 2000 training program, the first being held in Singapore in 1989.

Christian Projects who are funding the project is almost entirely funded by its trading arm which helps churches purchase stationery and other supplies. You can contact them on 008 24 2904 (free call) for a price list.

Churches of Christ Logo Competition

In the 5 June issue we announced a competition for the most fanciful interpretation of the Churches of Christ logo. Entries close 24 July.

One of the entries received so far comes from Bill Flett (Ann St, Brisbane):

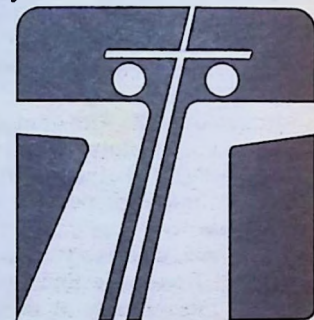
"Much has already been said about the airport runway, with our much-vaunted Air Traffic Controllers pointing the incoming 747B in different directions, but, really the meaning is clear.

Just turn the whole thing upside down—see? A poor minister, bags under his or her eyes, heavily frowning, brow split by another headache, eyes popping through lack of sleep—an amazingly accurate

characterisation of the strains and stresses of Churches of Christ leadership. Yet, take heart—remember, our logo is in an inverted position!

So, lighten up, ye Christians! Rejoice!

Church life is better than you think!"



CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION

A training program designed for personal and professional development in ministry is offered each year at Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute.

The course is for 9 months full-time (3x3 month units) commencing on February 22nd 1994, and concluding on November 11th 1994. (Applicants may apply for one 3 month unit only). There are on-call allowances for weekend and evening duty.

3 study grants of up to \$5,000 are available for those undertaking the full 9 month course (inclusive of on-call allowances).

Applicants should have previous experience in pastoral care.

Closing date for applications: August 27th 1993.

Enquiries and requests for application forms should be directed to: Mrs Jan Wade, Director, Clinical Pastoral Education, Pastoral Care Department.

Telephone: (03) 641 5367. Fax: (03) 670 3357.

Peter Mac

Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute
481 Lt. Lonsdale St., Melbourne, Vic. 3000.

Establishing Networks

Mildura's Telelink program



• John Vicars (coordinator) and David Ratten (senior minister)

For many people, their telephone is one of the few links they have with the real world outside their doors. However, it is still a limited means of communication. When some of these people are introduced to a Telelink program, it brings new dimensions into their lives, new friends, information and the pleasure of good conversation with their peers once more.

The Mildura, Vic, church is developing a special ministry called Telelink. Late in 1991, a trial Telelink program was commenced under the leadership of John Vicars, one of its members. John has had over nine years of experience with Telelink programs and knows their value, especially for elderly, housebound people.

Telelink is simply a name given to a program that uses Telecom Australia's Conferencing facilities to allow for up to 10 people to meet together on their telephones for discussion. It's a little like the old country telephone "party line", where people got together for a good old "natter." The Mildura church has two groups of seven people currently meeting on a weekly basis for about 45 minutes. Each person in the group can talk and listen to the other members, and it's all done on the telephone. What do they talk about? Anything they like, the weather, rhubarb and apple pie,

musical cards on a gravestone, or whatever takes their fancy!

The aim of this program is to break down the wall of silence and isolation, and build up spiritual and supportive networks for these older, lonely people. Meeting through Telelink can give a sense of purpose, belonging and hope. Participants are able to socialise at their own level, share in information and even education. They have much to contribute and bring many years of experience and knowledge with them. One of the most encouraging things is the way that participants will begin to care for, and support each other.

With the provision of some government funding for next few months or so, John is able to work full-time at developing the program beyond the two groups currently operating.

Telelink is largely directed at people in the community who need the support of their peers. Too many, especially older, frail, people are cut off from the mainstream of life. Often they have resigned themselves to loneliness and isolation. Telelink seeks to redress this by simply putting a small group of people together on the telephone so that they can share and talk and live a little. Telelink will never replace the human touch, but it will help them to realise that someone cares.

Tax Guide for Ministers

Valuable information

It is that time of year when we all need to consider our taxation position and preparation of income tax returns.

To assist ministers in completing their 1993 income tax returns, Saward Dawson Wright, Chartered Accountants, have prepared a Tax Guide as a supplement to the Taxation Office provided TaxPack. The Tax Guide covers most types of income likely to result from pastoral duties and the relevant deductions which can be claimed. Some of the major points outlined in the Tax Guide include:

- Timetable for return lodgement.
- Impact of self-assessment.
- Treatment of taxable allowances compared with fringe benefits.
- Tax status of "gifts" received.

The Mildura church would welcome any inquiries from other churches interested in the Telelink program, or information from other churches running similar programs.

- Substantiation and record-keeping required for deductions.
- Alternative methods for claiming motor vehicle deductions.
- Taxation rate schedule and eligible rebates.

The Tax Guide confirms that lodgement of tax returns is on a self-assessment basis. This places the onus on the taxpayer to ensure that the return is correct at the time of lodging and that all record-keeping is in order.

A free copy of the Tax Guide is available by contacting the office of Saward Dawson Wright on (03) 898 9531.

Correction

In the article by Ken Stothard, "Understanding The Doctrine of the Covenant" (*The Australian Christian* 19 June) a incorrect reference appeared in the text. The final Scripture quote in the second last paragraph should have been Heb. 10: 28, not Heb. 10:23 as printed.

Tax Deductible?—You Decide

The lodgement of personal and business tax returns for the 1993 year continues to be based upon self-assessment.

The obligation is on each taxpayer to ensure returns are correct and necessary records maintained.

Saward Dawson Wright has the professional expertise and experience to advise on business and taxation issues and assist with the preparation of all types of tax returns.

Contact: Cathy Braun, ACA on (03) 898 9531

Principals
Bruce Saward
Cliff Dawson



Associates
Jenny Stewart
Cathy Braun

Saward Dawson Wright

Chartered Accountants

9 Prospect Street, Box Hill 3128. Telephone (03) 898 9531

The Kukatja people of Balgo Hills —A Force Ten Project

Aboriginal self-help project

The Kukatja people are an Aboriginal community living at Balgo Hills, on the northern fringe of the Great Sandy Desert. The area is surrounded by spinifex plains of red dust and sand, and the nearest town is Halls Creek, WA, about 260 km away. Temperatures reach a sweltering 45° degrees. Rain is scant, averaging only around 258 mm a year, with most of this falling during a short three or four day period. In fact, it was the wind and dust storms that circulate across the area that caused the people to name the place Balgo, which means "a dirty wind".

The Catholic Mission was established at Balgo in the late 1930s and the Kukatja stayed settled around the Mission. In the early eighties, the Catholic Church ceded responsibility for Balgo to the community, but has continued to provide a pastoral and advisory presence,

supplying health and education staff to serve the community. At present, 500 Aboriginal and 30 non-Aboriginal service personnel live at Balgo.

Throughout the time at Balgo, the older people in the community have maintained their culture and law. In the early eighties, it was this fact that prompted the community to take steps to pass on the values of Aboriginal culture to young people in the community.

The people asked the church to take responsibility for their school and, because language is an important means to preserve culture and tradition, they also asked that the school be a bilingual one. Outside the school situation, the children rarely had to use English, so education in their own language was vital.

The Kukatja language and culture are taught by the com-

munity people, and language concepts and outlook serve as the basis for all other schooling activities. The community's support and its interaction within Luurnpa School, combined with the use of initial language concepts and the presence of dedicated, experienced and long-staying teachers, has meant that the Balgo children are much more literate in both English and Kukatja than their counterparts who had attended the former Government school and had been taught in English only.

As the school has evolved and grown, so too has the demand for appropriate reading books. Realising that stories about familiar concepts would be the best way to teach the children, the community discussed how this could best be achieved. They decided that the old people in the community should be encouraged to tell

stories about their past, and their cultural activities. These stories—which cover such things as how people hunt and how to make bush sandals—have been written, illustrated and reproduced by community members in story books for the children to use.

Australian Catholic Relief funded this initiative in 1983, and in 1993 provides \$12,000 to help cover the salary of the coordinator for the Literacy Centre. While donations to this project are non-tax deductible, support for this project will enable future funding for Aboriginal self-development activities to continue.

This is the July project for Force Ten (the Australian Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Relief working together). Details of such projects can be obtained from Force Ten, PO Box C199, Clarence Street, Sydney 2000.

Call for Recognition of Native Title

Open letter from the Uniting Church

The national leaders of the Uniting Church in Australia and leaders of the church's Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress urged the Commonwealth and State Governments to legislate as soon as possible for the permanent recognition of native title throughout Australia.

They said it was morally right for Aboriginal people to have a power of veto on the use of Aboriginal land, and that future government negotiations must involve Aboriginal representatives.

The UCA leaders used an open letter to the Prime Minister and State Premiers to respond to the government's inability to reach an agreement on the High Court's Mabo ruling. They said they were con-

vinced of the urgency of legislating for permanent recognition of native title for several reasons:

- such recognition would provide the best opportunity to redress the dispossession and suffering of Aboriginal people,
- it was a matter of justice for all Australians,
- it was crucial to the process of reconciliation,
- it was imperative that national guidelines be agreed,
- it would save lives and improve standards of social and physical health among Aboriginal people,
- the long-standing sufferings and grievances of Aboriginal people deserved a courageous and permanent solution.

Mabo Posturing

A leading church spokesman has warned that extremist statements from both sides in the Mabo dispute could set back the quest for national healing.

Ian Allsop, President of the Australian Council of Churches (and National and Victorian Conference Secretary), urged federal and state governments to negotiate in good faith towards implementation of the High Court's Mabo decision.

"Hesitation by government leaders, or political posturing by non-Aboriginal and Ab-

original sectional interest groups, could well damage the process of reconciliation," Ian said.

"Our country must not lose this chance to redress the injustice of years past and begin a new chapter in relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians."

L. C. F. Higgins

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Aboriginal News

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Christian Fellowship

Urgent Help Needed!

The Mareeba Aboriginal Christians have been without a pastor for six years. During all that time the elders, Vincent Mathieson, Tom Mitchell and George Meldrum, have carried on to the best of their ability. They have undertaken Bible College training via correspondence. They have kept regular programs running. They have even taken the Gospel to outlying Chillagoe, a few hours away along corrugated roads. The whole church has been faithfully carrying on through thick and thin.

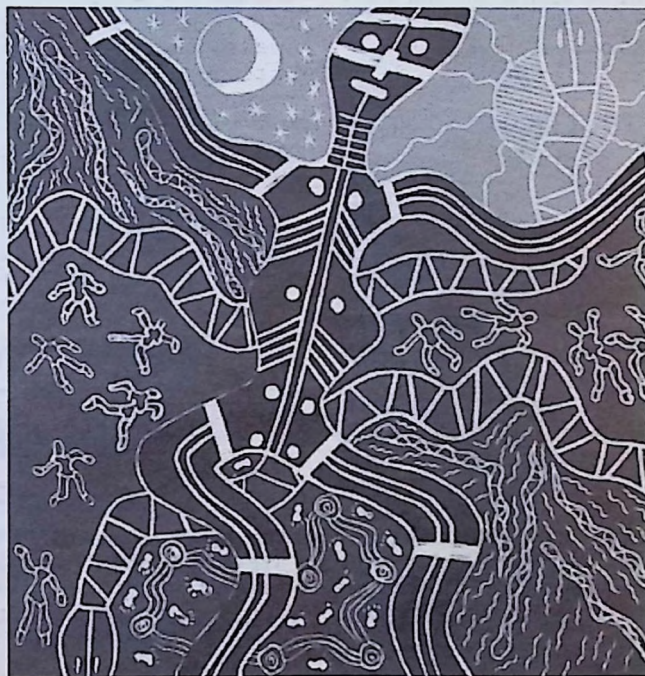
Recently, sickness has taken its toll, with both George and his wife, Estelle, ending up in hospital. Also, older members of families have needed extra care, causing their adult children to be unavailable to drive buses, and help out with youth group and Sunday School. The number of attenders has steadily decreased in recent months.

They need help! Is anyone available to visit for even a couple of weeks? They would love someone to bring messages, or help with youth group or Sunday School, or visit with people in town, or lead Bible studies, or show, in some way, that they are concerned. If readers can assist they should phone Lyle Morris on (077) 45 1212.

Concern

At the beginning of June, pastor Lindsay Grant from Logan City Aboriginal Church, Brisbane, Qld, attended a conference in Sydney. While there he heard of a group attempting to revive Aboriginal spirit worship. The Assemblies of Biami have published a book *The Book Of Yah*. According to Aboriginal legend, Biami is the spirit who made the earth, sky and seas. The Assemblies of Biami claim that Biami is the one true god of all Aboriginal Australians. They have applied to the Queensland government for funding to print 2,000 more

copies, and for a mini-bus with which to tour Aboriginal centres throughout the state. This is the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, so their application could receive consideration. Please pray that they will be unsuccessful and that they will not wreak havoc.



Church Activities

Mareeba really appreciated the visit of Richard and Shirley Pearce to Cairns in the middle of June. The church would be able to put any old, pre-loved Redemption Songbooks to good use. Contact Vincent Mathieson with any offers on (070) 92 1043.

Normanton reports that around 85 young people attend the after-school program which the Christian Centre runs. Two folks, Peter Campbell and Margery Nimble, were welcomed into fellowship, after deciding to give their lives to Christ in May. About 30 children went on a Sunday School outing to the river to fish. Unfortunately, no catches of any size were reported.

Indigenous Peoples Kit

Resources for discussion and reflection

Each year for One World Week (15-22 August this year) the Australian Council of Churches together with Australian Catholic Relief produces resource materials on some issue that is facing Australian society. This year, with 1993 being the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, the kit focusses

churches or groups can become involved in specific action.

Areas of challenge are: Australian Aboriginals; Aboriginal art, drama and literature; material on a Treaty between Aboriginals and Australian society, along with a discussion on the implication of the Mabo case; Aboriginal support groups; racism; indigenous spirituality; colonialism today and material on other indigenous peoples in South and Central America, North America and the Asia-Pacific region.

One World kits and other resources are available from: The NSW Ecumenical Council (Box C199 Clarence St PO, Sydney 2000. Phone (02) 299 2215); The South Australian Council of Churches (155 Pirie St, Adelaide 5000. Phone (08) 232 0070); Queensland Churches Together (PO Box 2278, Brisbane 4001. Phone (07) 221 9599); World Christian Action, Victoria (Level 4, 306 Little Collins St, Melbourne 3000. Phone (03) 650 6811); The Tasmanian Council of Churches (29 Bathurst St, Hobart 7000. Phone (02) 34 2543); or The Conference of Churches of Western Australia (1st Floor, 10 Pier St, Perth 6000. Phone (09) 221 1732).

on this issue. The claim is made: "Our aim is to ensure a discussion based on fact, not fiction; reality, not mere emotion."

The kit contains material for discussion groups, worship services and areas where

At Logan City, the ladies held their inaugural meeting on 4 June. They plan to hold meetings and clothing sales simultaneously on the last Friday of each month. About 22 young people attend Sunday School regularly. Numbers have been disappointing at morning services on Sunday, but more come along at night. The church ran a successful Market Day at the end of May, raising \$372.

—Ken Tedford



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Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to
200 words

Not Christians, but Compassion Shames Us

To the Editor,

I regret that Nancy Souness ("AC" 5 June) was upset at my reference to the Good Pagan, which was not directed at Professor Hollows in particular, but at those people who do not profess to be Christians, but who display in their living and in their character, that most Christlike quality, compassion.

I have a deep appreciation and respect for the late Fred Hollows, whose life of compassionate service to the poor and underprivileged would leave many of us in our discipleship, far behind.

Soon after Professor Hollows' death I listened to a recording of him being interviewed by Carolyn Jones on her session *The Search for Meaning* on National Radio. When he was asked by Carolyn about the place of religion in his life he made no claim to being a Christian, as much as I would have liked to have heard him say so. I would like to say, though, that my heart warmed toward him when he talked about his love of poetry and then quoted some lines that are amongst the loveliest in the whole of English poetry—from Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*. He must have been a wonderful

person to talk to when he had time to relax. His reference to his patient and gracious wife at the close of the interview was one of the most moving testimonies that I have heard made of any person. The tape of the interview is available from the ABC in Sydney. It's worth buying and listening to if you haven't heard it.

So—back to the question that exercises the minds of some of us, "What of those who make no claim to be Christians, but whose compassion and active expression of it leave a lot of us far behind?" —Ken Dawson

(Brooklyn Park, SA)

What Kind of Society?

To the Editor,

We are writing to endorse the words of Archbishop Keith Rayner when he says "economics is to be our servant, not our master" (*The Age* 31 May, "Opinion—Analysis") and to urge people to ask themselves, "What kind of society do we want to produce."

Governments are elected to create or sustain an environment where people are cared for in relation to the ethos of that society. Our ethos has been, more or less, one of a fair go; where everyone, rich, poor or middle income, can take advantage of quality education, health care and public transport, all of which go towards enjoyment of the environment

in which we find ourselves. It is that ethos which is under threat, not only by the economic rationalism embarked upon by our governments, but also the attitudes within society which put them there in the first place.

Archbishop Rayner challenges us to change our ideas about our standard of living, so that every family unit, couple, or independent individual, can live with dignity.

There was a man in history who challenged someone who came to him for counselling in just this way. He suggested to sell all they had and give it to the poor. Only then, for that person, could the real riches of life be known. That same man lived and taught the philosophy of bearing one another's burdens, and of reaping the results of what one sows. If we continue to sow the seedlings of economic rationalism within

our society's psyche then we will continue to reap frustration, anger, injustice and poverty of spirit.

Our feeling of powerlessness against the brute force of economics, can only be overcome by people working towards a change in attitude within society about society, which will then be reflected through our governments.

—Knoxfield Worship in the Round, Knoxfield, Vic
(Pat Rivett, Robert Kennedy, Lorna McCredden, Stan McCredden, Helen Kennedy, Lyn Rowler, Rod Brown, Greg Pettifer, Bruce Anderson, K Rivett)

Violence Against Women

To the Editor,

I cannot agree with Colin Johnson when he says that *Naming Violence Against Women*

Letters from Tertius

God's Answer

To the Editor,

We were given a little devotional book and my wife and I have been using it for our bedtime reading for a quarter. It was only on the last night that I noticed the back page. It had two columns. One was headed "Prayer Requests" and the one alongside was headed "God's Answers".

I wondered if it is meant to keep readers thankful when God answers their prayers, rather than have them take answers for granted. But, as usual, I have problems with it.

Can I always expect God to answer prayers in just the way I want? What if God in his love decides that to answer my prayer in my way would be detrimental to me or someone else, and, therefore, answers my prayer so differently that I don't recognise it as an answer?

A couple of Sundays ago our minister preached on prayer, from James I think. It said something about God not giving us what we want because we want it for our own selfish ends. I can imagine if I kept a prayer balance sheet on the "God's Answer" side, there might well be a list of "No's".

I've heard of people praying for years for the salvation of a loved one before it finally happened. Obviously God respected the stubborn right of those being prayed for to keep saying no, until, finally, love broke through. But a balance sheet, like the one at the back of the book, gives the impression that God should make it possible to have an accurate reconciliation at the end of each quarter.

I wonder if I listened too carefully to my mother who always used to say, "God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform."

—Tertius

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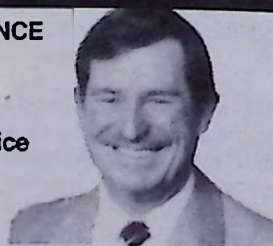
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Letters to the Editor



at NATIONAL CONVENTION

CELEBRATE THE FAITH AND AFFIRM THE
WITNESS OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN TODAY'S
WORLD

at

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND CONVENTION
OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA.

GUEST SPEAKER
DR NOEL VOSE,
PAST PRESIDENT BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

**SEPTEMBER 5-11
1993 MELBOURNE**

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is itself violent against men. To compare any such discomfort that we men may suffer because of the document, to the suffering of women and children victims, is to trivialise their pain. The evidence from surveys and experience indicates that the behaviours described are much more common in the Christian community than he (or I) like to think. If Colin were to talk to the victims of sexual and physical violence in our churches, I am sure his unrealistic image of church people would be dented, if not shattered, and he would have great compassion for the victims.

Of course, the majority of the men in our churches are respectful and caring, but there are many who are not, especially when within the privacy of their own four walls.

I appreciate Colin's concern that actions of purest intent may be misunderstood, but with a little sensitivity we men should

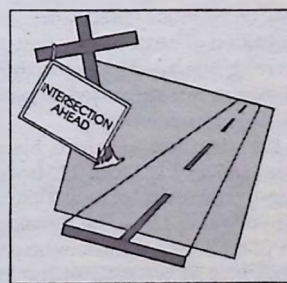
be able to detect any discomfort on the part of a woman and modify our behaviour accordingly. There will be false accusations. I have uncovered two among the hundreds of victims I have seen over the past eleven years—but what does Colin suggest? Should we sweep it all under the carpet because of these two, and ignore the hundreds, thus conspiring to keep the silence and collaborating with the perpetrators against the victims?

I think not!

The majority of men in the churches endeavour to be as respectful and responsible as they know how in their relationships with women. A sizeable minority do not. Women and children victims deserve our respect Colin, let's listen to them and hear what they have to say, as unpalatable as some of it may be.

—Reg Brand
(Director, Domestic Violence
Service, Adelaide, SA)

Creating DISCIPLES of CHRIST



in the local church

MELBOURNE 1993

Western Suburbs General Conference
Friday Evening and Saturday
27th - 28th August

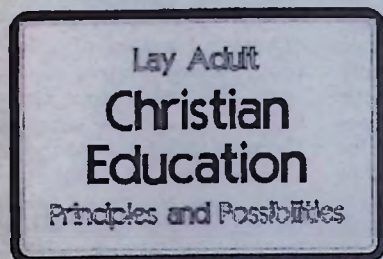
Eastern Suburbs General Conference
Friday Evening and Saturday
3rd - 4th September

National Minister's Refresher Conference
for Churches of Christ Ministers only
Tuesday through Friday
31st August - 3rd September

EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATION JULY 16TH

Conference Information - 03 783 3235

Books



**Lay Adult
Christian
Education**
Principles and Possibilities

Philip Hughes & Peter Bentley
Christian Research Association

Lay Adult Christian Education Principles and Possibilities

by Philip Hughes and Peter Bentley (Christian Research Association) \$6.

The Christian Research Association in 1991 undertook a study of lay adult Christian education resources and methodologies in the Uniting Church in Victoria. This booklet is a result of that report and it widens the scope to ask questions and push churches to examine the role of Christian education in their pro-

gram. There are some suggestions for developments that will mean the church is more effective in this area of ministry. For anyone involved in a Christian education ministry, or for churches who are serious about what they are offering in this area, it would be good to use this paper in a thorough examination of current practice and in the development of future goals and programs.

It is available from the Christian Research Association, Locked Bag 23, Kew 3101 for \$6 which includes postage. —CRA

Clap your hands!

by Larry Tomczak (Word Books) \$9.50

The "revised, expanded and updated edition" traces Larry Tomczak's story, from his childhood in USA, to his leadership role in a Christian group seeking to worship as a New Testament church. Tomczak was a Polish Catholic whose experiences of the Catholic church in the 50s and 60s caused him some of the anguish others also have identified. The constant fear of going to hell ensured that he led a religious life. However, the belief of Catholics at that time that "we're not supposed to read the Bible" left Larry with no personal faith in God.

The title hints at the direction in which his conversion (described in an entertaining way), led him. He became a part of the Catholic Charismatic movement, writing this book as he was moving out of that involvement into the development of a New Testament church. A good book for those who enjoy autobiographies. It also challenges us as we read of the earnestness with which Tomczak talked to others of Christ following his own conversion experience. —Julie Trinnick

Going and Growing

by D & T Van Halsema (Baker Book House)

In these days when overseas mission seems to be relegated to a position of less importance in many churches, a readable and concise book about the ongoing, real need for cross-cultural mission is welcome. *Going and Growing* is such a book, which mainly focuses on cross-cultural mission in an overseas context. The Van Halsemas present brief outlines of several well-known missionaries' lives, in the chapter called "Imitate their faith". They continue with statistics concerning world population growth, the number who have never heard of Christ and a focus on the fact

that presently Christian giving of funds and mission work is mainly to benefit Christians. The "fear factor" is considered as a reason for a reluctance to be involved in overseas mission. The Van Halsemas' response to this in part is to point to faith and the power it gives over fear. The book is suitable for using as the basis of studies on mission. It is written from a western perspective but could be adapted for use in a non-western setting. For those considering cross-cultural mission the book raises some of the relevant issues in a simple style. —Julie Trinnick

Music

His Gift

by Grace Knight (Grace MusicK) \$8.00.

His Gift, a simple yet pleasant musical, is a worthy alternative to the traditional carol service at Christmas.

Grace Knight's 20 minute musical is easy to produce and has an appealing style, suitable for a Sunday School group or choir.

It is a story set in the busy 1990s with a grandmother taking time out from Christmas preparations to tell her grandchildren about the real message of the festive season.

The story starts with the virgin conception, covers the journey to Bethlehem, through to the birth of the saviour and the visit by the three wise men.

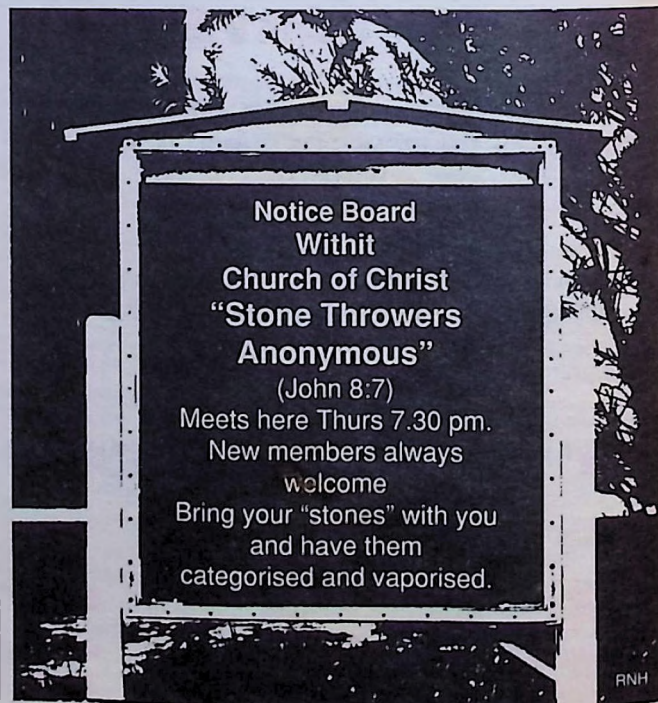
There are 18 short songs, allowing many people to take part in this production.

Set design ideas are included with the play to assist in production, which can be as simple or elaborate as required.

Audience participation can be incorporated at various intervals through the insertion of favourite Christmas carols.

The musical arrangement is simple enough for any church with a pianist.

Available from Grace MusicK, PO Box 26, Glenbrook 2773 for \$8 (including postage). A basic teaching tape is also available for \$7.00 (also including postage). There are discounts of 10% for orders of five or more copies. —Janine O'Rourke



Historic Move

"Building" on the past

The existing chapel in Margaret Street, Toowoomba, Qld, was built in two stages. The first stage was the demolition of the Congregational church building at the corner of Margaret and Neil Streets and its re-erection on the present site in 1889. In 1901, planning was commenced for additions to complete the church to its present form. The architects were Eaton and Bates. Tenders were called and Mr J. Renwick, a Toowoomba builder, was successful. The foundation stone was laid on 24 June 1903 and the completed building was opened on 16 April 1904. Financial difficulties forced the Congregational Church to dispose of the building and the last service was held on 7 December 1919.

The building then passed to the Trades Hall, who sold it to Churches of Christ in 1929. The first communion service of the Church of Christ was held on 7 April 1929.

O u r
f o r e-

bears, who had been meeting in Little Russell Street, purchased this building in the Great Depression. Their faith and courage should be an example to us all.

Progress and development allowed for the commencement of the Withcott church in 1982, our Toowoomba church's centenary year. Then, in 1988—Australia's bicentennial year, our Kingsthorpe church was commenced.

Continued membership growth demanded action and a 2.02 hectare block of land was purchased in Hume Street, just three kilometres south of Margaret Street, in 1986. In 1990, the church entered a fund raising campaign with Howard Cargill called "Shaping our Destiny". The members promised to sacrifice over the following three years to the tune of \$1.54 million, about \$1 million of that in cash.

Then the Taxation Dept authorised a 50% tax deductibility for this new building fund because of the extensive youth education program.

The Margaret Street property was put on the market in November 1989, but State Heritage legislation passed early in 1990 made it virtually unsaleable. In co-operation with John

Godby (then Qld Conference Secretary), we contested the Heritage listing and

Feature Electives at National Convention

A smorgasbord of studies

As well as the Bible studies and rallies, daily themes relating the keynote addresses brought by Dr Noel Vose will set the context for elective options, which will be part of the National Convention program being held in Melbourne 5-11 September.

"Christ as Resource: For Community and National Life" will be the Wednesday theme. Elective sessions will be in the areas of politics and religion, domestic violence, and having an integrity in our use of creation.

"Christ as Resource: In Life's Crisis" will set the theme for the Thursday morning, when elective sessions relate to illness, death and dying, divorce and marriage breakdown, pastoral issues for those without work, and a Christian response to AIDS issues.

A wide range of electives relating to mission will follow the Saturday address on "Christ as Resource for Christian Mis-

sion". Sessions will be held on working with the poor, the Gospel in the world of sport, women as leaders in mission, newcomers to Australia, and justice and peace from a biblical perspective.

The weekend sessions will be an excellent time for members of church boards to attend, at least on a day basis, because, during the Saturday afternoon, the emphasis will be on local church issues. Topics such as children in the Church, youth and faith, how to pastor to everyone, prayer and meditation, grace, singles and new hope, and living in unity will be available.

A major feature will be the report of a team visit to the US churches by a group of ministers. Led by Ted Keating, the panel will challenge our Australian churches to address some of the issues which inhibit our witness and mission.

Details on National Conference and Convention and on the elective program can be obtained from 77 Capel St, West Melbourne 3003. Phone (03) 326 8900.

after two years, received a ministerial decree de-listing the property.

Just over 12 months later, on 24 May 1993, contracts were signed for the sale of the property for \$750,000 to the Hog's Breath Cafe. They will renovate the building, which will remain standing.

Our last evening service in this building will be held on 25 July at 7 pm, with a supper to

follow. Our last morning service will be on 1 August at 9.30 am.

You would be welcome to attend these special days of celebration, thanksgiving and progress. We anticipate our Hume St Southside opening in 1994. —Bruce Armstrong

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Caring for the Unexpected

Seated in the small dinghy approaching the village was a man from Bunam and a white woman. Was it Fay Christensen? As the boat came closer he could see that it was a stranger. This was when he was informed that he was having visitors to spend the night.

It was about 3.30 on a cold wet afternoon and Titus had been waiting for the rain to finish before paddling home along the Keram river. Now he had to leave the canoe behind, and travel in the dinghy with his daughters and the visitors to make arrangements for their stay.

What could he give the woman to eat? He only had the usual food that was eaten in the village. What if she didn't like it? Well, he would ask her whether she could eat soup saksak. She said she'd eat a little so that was all right.

Now where could she sleep? His house was a bit old and needed some work. He'd have to get someone to sweep out the new house. Let's hope she doesn't mind climbing a ladder and sleeping on a limbum (split wood) floor. After she'd unrolled her mattress, he helped her tie the mosquito net up and shortly afterwards it was time to eat. He was trying to speak to her in English, but she seemed to understand some tok pisin. It was good to sit down with the two visitors and spend some time talking over a meal.

The next morning, he sent someone for a drinking coconut for the guests. He told his wife to prepare some biscuit saksak and cook some bananas so that his visitors would have plenty to eat. After breakfast, it was time to visit the site for the proposed new Churches of Christ Bible School at Gandep.

Then the woman had to go on to her next destination, Tumba on the Ramu river. With some other people he accompanied her on the three-hour walk across, helping to carry her bags. First they had to walk through a muddy part of the bush. He hoped that she wouldn't slip over too often. Further on there was plenty of long grass and hot sun. The woman stopped at one point to apply some cream to stop the sun from burning her. She didn't know which grasses were the ones with prickles, so he had to warn her of several types that they passed.

He had been worried about this visitor when she first arrived the previous afternoon but by the time they reached Tumba he recognised her as a sister in Christ. Sometimes God asks us to care in unexpected ways.

—Julie Trinnick



Love your Neighbour

These were the words echoing in my head recently. I was looking at a picture reflecting on the events of the past year when my neighbour's wife fell ill and died.

We had taken her to a doctor, then to hospital. I appealed to everyone to help her, nursed her, but it was all in vain. She passed away? No. But the question was, "What can I do for myself?" It's the first time the full weight of the commandment has truly hit home to me.

It seems that Jesus' commandment is much dismissed, by our modern, organised society, as meaningless.

To really love someone, we really do have to be looking for that love to go out to them. We need more than "self-focussed". I guess that's why we don't love our neighbour as you are on yourself.

I reckon we could all do with a little more prayers, our time, our talents and even our material resources. So who is your neighbour?



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ural Caring

Sharing a God who Cares



It is Sunday afternoon, and we pile into our van. We turn off the main street, down a muddy track, and drive as far as we can. We stop at a ditch and park the van. We climb out of the van and walk, past houses made from all kinds of scrap materials—mainly timber, iron and cardboard.

The track is muddy, so we walk with care, greeting all the people sitting on their verandahs, or working at cutting grass and building houses. Even so, I manage to slither off a muddy round log, and put my foot into some oily black mud.

A chorus of sympathetic cries goes up from the verandahs. I laugh and assure them that it's not the first time this delicate looking white foot has had mud on it, and it won't be the last, I'm sure!

We arrive at a platform made of scrap timber, with a roof overhead. We are told that it usually houses a pool table, but that tonight it is in use for our service. An old man hurries out with a jug of water and, to my embarrassment, begins to wash my feet, ignoring my cries of protest.

We sit down on a seat on the platform, and gradually people begin to assemble. Some of the Madang church members arrive, carrying guitars.

After introductions

and handshaking, we start. We sing, pray and I preach. The children are a bit restless, but the adults are absorbed in the story from the Old Testament and its application for today. Afterwards we pray for the sick people, sing some more, and everybody shakes hands with everybody else, from the youngest to the oldest.

A man with a kerosene lamp lights our way back to our car. Amid a chorus of goodbyes, we leave. We will be back next week with another story of God's dealings with people. We pray that these people will decide to follow the God who cares. Will you pray for them?

—Fay Christensen



our as Yourself

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our?

—Peter Clegg, Fiji

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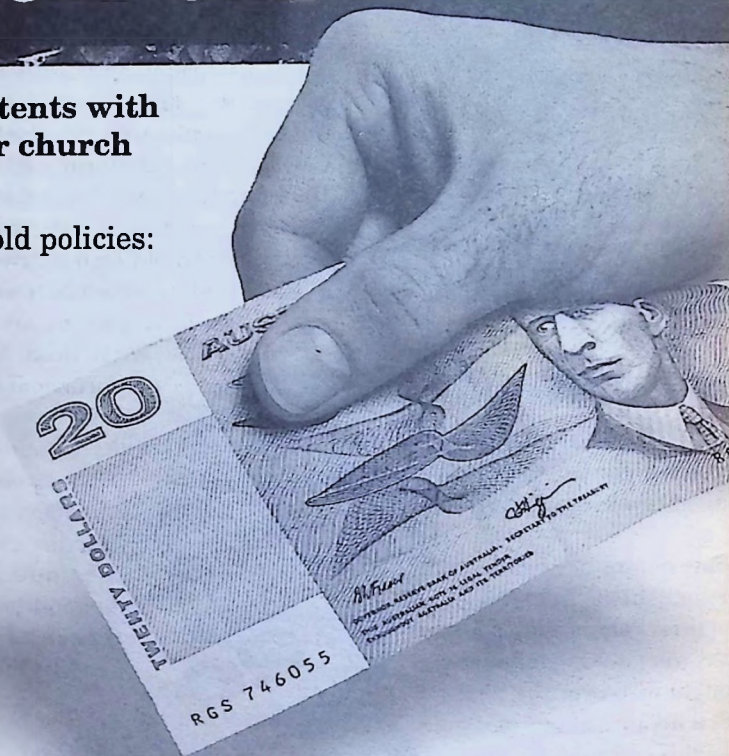
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Lecturer in Old Testament Studies

CCTC appoints Merryl Blair



• Merryl Blair

The Board of the Churches of Christ Theological College (Mulgrave, Vic) is delighted to announce the appointment of Mrs Merryl Blair as lecturer in Old Testament studies (half-time), commencing in January, 1994.

Merryl has had a long association with the College, as both a student, and more recently, as a tutor and adjunct lecturer.

She is currently serving in a team ministry, on a part-time basis, at the Hartwell, Vic, church, and is also pursuing post-graduate studies in the Old Testament with the Melbourne College of Divinity.

Merryl is married to Graeme and they have two children, Charis and Cameron. Being the first woman to take up a position on the permanent teaching faculty of the college, Merryl's appointment has exciting historic significance.

Merryl is a gifted teacher who inspires students by her energetic and challenging teaching style. She will be a valued addition to the faculty.

Merryl's appointment, together with the recent full-time appointments of Stephen Curkpatrick (New Testament and Theology) and Alan Niven (Pastoral Studies), reestablishes the College faculty on a firm footing for 1994, and will enable the College to continue to provide a balanced and sound theological education and ministerial training program.

Queen's Birthday Honours

David Thomas Lowe

In the recent list of Queen's Birthday Honours at least one member of Churches of Christ was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). David Thomas Lowe of the Harlaxton, Toowoomba, Qld, church, received this recognition for his service to disadvantaged youth through Drug Arm, Toowoomba, and to music education.

David was the founding chairman of the Toowoomba branch of Drug Arm. He has been on the Queensland board of Drug Arm for 11 years and was the last chairman of the Toowoomba Temperance League. David felt humbled

to be nominated for his award. "It's not the kind of work you do to get honour, but it highlights what you do and I accept the award for the sake of the work," he said.

David said he tried to get the drug danger message across to youth by speaking at schools, churches and various clubs.

Drug Arm provides counselling to those affected by drug abuse and runs a crisis accommodation centre for street kids.

"We have a street van that goes out on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and supplies basic essentials mainly to young people who have no home. From this work we meet

Faculty Appointment

New lecturer in Biblical Theology

The Board of the Churches of Christ (NSW) Theological College at Carlingford is delighted to announce the appointment of David Timms to the full-time faculty of the College, from the beginning of January, 1994. David will lecture in the area of Biblical Theology.

David has a BA, from Johnson Bible College, with a double major in Biblical Studies and Homiletics, and a MA in Religion, from Emmanuel School of Religion, with a major in New Testament. He will undertake further post-graduate studies along with his teaching role.

After a student ministry at East Corbin Christian Church (Kentucky) he has had two full-time ministries—East Side Christian Church (Elizabethton, Tennessee) and Foothills Church of Christ (WA). He leaves a successful ministry to take up the lecturing role.

David is enthusiastic about ministry in the local church and will bring this focus to his teaching, addressing it to the needs of pastoral ministry. His strong commitment to the Restoration Movement will also be reflected in his teaching.

He is married to Kim and they have two sons Matthew and Caleb. Kim, who comes from Southern California, grew up at the Eastside Christian Church (a church from the Independentstream of our Movement). The church is ministered to by Ben Merold.

At 31 years, David will bring a youthful vitality to the faculty. He is enthusiastic about the possibilities for service, and is looking forward with real anticipation to this new challenge and new direction in ministry.



• David Timms

the people who need accommodation."

David has also run free classes in Toowoomba for the past 23 years at which thousands of people have learned music. He has staged concerts featuring top Australian and

international artists and also runs free organ seminars for church musicians.

"Music is something I enjoy personally and passing on that knowledge is something that brings me a great deal of satisfaction," David said.

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Classifieds

BIRTHS

DEWILDT Walter and Melinda give thanks to God for the safe arrival of their son Joshua William on 11 June, 1993, at Sydney. First grandchild for Joy and Roger of Sydney, and Hennie and Peter of Culburra, NSW.

DEATHS

MOTT Edwin George Henry (Eddie). On 16 June, 1993, at Bendigo Hospital. Aged 78 years. Dearly loved husband of Jean, loving father of Peter, Jan and Trevor (Laughlin), Johnnie and Judy. Dear Pop of Jody and Ben and dear Pa of Emma, Aaron and Daniel. "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25)

IN MEMORIAM

BARBOUR Hilda Ann. A tribute to my Mum who passed away three years ago (13.7.90), aged 90 years. You not once spoke to me in anger or unkindness all my life, you didn't ever hit me. You're my best pal, and I miss you, a mother as lovely as you—Betty.

BURNHAM Frank. 14 July 1992. Fondly remembered by Pris, his loving wife, Peter, Paul and Cherry, and their families.

BURNHAM Frank. Dad, hold my hand all the way, every hour every day. Where no-one stands alone, you'll never walk alone —Paul.

DAVEY Aubrey Roy. Passed away 4 July 1992. Treasured memories of Roy. Beloved husband of Shirley, loving father of Philip and Dorothy, dear grandfather of Glen and Kylie. We miss you so much Dad.

JONES Dr Lloyd Edwin. Precious loving memories of our dear husband, father and grandy, who passed away to be with his Lord, 24 June 1986—Isabella, David, Wendy and family. Still missed, but with gratitude for all he has meant to us, and that the fruit of his labours continue—praise be to God, whom we thank and continue to serve.

WEST June Kathleen. Departed this temporary life 24 June 1992 to be with her Jesus. Precious memories will always be treasured. Life moves on, but love remains in the hearts of husband John, children Robyn, Graeme and Sharon, sons-in-law Colin and Matthew, grandchildren Lachlan and soon to arrive "Wozzie". "God carries his lambs close to his heart."

THANKS

PAGE Iris and family would like to thank our minister Ted Keating, organist Beryl Condict and all our friends who helped make the service held for Alan, Sunday 13 June, such a memorable afternoon. For

all the cards, letters, flowers and goodies we say thank you. In lieu of replies we are giving \$200 to cancer research. May our God bless you all.

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Growing Spiritually

A Life of Growth

W.W. (Dick) Saunders

My late wife, Kathleen, attended Frankston, Vic, church from infancy. I began at age 18. We both accepted Christ in a Thomas Hagger tent mission, August, 1923.

At that point, Kath's spiritual life was furthered and mine was born.

We grew spiritually through service—Kath in the Sunday School, girls' club, YPSCE and as organist—I as ICE Superintendent, YPSCE leader and as teacher/secretary, superintendent at Palmyra Sunday School. I believed God was calling me to ministry and, with Kath's agreement, trained at COB 1927-30.

After marriage, we served at Northcote (where our children, Brian and Valerie, were born), Hindmarsh, SA, Dawson and Peel Streets, Ballarat, in state tent mission work, then Bamba Road, Caulfield. 19 years of administration followed—Department of Social Service, Victorian Temperance Alliance, Vic-Tas Conference Secretary. I was privileged to be Conference President 1952-53. Evidently our spiritual growth made us acceptable leaders.

A North Essendon youth camp 30 May-1 June, 1952, was attended by Brian and Valerie.

Heading home, the campers' bus was involved in a train-bus smash at Boronia. Nine campers were killed instantly (two of them being our Brian (19) and Valerie (17)), and 17 were hospitalised.

Shocked and desolated, we floundered! We had served God for 29 years, and now this! Why? Where were the power, love and goodness of God? He promised (Isaiah 65:24), "Before they call I will answer." He fulfilled that promise. God came to us in that tragedy and used it to deepen our faith and our knowledge of him.

We had thought we knew God adequately! But he drew so near to us then, in so many ways, through so many people, and made himself so real to us, that we came to know him as never before—a living, vital presence, who shared our grief, whose compassion overflowed toward us, who proved all-sufficient to meet our deepest need.

Thereafter, none could convince us that God is only a figment of our imagination. We knew him experientially! Through tragedy and loss we grew to spiritual maturity. "We know that God works in all things for good to those who love him" (Romans 8:28).



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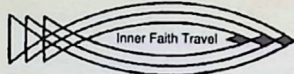
7.00 p.m.

Wednesday

1.15-1.45 p.m.

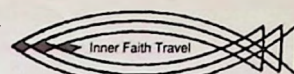
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Curkpatrick

A Gate Hinged on Theology

Stephen Curkpatrick

A Lukan parable about a man who wouldn't go, and indeed couldn't go, through his front gate to his neighbour, demonstrates that our relationship with neighbour always hinges on a particular theology of neighbour. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus follows similar stories in the ancient world in which reversal of situation occurs in the after-life.* Such stories sought to redress the problem of suffering in this life. This parable doesn't work like that, even if it appears to do so. It is firmly orientated toward the present.

There is complete irony in the rich man's attempts to bridge a chasm in the projected after life, when he didn't attempt to bridge the gap through his own front gate.†

The parable works to remind us that there are gaps which should be bridged now, between ourselves and neighbour, and therefore, between ourselves and the Christ, who as the Matthaean tradition reminds us, is always present in disguise in our neighbour in need. Attempts to bridge these gaps in another life are nothing less than futile, when we have every opportunity of doing so now.

The parable poses an imperative for the listener to open their front gate and go to their neighbour, however, their perception or theology of neighbour will determine whether they will or won't. Indeed, whether they can or cannot; for all gates between ourselves and neighbour hinge on a particular theology about neighbour.

If the listener's gate hinges on a theology that asserts that prosperity—personal or cultural—is an indisputable sign of goodness and integrity, while illness, bad fortune and marginalisation are predicated to a lack of righteousness; that person, community or nation will not open the gate and go to their neighbour.

In a world that generated such theological and ethical distinctions, there is no theological reason why the rich man should venture through the gate to his neighbour Lazarus, so he doesn't.

Our theological perception of our neighbour's circumstances in life, especially tragic circumstances, will determine our attitude, and therefore involvement, with our neighbour, near and far. If their tragedy is perceived to be ordained by God, will we want to become involved? Not likely. After all, who are we to question the providential acts of the Almighty who, "treasures up His bright designs And works his sovereign will"?‡

However, if tragedy is perceived to be sheer rotten bad luck, the chance contingencies of nature, such as cyclone and flood, which could happen to any of us at any time, we will want to become involved. Indeed if human tragedy is also perceived to have its genesis in the careless decisions or irrational actions of others, rather than "divine providence", which is perceived as a cosmic chess game, with people being the pieces moved around on the board, we will be stung into compassionate response. Our

theological perception of our neighbour's circumstances in life, especially tragic circumstances, will determine our attitude and contingent actions toward our neighbour. All gates between ourselves and neighbour hinge on our theology of neighbour and, ultimately, God.

If the listener lives by a theology that the after-life will more than adequately compensate for suffering in this life, it is unlikely they will go through their gate to their neighbour either. After all, if the suffering ones of our world will one day be gloriously compensated—why do them out of a better deal then, by reaching out to them now!

If the listener lives by a theology that God will always spell out specifically what we are to do with situations like Lazarus, with clear warnings about the consequences if we don't, they won't go through their front gate either. Our motivation to express God's *shalom*—compassion and community§—is because we have experienced God's *shalom*, not because we are afraid of the consequences if we don't do good. Motiva-

tion to express compassionate community is grounded in grace. We can't help but respond, with initiative and creativity, to God's compassion for all human kind in Jesus the Christ.

The parable is firmly orientated toward the present. Our lives are defined now and proleptically (in anticipation), for eternity, by our relationship to neighbour and, therefore, the Christ who is disguised in our neighbour, on the other side of our front gate. The imperative to be neighbour is as close, as simple, as going through that front gate. But will our theology allow us to do that?

* For example, the Jewish story of a poor scholar and the wealthy tax man Bar Ma'an, in which their situations are reversed; or the Egyptian story of Si-Osiris with a similar reversal of rich and poor. (J. Crossan & other commentators)

‡ *Churches of Christ Hymn Book*, hymn 18.

† According to Bernard Scott, this is central to the parable.

§ The weightier matters of the law (and prophets)—justice, mercy and integrity.

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Happenings

Specialised Life-Orientated Ministries (SLM) is holding a "ministry day" on 6 August, rather than the previous model of a 3 day national conference. The day, being held at Wesley Mission, Sydney, commences with a national board meeting. The annual banquet will be held in the evening and will include the 1993 Friend of SLM award to John Keefe, chief executive officer of the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport. Details of the day through Dr Mark Tronson, SLM National Office, PO Box 229, Moruya 2537. Phone (044) 74 3554. Fax (044) 74 4043.

The Ministry of Defence in the Ukraine has asked the Ukrainian Bible Society for at least 1 million Scriptures for the armed forces. The Bible Society is investigating the possibility of local production.

Muslims in Iran who openly declare Christianity are more likely to be executed following a change in government policy. Under the new policy, converts to Christianity are being charged with "apostasy" or "blaspheming the Prophet Muhammad". Under Islamic law (sharia) a judge is required to issue a death sentence for these offences. Christians inside the country fear the policy change will make evangelistic outreach even more difficult.

March for Jesus, the UK initiated movement that puts the church on the streets, was held on 12 June. Around 1.3 million

Christians in around 40 nations joined March for Jesus bringing a carnival atmosphere to the streets of 850 different towns and cities worldwide.

In northern Quebec, the Inuit (Eskimo) people often have trouble protecting their possessions due to the extreme cold, the snow and the Inuit mode of transport. To avoid damaging their newly published Inuktitut New Testaments many Inuit people have taken to storing the books in plastic or tupperware containers. The New Testament has therefore become known in some areas as the Tupperware Bible.

Since March 1990 the United Bible Societies has sponsored the printing and distribution of 1,893,679 Russian Children's Bibles. 830,000 of these were printed in Russia by the Bible Society in Russia. Plans are well advanced for the further local printing of another 600,000 Children's Bibles by the end of this year.

Breaking a 123-year tradition, the next meeting of the Anglican General Synod will take place in Melbourne, in July 1995. The decision was made at the Standing Committee meeting in Sydney in June. Since its inception in 1872, the Synod has only ever met in Sydney, which is to remain the base for the General Synod office.

Prison Fellowship International wants to run private

prisons in New Zealand, like one it has been operating in Brazil. Tenders for privately-built and managed prisons in Auckland will be let soon. Prison Fellowship has run the Humaita Prison in Sao Jose dos Campos since 1988. It had been closed in 1984 because of a worsening rate of escapes and police brutality and reopened as a private jail through the work of 2 city leaders who were also Christians. Since then, with virtually no financial support from the government but supported by 500 Christian volunteers, the re-offending rates of former inmates at the prison has plummeted to 4% (70% lower than the rate for other prisons in Brazil).

The International Year of Indigenous People is the focus for this year's One World Week, sponsored by the ACC's World Christian Action. In Melbourne a meeting is being held on 9 August at the Uniting Church Centre, 130 Little Collins St, Melbourne, at 11.30 am (BYO lunch, tea & coffee provided). The focus of this meeting will be on the concerns facing both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians and how we work through the implications of the Mabo decision. Discussion will be on the role that the churches and Christians can play. Flo Grant, secretary of the Canberra Aboriginal Church, a member of Churches of Christ, a lecturer, secretary of the Wiradjuri Christian Development and active in the local Aboriginal

community, will speak on these concerns and especially on how they affect Aboriginal women. For further information contact Jean Hillier on (03) 650 6811.

Growing numbers of refugees in the war-torn former Yugoslavia are professing new-found faith and filling up evangelical churches, according to church relief workers in the front-line Croatian town of Osijek, and in Belgrade, the Serbian capital.

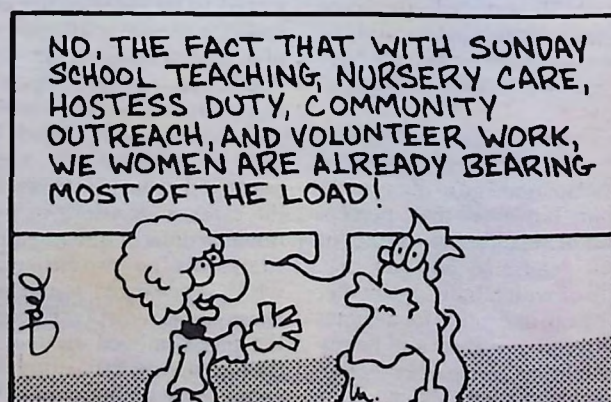
The Gateway Baptist Church at MacKenzie, a Brisbane suburb, has developed a 32 acre property featuring the former Expo 88 Queensland Pavilion as its worship centre. A lake-side amphitheatre, several "prayer ridges" and two dams are other features.

Baptist minister Les Scarborough has become John Mark Ministries' facilitator in Sydney. He joins founder and director Dr Rowland Croucher (Melbourne) and Sue Algate (a Queensland Uniting Church minister who is serving the ministry during 1993). John Mark Ministries is a cross-denominational Christian service organisation offering counselling, consulting, books and seminars to Australia's churches and their leaders. Its special focus is research into why 10,000 Australian pastors and ministers leave for some other religious or secular vocation.

The Churches of Christ Activities Committee are again offering courses in ski touring this winter. They are offering a graded-skills program, where participants will have lots of fun, but also learn to ski well and safely. Activities will take place at Falls Creek and Lake Mountain, and will concentrate on cross-country skiing. The courses are being held 6-8 August (cost, \$60), 13-15 August (cost, \$60) and 3-5 September (cost, \$480—for intermediate only). Fees include food, accommodation, skis and transport and parking between the camp and the snow. Details of costs, experience required, equipment, etc, from Steve Smith on (03) 557 2778 (home) or 882 7229 (work).

"Churches & Social Justice" is a conference on the role of the Christian church in social policy and practice which is being held 17-19 September at Earle Page College, University of New England, Armidale, NSW. The objectives of the conference are to examine the role and record of the major Christian church in national Australian social policy issues and to analyse the options for churches considering intervention in policy debates and policy-making. Registration closes 31 August. Registration forms and details can be obtained from The Conference Officer, New England Conference Management, University of New England, Armidale 2351. Phone (067) 73 2154 or fax (067) 71 1713.

Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kaufmann

"The Panama Deception"

Viney Longthorp

Currently being screened in many independent movie-houses, is Barbara Trent's much acclaimed documentary on the events in Panama in 1989. On 20 December, 1989, American troops invaded Panama, causing widespread suffering, death and destruction. The attack was widely condemned by the world community.

The film traces the history of American involvement in the region, of which this attack was the climax. In 1903 America gained control of the region from the French; one does not need to be a military expert to appreciate how vital Panama and the canal are to American trade and security. After World War II and during the subsequent Cold War, the Pentagon showed real paranoia about the region. J.K. Galbraith referred to it as America's "jugular".

Maybe this explains the savagery of the attack. The film claims that hundreds were left dead, many claim that the toll was in the thousands, with bodies dumped in mass graves. There were 25,000 left homeless, and many thousands more, who were considered "political opponents", were arrested.

The professed aim of the invasion was the capture of Manuel Noriega. Noriega came to power with the assistance of Presidents Reagan and Bush (Bush actually boosted Noriega's income when he was on the CIA payroll); later, Noriega was turned into a "mythical" villain, labelled a vicious drug-lord dictator. Other excuses given for the invasion were the protection of American citizens, the reduction of Noriega's drug trafficking, and the death of an American marine. The overriding reason, according to Trent, was the renegotiation of the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Panama Canal Treaties. Noriega was seen to jeopardise this.

Where such events trouble many of us is the fact that these were the acts of a liberal-democratic society just like us. What alarms us further, as the film so clearly shows, was the utter manipulation of America's mass media by the government. They are depicted as puppets of the White House. The interviewing of scholars,

officials and journalists all tended to show that the news media lacked independence in its coverage and ability to criticise the power elite.

All in all, it is amazing how this film was made, much less distributed in commercial circuits in America. By all accounts it caused George Bush great discomfort.

This film is emphatically not entertainment. Why bother seeing it? More positively, who should see it? There are many of our people in churches in all parts of Australia, who will find

it useful. There are many who are deeply involved in ministries relating to human rights and social justice, who are active in such agencies as Amnesty Inter-

national, Red Cross and various peace movements. Work such as this requires that certain facts are appreciated, even if they are distressing and negative. The film is a competent piece of investigative journalism, after the manner of the ABC's *Four Corners* and the best of Jana Wendt.

The film also needs to be seen in perspective; this is not to make excuses for any nation's policies or action. For as Dean Inge said about the America of the early part of this century, "It is the mark of a great nation that it has great virtues; but a great nation also has the capacity to sin greatly."

Further, the reason why Barbara Trent made the film was not in the spirit of latter-day "America bashing", so fashionable in the recent past. Rather, it is an example of true patriotism. As Pascal Bruckner writes, in *The Tears of the White Man*, "If we are proud of our country, of its technical and cultural accomplishments, why should we try to play innocent

when someone does something repulsive in our name? Every Westerner carries the historical responsibility for his culture. If he claims a part of its greatness, he must also acknowledge his kinship with its worst representatives."

A further perspective on the relationships between some Great Powers and the Third World (of which Panama is part), is offered by Susan George in her recent book, *The Debt Boomerang*. She points out that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, far from helping poor nations—as was intended, has exacerbated their poverty. For these organisations are not democratically run, but are answerable to shareholders, most of whom are related to the power structures of the wealthy nations. The debt structures in the poor nations have escalated to the point where they cannot be repaid; many of these poor nations have, subsequently, had to resort to drug production and predation of the environment. Partly, this explains the policies and actions of Noriega, which incurred the righteous wrath of America.

We should not neglect films such as *Panama Deception*. They alert us to global realities; they may even keep us humble as they alarm us; they remind us that "casting the first stone" is always a hazardous enterprise; and that for every display of hubris, the inevitable nemesis hides around some corner.

Bush boosted Noriega's income

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Panama Deception

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Testing The Work

Doug Ferguson

The confusing voices continue with politicians endlessly dodging the questions and talking in circles. The nation's leaders call each other names and set out to destroy our heritage. So what message does the Lord have for us, that we might examine our personal image in this world to which we must not conform?

Our Father in heaven had an answer for the worldly minded Christians at Corinth as he spoke through Paul in 1 Cor. 3.

Verse 1: I see you as little children who have never grown since your new birth. You have existed on easily prepared take-away food. You have not made an effort to understand Scripture, being content to accept the trivial as a means of keeping in touch with Christ. You have made no effort to allow the living Lord to reside within, so that he may continue his work on earth through you. Even in this you have been receivers only of the word and not givers. For the gift of Christ must not only be received, but must be kept alive and growing, and must also be exercised and given away. Therefore, you

have not yet had any experience with the Holy Spirit. You are desperately in need of spiritual food of greater depth and value so that you may be strong in this changing world and so that you may withstand the pretence of Christian belief that surrounds you. For there can be no spiritual depth where there is division among you on the basis of human values and opinions.

Verse 4: While anyone has an overriding obsession to be loyal to a particular person their thoughts and motivation are exhausted in their defence, or for their praise. Such a one is wasting their spiritual potential in hero-worshipping a mere human. But it is Christ who should have the prominence in our mind as King residing within. Let him do the ruling and the motivating of our thoughts and actions and there will be no competitive aggression between us.

Verse 5: After all, the people that we have been listening to and who we have respected are nothing more than the servants of God through whom you came to know and to believe in the Lord Jesus. Always remember that they did not operate under their own volition but by the direction of the Lord

himself. They were possessed by the Spirit of the Lord and were directed and driven to relay to you the words of the Lord. We need to remember though that it is not by them that you are saved; it is by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 6: We need to see and appreciate that the seed may have been sown by the likes of the Apostle Paul and it was people similar to Apollos who tended the needs of the people

by supplying the necessities that enabled that seed to develop and grow. So both were servants of the Lord with varying responsibilities working under direction by the

Holy Spirit. Throughout our life together my wife has been the one with the expertise to transplant cuttings in the garden which never seem to fail, while my own efforts in this field have been complete failure. I have often been favoured with the responsibility of watering and fertilising but neither of us has ever had the power to give life to the plant. Only God can give life and he does that so well! Therefore it must be clear that it was God who caused the spiritual growth which is life itself. Both servants of the Lord were simply instruments in the hand

of the Lord and they had no power of themselves to introduce life, for only God had, and has, that power. Each of these servants have their own unique purpose and each will receive their due reward in time, but it is only in the Lord that they have any status.

Verse 10: Now it is by the grace of God that it was given unto Paul for him to lay a foundation as one who was an expert builder. It is no disgrace to him or to any other that someone else should build upon that foundation. That same foundation being none other than that already laid, which is Jesus Christ the Lord.

Verse 12: Any person finding that foundation truly laid and beginning to build thereon, must of necessity choose the most excellent materials, for the work will be on display for all to see and make a judgment. One thing is certain, it will be in the spotlight on the day of judgment. Indeed, there will be heated criticism of any sub-standard performance of anyone's work.

Verse 14: If the work will stand the test on that day, each will certainly receive their reward. But, if the work is destroyed by the test, it will be the operator who will suffer the loss. Nevertheless, the builder will be saved, as one escaping because of immunity to the heat, having already been saved by the power and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The confusing voices continue

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See You Sunday!

Gabriel Babare

Bob was a minister who'd given up working to prepare his sermons. He was pretty bright, a good speaker, and his congregation weren't highly educated. He took a vow that he would always preach without preparation, putting all his trust in the Holy Spirit. One day, just before the service began, one of the denominational bigwigs walked in.

Bob was nervous as he welcomed the official, so he told him of the promise he'd made himself to trust in the spirit. The official seemed to understand, and the service began. Halfway through the sermon, the guest got up and walked out. After the service Bob found a scribbled note from him on the foyer table, "I absolve you from your vow!"

How many of us approach worship with a similar attitude to Bob's? How many of us sort of just "cruise along" when it comes to worship, without thinking or preparing ourselves. Do we think we're doing God a favour by worshipping? Do we think we get more points with God because we've gone to church? How many of us really worship?

Today, the music, activity, and the form of what happens on Sundays seem to be all peo-

ple focus on when they hear "worship". But Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman tells us that the only worship God is interested in is worship done in spirit and in truth.

Because God has revealed that this is what he desires, we have to stop and ask ourselves some important questions about the way we come together and worship. First, if God desires spirit and truth in worship, then what does the shape of our activities have to do with this? How do our habits and traditions in worship contribute to our worshipping in spirit and truth? And second, if God desires spirit and truth, then does it mean he rejects my Sunday worship (or any worship for that matter) that is not offered in spirit and truth?

As I think about this second question, I'm reminded that time and again God makes it evident that he does not accept "worship" just because people call the activity by that name. Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices to God. Both came and worshipped God. But the Bible makes it clear that God doesn't accept or respond to whatever we want to give him. God isn't some beggar happy to accept whatever we, his children, want to spare, religiously. He is God, and when we treat him like some passive receiver of whatever we want to give, then we show just how far we really are from spirit and truth.

Some might say, "But we know what God wants because

he's told us how to worship him in prayer, praise..." Friends, the Old Testament shows just how little God is impressed by the forms even he himself instituted when spirit and truth are absent. The Jews in the O.T. were knew well that God required sacrifices, prayers, and praise from his people. They, like Cain, understood the mechanics of worship. But there were a number of times where they had come to think that just doing the act was enough for God. At one such time God said to his people, "The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me? ... When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? ... Your incense is detestable to me." (Isa. 1:11-13) Does that say anything to us about our own attitudes to worship? You bet it does!

Have we gotten used to telling God what he wants in worship? Have we come to think that the right activity equals acceptable worship? If we have, then we are as wrong as the ancient Jews. God is primarily after our hearts, not the shape of our activity. God's not interested in what we give him in worship if our goal is to just satisfy our religious conscience, or our sense of what is religiously "proper". God desires us to be a people who worship him in spirit and truth. And any reading of Scripture shows, that has been God's primary interest for us since the Garden.

Today, people are asking what form of worship is really

God pleasing. Should we have hands up or hands down. Should we be on our knees or standing. (I recently shared in a service where people stood for two hours and sang songs over and over again. Was that 'better' worship than in my home church?)

Jesus' answer to us is the answer he gave to the Samaritan woman, when she asked a parallel question 2000 years ago. God is interested in spirit and truth, he's interested in the juice of our worship, not the shape of the bottle it comes in.

And if our worship is in fact in spirit and truth, then it won't be something we can turn on for an hour, and then turn off till next Sunday. If that characterises our "worship", and so often it does, it only highlights that our worship is not only shallow, it may even be ignored.

We can be as contemporary or traditional as we like on Sunday. But unless the worship attitude is the very foundation for everything you and I do, unless our worship truly reflects who I am and where my faith is, then I deserve the same condemnation God gave the Jews, "Who wants your worship? Who wants your noise?"

This Sunday, don't be impressed or comforted by the form of your church's worship; instead, open your heart in all humility to the Lord we serve. This Sunday don't inspect your worship service as if it's there to please you, focus on making all you sing and pray a genuine expression of your own thanks and commitment to the one who gives you life. This Sunday, if you have bitterness of any shape in your heart, then let the cup and the bread go by, until you can partake truthfully in the Spirit of Jesus. This Sunday, don't go to church to give God what you think he deserves, give him what he demands and has the right to you!

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Changes

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DALBY: Secretary—Mrs Sandy Evans, PO Box 719, Dalby, Qld 4405. Phone (076) 62 1936 (church office).

Baptisms

•Maurie & Cheryl Farrell, Kingsley, WA •Mark Nilsson, Christine Smith, Peter Smith, Haddon, Vic •Grant & Debbie Burgess, Margaret Cornbill, Rebecca Gallagher, Les Davidson, Simon Jones, Alison Tucker, Dawson St, Ballarat, Vic •Louise Badenhausen, Andrew Broughton, Melanie Atkinson, Michael & Nathan Chapman, Emmanuel, Sunil, Melanie, & Rebae Benjamin, Rebecca & Miriam Whittington, Devonport, Tas •Emma Thompson, Rebecca Poole, Darryl Marks, Debbie Marks, Greenacre, NSW •Paul Sharp, Tony Hannaman, Paul Dugdale, Angie Payne, Anneliese Halse, Elissa Mitchell, Belinda

Tas

LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, D. Tobler) One baptism on 13 June at 7 pm ... Wonderful display of sewing & knitting from State CWFs for Aborigines Missions ... WEC visitation team contacted over 350 homes in Invermay area ... Wayne Kerrison speaker on 20 June.

Morris, Kalamunda, WA •Louise Geiger, Launceston, Tas •Ruth Bishop, Amy McBride, Sam Collins, Chrissy Neville, Thornleigh, NSW •Peta O'Dwyer, Wendy Watts, Alisha Faulkner, Joseph Chan, Joan Foley, South Perth, WA •Jenny Hooper, Matthew Smith, Northam, WA

Marriages

•Natalie Angus to Richard Suter, Annette MacPherson to Troy Latto, South Perth, WA

Deaths

•Maurice Miles, Tootgarook, Vic •Greta Pain, Ashburton, Vic

Church News

SA

GOOWLA (Roger Risson) Pastoral visitation team held training session with Ros Green (on visiting the sick) ... "Searchers" outreach group (for non-members & non-Christians) on second series of studies ... Church weekend camp held at Point Sturt ... Farewell evening held for June & Mike Gillies & family ... Three Bible study groups have been taking "Personal Spiritual Growth" series as follow-up to Roger's recent sermons.

Qld

DALBY (A.C. Ochse, S.L. Colyer) Ivan Mann addressed church on behalf of Gideons ... Youth group camped at the Bunya Mountains ... Combined gospel service held at Bongeene. Tony Ochse speaker ... Sermons on the Beatitudes giving us much food for thought ... Sandy Evans (secretary) & Margaret Nowitzke (treasurer) coopted onto board ... Rick Whittle now church administrator.

MAROOCHYDORE (Geoff Risson) Last quarter busy with fundraising activities for church

building fund ... The ladies presented a pre-loved fashion parade with LifeLine & also their annual international luncheon ... In addition, the men organised a huge garage sale—highly successful ... A recent development concerning our land at North Buderim should prove advantageous to church plans & we pray for guidance in this regard.

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Church News

NSW

EPPING (David Moyes, Lester Sutton) Services in May witnessed further growth in attendance ... am average 240 & pm attendance 100 ... Eldership having discussions about coping with growth, both spiritually & numerically ... Playgroup is growing with 60 regular attenders ... Many attended church picnic ... Seniors group for community has commenced under leadership of Peter & Hazel French, & Ira Torode ... Preparations underway for church's 70th anniversary 25 July.

GREENACRE (Peter Holt, Tim Smith) Church celebrating its silver jubilee this year ... Wes Beavis led church in worthwhile worship seminar followed by concert ... George Mallaby shared his Christian walk at both services 23 May ... Strategic planning process nearing completion with development of vision statement, objectives & new ministry model ... Four baptisms recently ... New people visiting each week ... High School section of Sunday School now in afternoon & growing.

THORNLEIGH (Franklyn Elliott, Stuart Wesley) For most of June, 13 young people from South Pacific School of Mission, Boise Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Idaho USA, shared church activities & outreach by doorknock visitation & programs in local shopping centres ... At pm service 13 June, 4 young people baptised by Keith Morgan ... Thornleigh combined with Telopea at State Youth Games over June long weekend at Wollongong, came second.

TWEED HEADS (Richard Oakes, Paul Hodgson) Margaret Phillips honoured on her 80th birthday ... John Aker, World Director SGA, speaker at luncheon ... Richard attended State Conference & Refresher ... David Best, David Bayliss from FEBC speakers at CWF morning tea ... Combined evening serv-

ice with Southport & Burleigh Heads to hear Major Ian Thomas ... Atibam Akimin, pastor from our missions in PNG, speaker at church dinner ... Diana Catts welcomed.

Vic

ROWVILLE (J. Sutton) Enthusiastic working bee, 5 June, transformed industrial premises into a functional worship centre. Good attendances marked opening services next day. New venue, 17 Neutron Place, Rowville, offers many advantages after three years meeting at pre-school centre ... Donations of complete carpeting, seating for 100, office furniture, etc, greatly appreciated ... Nearby housing development offers excellent outreach opportunities.

SURREY HILLS (David Brooker, Julie Adam, Frank Langford) Congratulations to Roslyn Armstrong & Andrew George—recently married & to Caroline & Bruce Verity—on baby Jarrod's arrival, also to Caroline—Bachelor of Fine Arts, LaTrobe ... Mid-year dinner held for nine newer attenders ... Inter-church series of four Bible studies underway. First speaker Prof. Ian Williams on Matthew's Gospel ... Youth groups helping monthly at Crossroads Centre, St Kilda, serving meals & washing up.

HADDON (John Tudball) John Tudball inducted 2 May as part-time minister. Vision given for growth & position to become full-time ... Church in high spirits with current membership 23 after eight months of ministry. Five baptisms taken place ... Church continues to join with Dawson St for pm services & cabarets ... Christmas cabaret a joint effort at Haddon Recreation Centre. 500 expected to attend.

DAWSON ST, BALLARAT (Stephen Templeton, Tracey Wickham) Stephen Templeton to conclude ministry Dec 93. Taking up challenge to plant church Byron

Bay, NSW ... Day of prayer held 29 May 7-7 ... CWF held open night with Mrs Laurel Johnson from Montrose (heritage) Cottage ... Fishes & Loaves network target set for 3000 meals as Dawson Street's mission outreach ... Winter coffee cabaret held at Ballarat Tennis Centre, 281 attended.

TOOTGAROOK (M. Giezendanner) Pentecost services well attended as we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit & birth of the church. Combined evening ecumenical service & time of fellowship ... CWF enjoyed mid-year luncheon. Gwen Conning gave interesting talk on Open House for unemployed youth in the Heidelberg district ... Keith Forster back after surgery ... Open Door still meeting a need for lonely people.

CARNEGIE On 30 May 100 years of service was celebrated. 200 plus members & past members were present at the morning service with Don Smith as guest speaker. Following lunch the afternoon concluded with a PSA. The history of the church 1893-1993, is available from the secretary ... The resignation of minister, Ron Braun, was received with regret.

BELMONT (Neil Galbraith) Sunday worship services growing into bright relevant experiences that everyone enjoys ... Church band playing twice a month in mornings & monthly in evenings ... Attendances at both services increasing ... Weekly activities continue to attract both church & non-church children & adults ... Explorers', Girls' Club & new Junior Youth Club all attracting new members ... Kids' Bible Club commenced on Wednesday afternoons. After seven weeks 25 primary age children attending.

ASHBURTON (Iris Lawson) Gordon Stirling, Pam Bowers & Ken Barton speakers while minister on holiday ... Members welcome Neil Lawson back after five months in Perth ... Family picnic at Monbulk featured service in chapel ... CWF presented hat parade at Christian Guest Home. Eunice Reidy speaker at CWF service ... Members give thanks for life & service of Greta Pain ... Edith & Ken Barton presented slide program of World Convention & National Parks tour, USA.

WA

KINGSLEY (Peter Clayton) Son Troy born to Jeff & Wendy Dunning ... Stephen & Margaret Olsen & family, Robert & Kathleen Barlow welcomed into fellowship ... Maurie & Cheryl Farrell baptised ... Girls' Brigade held church parade celebrating centenary ... Graham &

Val Underhill returning to work with OMF in Singapore ... Albert & Pat O'Neill travelling overseas ... Peter Clayton leading studies on Revelation at evening services.

SCARBOROUGH (Nigel Merrick, Raye & Mike Halseby) Many new church families attending monthly basketball parade services ... Youth taking a very active role in evening services ... Nigel Merrick preaching on "Seven Men who Control the World from the Grave" ... "The Edge" drama & dance group presented the gospel message in a unique way ... Mid-year Missionary Week celebrated with Don Cameron who served in Zaire as speaker.

PERTH (G. Powell) As speaker at four evangelical meetings, Des Nelson (minister at Kelmscott) brought blessing & challenge ... Wayne Pobke conducted morning service whilst George Powell attended National Charismatic Leaders' Consultation in Canberra ... Welcome home to Gordon & Elma Ewers from tour in China & to Jim Collingwood from visiting family members in Hobart & Canberra ... Jen Anderson recovering from hip replacement surgery.

KALAMUNDA (David Shalley, Paul Sanders) Outreach program Warm Winter Weekend, 32 trailer loads of wood delivered to needy families and colourful handmade rugs ... Church involved in practical help to refugees arriving from overseas ... 33 young people enjoyed camp at Northam ... Young people organised & taking part, monthly, in evening service ... Room leading off from worship centre prepared for use as prayer chapel ... Missionary Rhonda Willems, Belgium, shared.

SOUTH PERTH (John Bond, David Stanford) 45 young people stayed at Roelands to participate in WA State Youth Games at Bunbury ... John Bond attended NSW YFC gathering ... Ladies Fellowship speaker John Bond on theme "Serve the Lord with Gladness" ... Open House shared wedding photos & a "Guess Who?" ... David Stanford planning Carnarvon Mission team for July Convention ... Zora Ellis, Julie Bond, Joy Tumell preparing July Holiday Bible Club.

NORTHAM (Graham Butler) Family camp in Maida Vale, Perth, with Errol Kirk (from Bridgetown) as speaker ... Visit from Rockingham youth group who led Sunday service as well as youth afternoon & evening on Saturday ... A joy to see Jenny Hooper & Matthew Smith baptised & also many of the young people making commitments & re-commitments.

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God's Great Weakness

Ray Hawkins

Dear Eternal God,
I want to thank you for your weakness!

I could not abide before your strength, and to see your holiness would consume me instantly. People talk about your justice as though it would be their refuge or supporter of their cause. O God, I know it would not be able to do anything but condemn me. How could I, sinful creature that I am, be deluded to imagine that I could stand before the power of your breath.

Dear Lord, it is your weakness that makes me know hope and safety through life. I love you Lord for your weakness! It arouses my heart and attracts my devotion as no display of power could do. On reflection, I was not aware of this initially, but now I know it was your weakness that won my heart. Your willingness to be vulnerable unveiled your love for me. There is no miracle or display of frightening majesty that could achieve this response from my spirit.

It was not as the Lord God of Hosts you came to me but as a suffering servant. The Gospel was not the crushing of your enemies and the ultimatum of "bow or burn", but of mercy embedded in love. The wonder of a peasant family being your vehicle to enter this world is beyond the fantasy of humanity. Imagine King David's overthrown, despised family line being parental custodians of the eternal. What weakness is displayed, especially when you left yourself open to the slander about suspicious parentage. How weak could you, beloved God, become?

And yet!

I see the record of your rejection and homelessness, the limitation of your sovereignty and the tears of your humanity. You have drawn my heart to you O God of Glory, Man of Galilee, through your sorrow and shame. As the Spirit shows me Gethsemane and Calvary, the place of your utter frailty, I know what it means to be loved.

Your weakness is greater, stronger, more appealing than all the glory and power of the world. For the weakness, the agony, the shame of the cross has wooed me and won me to yourself, and made the kingdoms of this world as childish trinkets. For in your weakness you shattered their hold over me and smashed the might of the realm of darkness. What unbelief sees as a scandal, a stumbling block, has become for those captivated by the Gospel, the basis for praise.

Now Precious Lord, your weakness is my strength, my song, my sermon. It calls me to be true when I am tempted to live a lie; it gives me a melody when all around is in disharmony; it is the message I share with hearts longing for hope and mercy. I love you Lord for your weakness. If you had never become weak, I could never have come into your embrace. Thank you that your weakness is stronger than the might and myth of this world. I begin to understand what Paul was opening up to the minds of his readers when he wrote, "the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Cor. 1:25).

The Last Word

Promises may get friends, but it is performance that keeps them.

—Owen Feltham

"I operate a typewriter by the biblical system."

"What's that?"

"The 'seek-and-ye-shall-find' system."

★★★★

A minister habitually told his congregation that if they needed a pastoral visit, to drop a note in the offering plate. One evening, after services, he discovered a note that said, "I am one of your loneliest members and heaviest contributors. May I have a visit tomorrow evening?" It was signed by his wife.

★★★★

"Pastor, how many active members do you have?"

"They're all active. Half of them are working with me, and half are working against me."

★★★★

A Sunday School teacher asked a student, "What are the sins of omission?"

After some thought, the student answered, "They're the sins we ought to have committed, but haven't."

★★★★

Member to minister at the end of the morning service, "You were really good this morning! You interrupted my thoughts at least half-a-dozen times."

★★★★

During a tense moment in a horror film, an elderly man began groping for something on the floor, disturbing the woman in the next seat. Finally, she inquired testily, "What have you lost?" "A caramel," said the man. "You're going to all this bother for a measly caramel?" "Yes," said the man, "my teeth are in it."

★★★★

A wedding guest, asked if they enjoyed the evening, replied that it ended up rather sad, for as the bride and groom left for their honeymoon the bride's mother started to cry, the bridegroom's mother started to cry and even the wedding cake had tiers.

★★★★



"At the moment I don't want to communicate. At the moment I want you to clean out the garage."

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