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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

On Two Wheels and a Prayer



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Comment

What If There Were No Holy Days

Alan Matheson

Easter 1993 it happened.

For the first time football was
played on Good Friday.

Sydney's Bishop, John Reid, said, "traditionally, such days have been kept free from commercial exploitation ... we can only regret that there is this break down in community attitudes." (*Church Scene*, 2 April)

Such criticism prompted Harry Herbert of the Uniting Church of Australia to take up the issue. He argued that, "public holidays (holy days as their name says) are often derived from the Christian culture which is part of the history of Western and Australian tradition.

They are like Christian prayers in Parliament, references to God in the Constitution and various other ceremonies. They are relics of a bygone age." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 April)

He went further and asserted that, "When Christians try to act as if these relics are still alive and that they really matter, it brings only scorn upon themselves and the Church. The practical reality of Christendom, where Church and State were one, has long passed into history. It is only the ceremonial remnants that are left and attempts to breathe life into them is a waste of time."

I guess there are a couple of issues which need to be sorted out if we are to have a rational debate on holy days. First, which days does the church identify as holy and which days should be, or not, public holidays, or does it matter anyway?

Second, does the church need the authority and protection of the State to declare its holy days public holidays. If so why? To preserve the faith?

Which Holy Days?

The issue came to a head in Victoria where Good Friday was a holiday as was Easter Tuesday, yet Easter Sunday saw the shops open but closed on Easter Saturday.

Why a holiday for Easter but not for Pentecost? For Eastern Christians, Epiphany is the second most sacred festival after Easter, so in this multicultural Australia, why not a holiday on Epiphany?

In fact, if as a Christian you go to an Orthodox Church, your Good Friday is not my Good Friday. Why does my church have a holiday but you miss out?

For six centuries the church did not need

the assistance of the State to celebrate Christmas.

By the 17th century the English Puritans tried to do away with any celebration of Christmas. In fact under Oliver Cromwell the Christmas festival was discontinued. So for Christians in the early days of American settlement, Christmas was a regular work day and continued as such until the middle of the 19th century.

Public Holidays

The fundamental question for Christians in a secular, diverse, contemporary, Australian society, is do they need the protection of the State to celebrate their faith.

Certainly the devout Jew or the faithful of Islam do not. Is our faith so insecure and uncertain that it can only be sustained by the protection of the state.

If for Christians, why not for Muslims or Jews? On what grounds do we claim privileges for our faith. As a church we proclaim the richness and diversity of the Australian community. If we are serious about celebrating that diversity then we're going to have to work through such issues as holy days and public holidays, not only for Christians but for those of other faiths or no faith. The time has surely come for the Christian church to accept the reality, that Australia in the 1990s is secular and non-Christian.

It is time to reject the protection and the privileges that the State grants to Christians.

It's time to reject Christian prayers in Parliament, swearing on Bibles, and references to God in the Constitution.

It's time to reject the State accolades and awards for "services to religion". One can only wonder at the response of a Paul in prison, or a Christian in Korea, El Salvador or the Occupied Territories on hearing of Christians who wear medals for "services to religion."

My point is that the longer we continue with the charade of Australia as a Christian nation, the longer it will take us to find our place in that society as Christians.

In the end it is irrelevant whether we play football on Good Friday or not, go shopping on Christmas Day or watch the Sunday night movie on television.

Alan Matheson is International Officer of the ACTU and member of the Camberwell, Vic, church.

Picketing the Church

New experience for media personality



• Fencing at the Williamstown church

Malcolm Gray, one time Channel Seven weatherman and Williamstown Athletic Club member, has opened artshows, launched fundraising ventures, and compered award ceremonies, but he has never before opened a picket fence.

The former guardian of the isobars and latter-day author of speaking and memory books will be guest speaker at the Picket Fence Celebration on 8 August at the Williamstown, Vic, church, cnr Douglas Pde and John St.

Minister, Cheryl Johnston, said, "the Federation style picket fence, grassed areas and removal of sterile concrete slabs, together with an interior paint job, new light fittings and partial rebuilding, are designed to give a new face to the property while helping it blend in with the Williamstown streetscape."

"Malcolm Gray is the ideal face to complement our new face".

Malcolm competed for Williamstown Athletics Club

in the mid 60s after being introduced to the club by friend Ken Duffy, whose mother and family are still well known Williamstown identities. Ken is now the minister of the Midland, WA, church.

Malcolm's optimistic approach to weather forecasts will also see him speaking positively on 8 August. "Optimism," he says, "is the basis of success, and fortunately, is easily taught."

Malcolm should know about optimism. He regularly worships at Berwick in a church that is 125 years old. Williamstown church is 106 years old. 30 years ago Berwick also had a little white chapel in the main street. Then possibility thinking slowly developed the congregation to the point where now over 700 people worship each Sunday, and the opening of its new chapel, the biggest mud brick chapel in the southern hemisphere, was covered on national television. "That's the result of optimism", says Malcolm.

When he looks at the new face of the Williamstown church, he doesn't see a picket fence. He sees an attitude that seizes a great idea and makes it happen. The Williamstown people have been fantastic in their giving both financially and in time. The finances, about

\$14,000, have come from interest free loans, being repaid over three years, and gifts. The Properties Corporation has also given a gift of \$2,000.

Barry McMurtrie held a seminar at Williamstown, late March, and enthused the people into action, by believing in themselves and the power of God. A new picket fence, lawn, gardens and new signs have transformed the outside of the chapel. Inside they have removed a stage, carpeted, painted, placed curtains and changed the layout of the chapel.

As part of the celebrations, the church has organised a series of lively worship events which they are publicising extensively in the area. On 15 August, Terry Wheeler, coach of the Footscray Football Club, is speaking on "The Great Parachute Jump"—motivation and commitment. The service on 22 August will feature Harmonics Unlimited, a local men's quartet. Barry McMurtrie will be speaking at the service on 29 August, whilst talented singer Arch Stevenson (see "AC" 8 May) will be the guest artist on 5 September. The final service in the series will be on 12 September, when a special family and kids service will see Pete the Clown as the special guest.

—Cheryl Johnson

Children in Action

Combined children's events

The Forest Hills Secondary College was the scene for a tremendous night of fun and competition for the Kidsmin, Vic,

annual State Children's Games. Competition was keen, with clubs participating in their distinctive colours. Ormond/Parkdale were winners of the Junior aggregate points and Surrey Hills were the Intermediate champions. The program comprised relays and an individual skipping event. Ribbons were awarded to all competitors in winning teams.

The games are part of the Kidsmin program, which offers children's groups the opportunity to be involved in combined events.

Forthcoming activities are a tea for Explorer leaders, the Boys' Initiative Camp at

Monbulk, Zone Festivals, and a dinner for Good Companions' leaders.

Kidsmin (Vic) is a Committee of the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development.

Correction

In the Growing Spiritually article by Dick Saunders ("AC" 3 July), it stated that his late wife, Kathleen attended the Frankston, Vic, church from infancy. This should have read the Fremantle, WA, church. The error is regretted.



• Competitors in relay events

Darwin in Good Heart

Family, when far from home

At the request of National Executive, the church at Modbury, SA, released Maurice and Betty Keatch to conduct an interim ministry with the church at Darwin from May.

They write, "Though the church at Darwin is small numerically, it is our joy to be able to minister here for four months. The welcome we have received and the way we have been made to feel at home is indicative of the warmth and love that is evident up here."

The church fellowship provides an extended family for people who live so far from their own family and friends.

Visitors from southern states help establish a valuable link with the Darwin church, and conversation between members and visitors often reveal common friendships and associations. We would urge visi-

tors to spend at least one Sunday of their holidays in fellowship with the Darwin church.

Members of other churches transferred to Darwin should contact the church as soon as possible after arrival here.

Until the end of August, we can be contacted at the manse on (089) 27 9372 or the church office on (089) 45 1484. The postal address is PO Box 83, Sanderson 0812.

After August, contact Beverley Maxwell on (089) 27 4139 or Greg Williams on (089) 45 0805.

Church secretaries are asked to advise Darwin of transfers.

The church is in good heart and spirit, and is planning for great things to happen in the future.

Please pray for the future ministry of this church."

—Maurice and Betty Keatch

Family Violence and Sexual Assault

Skill-sharing series

A skill-sharing series on "Dealing with Family Violence and Sexual Assault" is being offered by the Vic-Tas Department of Community Care as part of the Hodos program at the East Keilor, Vic, church. The four nights will deal with acknowledging violence within the church, the church and the law (looking at the tension between the demands of the law and a traditional Christian ethos), identification of the forms of violence in the church community (six different forms including physical violence are explored and suggestions made about countering such violence), the big secret of violence in the home, men against violence and strategies for transformation. The series is open to any concerned persons in local churches and is being coordi-

nated by Joy Butler and Louis van Laar. The series is being held on Wednesday evenings (7.30-9.30) on 4, 11, 18 and 25 August, fees are \$20. Child care is available (request on registration). Details of registration, which closes on 30 July, and forms can be obtained from Louis van Laar, Department of Community Care, 77 Capel St, West Melbourne 3003 (Phone (03) 326 8977).



ON YOUR OWN, YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Christian Singles Fellowship offers friendship through correspondence with other born-again Christian singles and single-again people

Write enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

CSF, PO Box 17, Anna Bay 2301

Logo Competition

Time is running out

We are currently running a competition for fanciful, or otherwise, interpretations of the Churches of Christ logo. This competition closes on 24 July. In the 7 August issue we will publish the designer's concept of the logo along with our winning entries.

Following, is another entry in the competition. Entries should be sent to *The Australian Christian*, PO Box 101, Essendon North 3041 or fax to (03) 379 0015.

Churches Of Christ Logo—A Fanciful View

Maybe the artist in choosing the colours black and white had the dominant Australian population of Aboriginal and British in mind.

When justice has to be served by the death penalty, the cross reminds us that there are more humane ways of satisfying

justice than by crucifixion, with its agonising suffering. The empty cross too, takes us back to Jesus Christ's crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection in power, when he established the church universal. The upright figures are emblematic of the unsleeping church. The spotless white gowns are a pattern for Christian growth, perfection, purity and holiness.

In my imagination, the two heads represent the church's eyes, keeping endless watch over the world in its need. The outstretched arms are the outreach of the church as she takes hope to the fallen and sinful, companionship to the lonely, comfort to the mourning and bereaved, and food and warmth to the cold and hungry. Above all, the church must stress faith in the power of God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ our saviour.

—Mrs Gertrude Shannon (Wembley, WA)



EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS SAYING I LOVE YOU, SAYING GOODBYE

A new resource for anyone who might minister to those experiencing the grief of pregnancy loss following miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, termination or IVF procedures e.g. clergy, pastoral care workers, hospital staff, chaplains, church deacons, lay ministers etc.

For several years now, as part of our Pregnancy Loss counselling service, the Pregnancy Action Centre, in conjunction with our local ecumenical community, has regularly held special services: "Saying I Love You, Saying Goodbye".

INFORMATION KITS

We are pleased to now have available a special minister's kit to assist others in providing this unique service:

- including background theory of maternal grief theological underpinnings and practical applications i.e. music, settings, sample order of service and annotated presider's notes.
- compiled by a team of interdenominational clergy and grief therapists.
- Price: \$15.00

INSERVICE

"UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH PREGNANCY LOSS"

A special one day inservice is being held at our Centre in Ringwood:

- July 2, 9.30 am to 3.00 pm: \$25 including lunch

NEXT SPECIAL SERVICE

"Saying I Love You, Saying Goodbye":

- July 28, 8.00 pm at Ringwood Church of Christ Bedford Road Ringwood

All enquiries to:

Pregnancy Loss Counselling Service
Pregnancy Action Centre
PO Box 610 Ringwood 3134
(03) 870 7044

Christmas Missions Fair

Beating the rush and commercialism



Once again Chadstone, Vic, will be involved in a unique Christmas Missions Fair where the public are invited to be creative with Christmas gift giving.

The third annual Christmas Missions Fair will be held at Holy Family Church Hall, Stephenson's Road, Mt Waverley on Saturday 21 August, 10.00 am-4.00 pm and Sun-



day 22 August, 8.30 am-2.30 pm.

Chadstone is busy with the grass roots organisation of the fair including publicity, catering and street theatre. "Sharing our Gifts" is the logo for the Christmas Missions Fair where 13 Waverley Church and aid agencies are involved in an ecumenical project designed to

give people a unique opportunity of supporting the goals of care organisations both at home and abroad.

By purchasing a "gift" ranging from \$2-\$25, the purchaser receives a beautiful card to send to the recipient, with greetings written on the spot by a calligrapher and details of where the entire amount of money will go.

Cathy Bradley, the publicity coordinator is enthusiastic about this fresh way to beat the Christmas rush. "It not only solves the problem of the last-minute gift," she says, "it means the money will be directed to someone who is in real need. It truly reflects the spirit of Christmas."

What's more, all your worries are over four months in advance!"

A project of the Mt Waverley and Chadstone Inter-church Council, it is a novel way of

showing friends and relatives they are being remembered, while the money that might have been spent on them is going to others in need.

Projects that will be directly supported by the fair include the Anglican Church's Mission to the Streets and Lanes and St Mark's Community Centre Fitzroy; the Catholic Church's Centre for Young People in Papua New Guinea, San Antonio Village, San Salvador and St Mary's House of Welcome, Fitzroy; the Uniting Church is supporting Replanting for Recovery in Africa, Melbourne City Mission, Sudan Uniting Mission and the Church of South India Council for Childcare. Also represented at the Fair are the Slavic Gospel Association, Trade Winds Tea, the CAA's Trading Partners and Waverley Emergency Adolescent Care.

—Cathy Bradley

The Barnabas Fellowship

Ministry with disabled people

On 28 November 1992 twelve Christians from a wide range of churches established a new ministry. The Barnabas Fellowship is a resource and networking ministry that seeks to provide links between people with disabling conditions, local churches, community organisations and professional people. The Barnabas Fellowship represents a wide range of people actively interested or involved in the world of disabilities. The fellowship is currently in the process of developing the basic groundwork with the aim of making The Barnabas Fellowship accessible and operational by early 1994.

The ministry aims to simply, yet effectively, meet the needs of people with disabling conditions, and by so doing extend the Kingdom of God by hands-on assistance, by obedience to Jesus' commands and example. Further, they aim to recognise and promote the specific gifts possessed by people with dis-

abilities, and to enable them to actively minister within their chosen local church. The ministry has varied divisions including, social/recreation, transport, education and training, Christian education, world cultures and disability, equipment, legal, medical, counselling, financial, housing/accommodation, liaison/research, employment. How can you help? Link us with people who may be able to assist us to meet needs in any of these areas of ministry. The Fellowship is looking for people interstate to help expand the range of people available, skills levels and interest, to make this a truly Australia-wide organisation. Become involved yourself, as your time and commitments allow. Pray for us. Contact Ted and Judy Leask, 4 Killeen St, Wentworthville 2145 (phone (02) 635 4251) or Russell and Stephanie Baker, 18 Canton St, Canterbury 2193 (Phone (02) 718 1605).

Church Growth Movement

An evaluation

Lyle Schaller has written a detailed analysis of the impact of the Church Growth Movement on the American church in the last 25 years. See the April issue of *Net Results*. The Australian Board of Church Development and Education distributes this magazine (a few copies of the issue are available for a cost of \$2.80, including postage). Requests should be made to 77 Capel Street, West Melbourne 3003.

Schaller notes the widespread influence of Church

Growth thinking across the whole American church scene. He details how evaluation processes have changed under the new influence. There is now a much greater emphasis upon churches shrinking or growing in size. In the same mood, there are new perspectives on the role of the minister. Schaller says the focus is increasingly on moving towards the visionary leader, one who is able to facilitate change and direct the church's efforts towards more effective outreach.

Part-Time Work Available

Due to the expansion of our book distribution company, Delmark Pty Ltd has a number of positions available in metropolitan and some larger areas in the Eastern States. No outlay required, but a reliable vehicle is essential. For details and interviews

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Witnessing as a Community

Working with others

A Gentile in the midst of a very strong Jewish community. This is how it is for most Christians who live in Caulfield or parts of St Kilda in Melbourne. The South Eastern Suburban Regional Church (both congregations—Malvern—North Caulfield and Bamba Road, Caulfield South) are in an area reputedly containing the largest per-capita Jewish community outside of Israel.

The influence of the Jewish culture is very strong. Political candidates must be seen to be Jewish for a chance of success in Council, State or Federal elections. The one Catholic secondary school has been closed, both State secondary schools have small numbers, but there are now five Jewish secondary schools. Large numbers of Jews from Europe have built houses with a strong emphasis on security, with high walls reducing opportunity for interaction. At times of particular tension overseas regarding Israel, there are noticeable community tensions and increased security

measures for protection of Jewish school children. In this setting, Caulfield ministers regularly gather together for sharing matters of concern, mutual support and, more importantly, cooperative witnessing.

At Easter and Advent each year, a full page local paper advertisement proclaims a distinctively Christian message and advertises church services. At Pentecost, an ecumenical service is held. Over the years, the various local church buildings are used and the guest speakers invited from the various denominations.

The special City Council festivals and appeals, such as food parcels at Christmas, are well supported by the churches and there are Christmas Carols sung in the streets. It is in these ways that the profile of the churches is enhanced and the message of Christ's love and compassion shared through our joint actions.

Our Bamba Road Christian Women's Fellowship holds an anniversary fellowship day

each year and invites ladies from the other churches for lunch and to hear a guest speaker or see a show. This builds links among our different denominations. These links are also strengthened through other activities such as the local branch of the Bible Society and Christian Education in Schools.

At Malvern, the Presbyterian and Uniting Churches have been worshipping with us for well over 30 years at Easter, Christmas and other occasions. This is also enhanced by the mutually supported mid-week studies throughout the year.

While there are links among our different denominations, there are also links established with our Jewish neighbours. For over 30 years now, a Jewish ladies gymnastics group has been using our Malvern—North Caulfield buildings. We also have the Jewish Believers Fellowship regularly using our Bamba Road buildings. This is a group who gathers from several denominations to proclaim Jewish and Christian beliefs, while enjoying fellowship together.

We believe that cooperation and friendship with our neighbours, whether Christian, Jewish or whatever, ought to occur

naturally. Hopefully, such neighbourliness may overcome the legacy of distrust, resulting from centuries of oppression Jews, in particular, have experienced from Christians in Europe. We would like to think that the high walls can come down between neighbours, once trust is established. Likewise, we desire to work cooperatively with our Christian neighbours, to overcome the bitterness and sectarian strife of past centuries between various Christian denominations.

We have found there is great value in our community knowing that, whereas we Christians do things separately and in different ways much of the time, we can work, worship and proclaim together the Lordship of Jesus Christ; and in doing so, show practical love to others in our community. Also, that while Jewish people do not recognise the Lordship of Jesus Christ, they do worship the one true God and Father of us all.

It is time for us to reveal to the world that different religious communities can and do live in harmony together, as neighbours, without diminishing the strength of our distinctive beliefs and practices.

—Andrew McMillan

Specialised Cleaning Service

Meeting particular needs

For people in Melbourne and surrounding areas, a specialised cleaning service is now available. Emergency Cleaning Service is offering a service to families of the elderly, or those who have to clean up a house or room that requires sensitive handling (through medical or other reasons).

They are used to handling clean-ups that require special treatment, and also work on locating and recovering important papers and special family memorabilia that might otherwise be destroyed in such clean-

ing operations. Emergency Cleaning Service can be contacted at 6 Haering Rd, Boronia 3155. Phone (03) 720 5151 (mobile 018 10 7089).

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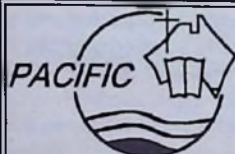
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Church on the Move

Opening of Townsville's new chapel



• Moving out with Townsville's new chapel

There was a lot to celebrate as the new Townsville, Qld, chapel was opened on 6 June at 2.30 pm. The opening realised a 30-year dream for the members and gave a permanent home to the children's Bible School in the old chapel.

Official guests were the Mayor of Townsville, Ald. T. Mooney and Mrs Mooney, and Queensland Conference President Noel Leitch and Mrs Leitch. Noel gave the prayer of dedication for the new chapel.

It was good to celebrate with friends and visitors from other churches around Townsville and, through the service, be able to acknowledge God's timing and provision in every way.

The new chapel was formerly owned by Manchester Unity (and before that a Presbyterian church) and was made available if we would remove it from their property, approximately

200 m down the road from the church property; a mammoth undertaking, but ably achieved by the removalists with the help of NORQEB (local electricity board) to remove power poles, and the loss of a few trees along the footpath, as it is a very wide building. Then began the working bees, bringing about a transformation of an old building and a congregation, finding talents they didn't know they had.

Tom Cummins took on the job of project supervisor, enabling the work to be done in a more professional manner. Tim Hinspeter was taken on as his assistant and was able to do a lot of organising and preparation, to keep the working bees going. The youth pastor, Debbie, wanting to get married on 10 April, helped speed the process and we were able to have our first service in the chapel on 4 April.



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9.00 a.m. & 11 a.m.

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Multicultural Eternity

Celebrating in diversity

In Revelation we read of the vision where people from all over the world will be worshipping God. Here at Malvern, Vic, we have shared in a foretaste of that glory due to our great God. (Rev. 7:9 NIV)

When people from the Indonesian Praise Church and the South Eastern Suburban Regional Church gathered at Malvern, Vic, a great worship service took place on 6 June.

We were led in praise through song by John Simon, under the musical direction of Agus Suwiga, with supporting singers and musicians.

The guest preacher was Peter Lee from Grace Church, who spoke on our being gifted to serve.

As we read from Revelation, we appreciated sharing together the celebratory nature of the Lord's Supper as a foretaste of sharing together for eternity.

To join together for worship, appreciating the different cultural backgrounds of Austral-

ians and Indonesians, is not an everyday experience for any of us. Rather, it is occasional and we do know we are not alone in this sort of experience.

We know many churches in Australia have held multilingual and multicultural worship services, so very little is reported about them as being news in 1993.

But, at a time when some of our leaders are pushing monocultural worship as being the way ahead, we should recall that God has provided for us a vision of a multicultural eternity.

While we easily recognise the validity of worshipping God in distinctive cultural settings, we ought to equally uphold the multicultural perspective. The New Testament does not consider gender or cultural background of overriding significance, for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28) and we believe that also applies to the worship of God.

—Andrew McMillan



DIRECTOR

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MMM is a non-denominational faith Mission providing practical assistance to Christian Ministries throughout Australia, South East Asia, the South Pacific and Southern Africa.

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Application forms are available from:

The secretary, Mobile Mission Maintenance, P.O. Box 184
East Kew Victoria 3102.

Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to 200 words

Naming Violence Against Women

To The Editor,

I respect the views of Reg Brand ("AC" 3 July) and his calling in the service of domestic violence, but jumping to unjustified assumptions and adopting the stance of an extreme position does not do the cause justice. I am not blind to sexual harassment and I have not suggested that it should be ignored in the church and swept under the carpet (my letter 24 April). Nor do I have an unrealistic image of church people, moreover, it is unfair to infer that I am lacking in compassion or without personal knowledge in the distressing outcome of sexual harassment.

The point of my concern is that the booklet *Naming Violence Against Women* is a character assassination on all men as potential rapists and violators and, consequently, is divisive within the church. It details particular examples of harassment by men in positions of trust and pastoral involvement and it warns that men are not to be trusted in these situations.

Mary Ambrose ("AC" 19 June) accepts the concept of suspicion in all circumstances and suggests precautionary measures which may or may not be practical in all cases.

I don't deny the validity of the problem, but I maintain that the booklet is extremist, dishonest and divisive. Further, that the Department of Community Care and CWF, by indiscreetly circulating the booklet have failed to provide responsible leadership in raising the appropriate involvement and co-operation of the churches on the main issue.

—Colin R. Johnson
(Preston, Vic)

Naming Violence Against Women

To the Editor,

I support Naming Violence Against Women and I appreciated Reg Brand's comments ("AC" 3 July). I have had a long involvement with

Churches of Christ, however as a husband and father I have been a perpetrator of physical violence and many other abuses. I have put on a mask at church that was very different to the real me. I believe the church has a responsibility to move into this mission field. Perpetrators of domestic violence are protected when we refuse to acknowledge the extent of the victims suffering and especially when we deny the problem exists. Acknowledgment of the shame, pain and damage that results from violence occurring in church families is important. Most Christian men do endeavour to truly love and respect their families, but, I see many bad attitudes within the church that are unquestioned and require challenging and changing. Sexism is one example and can be expressed subtly. To a perpetrator, this is teaching him he has a right to dominate his family, when in fact he hasn't. I feel very sad that for me to overcome my problem, I had to look outside the church.

How our Heavenly Father must weep when we are not willing to feel a bit uncomfortable and address something that does go on in his children's homes. —Kevin Handasyde
(Vic)

Anonymous Christians

To the Editor,

My heart goes out to people like Ken Dawson who ask such questions as: "What of those who make no claim of being Christians, but whose compassion and active expression of it leave a lot of us behind?" ("AC" 3 July)

Karl Rahner (theologian) writes of anonymous Christians, stemming from his conviction that there is a supernatural existential element in humanity. Whilst Rahner is chiefly concerned with salvation and the life beyond, I also apply the concept to our earthly pilgrimage. When we meet a person whose love and concern deeply moves us, there, we behold an anonymous Christian, even though they make no claim to being a Chris-

tian. The Spirit of Christ plainly and recognisably indwells this person.

This helps when the question is asked, "From where does the non-Christian receive the strength to deal with adverse circumstances and heart breaking tragedies?" I have come close to people, who, not confessing to being Christian, display an inspiring strength, coupled with a loving concern for others.

They receive their strength from God. This surely, a hidden work of the Holy Spirit.

—Trevor Robinson
(Burwood, Vic)

Let's Grow

To the Editor,

The recent Christian Projects Leadership 2000 trip to America taught me a valuable lesson about the importance of small groups within our churches—we need to be willing to allow the church to grow in size.

Church growth takes place

only as the church allows smaller churches to be developed within its existence—by growing smaller, we grow larger. These smaller churches are what we have come to understand as small groups. These small groups would consist of two main components—neutral ministry and outreach; multiplying as they grow. Growth will be evident by the multiplication of people, as well as spiritual gifts.

I suppose the real challenge for me was to see the church as the Apostle Paul did—"a living body". Living bodies continue to make and develop new cells. Therefore, the living church must also develop new groups (cells), if it is to claim that it is alive. If we are to continue to witness the growth of God's Kingdom among us, we must allow God to multiply his ministry amongst us, this means by growing smaller, we grow larger.

—Stephen Templeton
(Dawson Street, Ballarat, Vic)

Letters from Tertius

Predestination

To the Editor,

I've always had trouble with the idea of predestination. It just doesn't seem like God to predestine some people to heaven and some to hell, with not a thing they can do about it.

My wife and I attended a service in the local hall while we were on a recent holiday. The lay preacher started his sermon by saying, "From the very beginning of time it was predestined that you people would be here in this place on this day listening to what I have to say." I nearly walked out to show him how wrong he was, but I suppose that act of stubborn rebelliousness would have been "predestined" too.

I think that my problem was solved by a prayer I read in the preface of a book from our church library. It was, "May we choose him who has chosen us."

This seems to say that God has chosen everybody to be a recipient of eternal life, but has also given us the choice of accepting it or rejecting it. Those who accept his gift are thus "predestined" to eternal life.

I can go along with that. But I decided to get out my concordance and check up on what the Bible says. I found that Romans says that those who love God and respond to his call are predestined to be justified and glorified. Ephesians says that those who are in Christ are predestined to be the children of God.

So the little prayer I discovered is right. God has planned the best for everybody, but only those who choose to receive the gift can have it. The rest prefer to give it a miss.

This is probably bad theology, but it makes sense to me.

—Tertius

Bellringer Honoured

Jock Roper, OAM



• Jock in St Peter's Anglican Cathedral belltower, Adelaide

We have discovered another member of Churches of Christ who received an honour in the Queen's Birthday Honours. John James Frederick (Jock) Roper was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to traditional bellringing, particularly through St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.

Jock joined the South Yarra, Vic, church in 1934 and later transferred his membership to Bentleigh and then Ormond, where he now resides in their Village. Jock still plays the organ at South Yarra, when required, and also at several churches, including Ormond.

Jock Roper is the first Australian to be awarded an honour for service to campanology, the art of church bellringing.

Since answering an advertisement in the religious pages of *The Age* in August 1930, he has been ringing bells around Australia and the world.

"I was brought up in Prahran and my younger brother was a choirboy at St Paul's", said Mr Roper, who continues to teach the theory, customs and traditions of the ringing art. "When I saw their ad for bellringers I was interested, because I liked the idea of doing something a bit different, and when I learnt some of the history and the art associated with it, it inspired an interest that has continued.

You don't have to be a musician to be a good bellringer. The important things are that you've got to be able to hear the bells, you've got to have a sense of rhythm—and you've got to be very dedicated and patient."

Bellringing as it is practised in Australia, is essentially a British art that traces back to the 17th century, when the first "methods" (plans that require bellringers to constantly shift positions and bells) were written.

With new methods easier to write than ever, thanks to computers, there is plenty to keep bellringers busy and there is plenty of interest. Melbourne has doubled its number of active belltowers in the last four years, from three to six.

While the former President of the Australia and New Zealand Association of Bellringers retired as captain of the bells at St James' in Gardenvale two years ago, he is showing no signs of easing up.

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■ Northcote
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■ Reserve 24 October
■ 90th Anniversary
■ Look for further notices
■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Man on a Mission

Biking for Bibles

Don Wesley is a man on a mission. An avid cyclist, Don, the minister of the Victor Harbor, SA, church, is currently in training for a 1,310 km bike ride from Adelaide to Canberra.

This is part of the annual Bikes for Bibles, organised by the Bible Society, which involves hundreds of cyclists from around Australia. Don is joining a group of 20-30 riders (male and female) who leave Adelaide on 22 September who anticipate arriving in Canberra 10 days later, along with other groups from the various States.

This year is the 10th year of Bikes for Bibles and the aim this year is to raise \$625,000 to fund literacy programs in Uganda, Zimbabwe and other African countries. Don is aiming to raise \$1500 (\$150 a day) in sponsorship and already has promises in excess of \$500. (Readers wishing to sponsor Don should contact him at 3 Swain Rd, Victor Harbor 5211. Phone (085) 52 1718).

Don commented that his decision to join the fundraising ride stemmed not only from his connections with the church, but his life-long love for cycling.

Don's grandfather owned a bicycle store and handmade a bike for his father, which has been passed down through the family. Having grown up with bikes from an early age, his father went on to become a successful road rider.

Although Don did not follow in his father's footsteps and take up the sport competitively, he admits it has always been his favourite hobby.

Three years ago, he decided to enter the Caltex Victorian Bike Ride from Mt Gambier to Melbourne (600 km). This was his first marathon bike ride.

Don commented, "That was a nine day ride, and was more of a holiday. The Bikes for Bibles ride will be a lot harder than that."

In December, Don plans to take part in the Albury-Melbourne leg of the Sydney-Melbourne ride that Bicycle Victoria is organising. He hopes to make it a family affair and be joined by his son Lyndon and brother Russell (who competed at the World Transplant games in Canada in July in the 20 km road race ("AC" 5 June) and nephew Ben.



• Photo and story courtesy, The Times (Victor Harbor, SA)

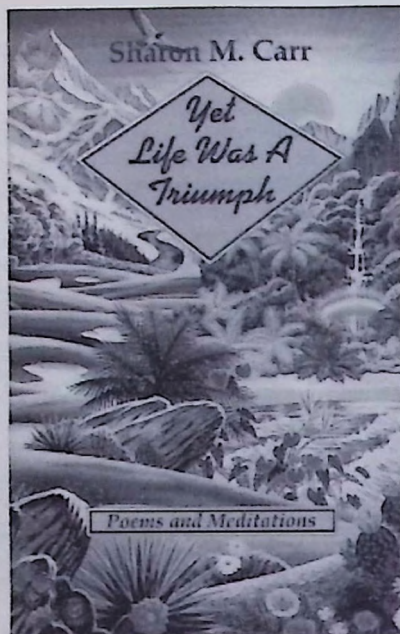
Victor Harbor Church of Christ requires a part-time minister

(To commence as soon as possible)

- A person who will be committed to working with the minister, elders, and the church in meeting the goals of the church as related to its Mission Statement.
- A person able to facilitate meaningful worship services.
- A person able to equip and train small group leaders.

For further information telephone: Ministry Selection Committee
c/o Elaine Baiges
(085) 52 3860

Books



Yet Life Was A Triumph

by Sharon M. Carr (Word Books) \$13.95.

"Most student poems are a burden in the life of a teacher of literature, I opened the book dreading and began to read. One poem drove to the next. I found myself reading the best poetry I had ever read by a college student. The sensitivity, poetic skill, range of learning and spiritual depth far excelled the work, I believed, of many accomplished and publishing poets."

This observation by Floyd C. Watkins, Professor Emeritus of American Literature at

Emory University will be shared by many who afford themselves the privilege of reading this volume of poems.

There is a tenacity about this work which brings one into jolting confrontation with one's own mortality.

Characterised by an urgency and a ruthless honesty that few writers dare embrace, Sharon Carr, a terminally ill 19 year-old has chronicled something of her own spiritual journey in this disturbingly pungent work.

Dying, and living, are too serious for triteness and triviality. They will not be found in this book.

Categorised into four sections: Bewilderment, Grief, Anger and Peace; the poems reflect an acute sensitivity and spiritual maturity disproportionate to the author's age.

The reader of this work will be privy to one person's struggle to come to terms with the profoundly human emotions of loss, desertion, hopelessness and regret for unrealised experiences.

Exposed to Sharon's intimate dialogue with God, the reader may expect to feel humbled, disturbed and challenged. One will also find quiet encouragement and triumph here as the resilience of faith is repeatedly shown to be sufficient when health and strength, and freedom from pain are gone.

Sharon wrote her own epitaph which was read at her funeral on 3 October 1990:

Because I was forced to live life boldly,
thankfully,
lovingly and
joyfully
death is tender,
and life was a triumph.

Read this work and you will stand in awe at a tragically brief, yet compellingly victorious, Christian life. —Garry Harris

Creative Silence

by J. Miley (Word Books) \$26.00

I recommend this book to those prepared to work hard to develop their spiritual lives. The writer developed her ideas through struggling with the difficulties of finding time to be alone with God and settling into a routine while coping with the

demands of young family. The motivations for Christian meditation are considered and methods suggested. Each chapter gives some of the writer's own experiences, ending with an exercise to assist the reader to develop a closer communion with God. Dependence on Christ is emphasised. This book could be used as an assistance in personal prayer or in a group, when the group is committed to spending time developing prayer life. It is a good starting point for those seeking spiritual growth and it also points the reader to other useful books.

—Julie Trinnick

The New Century Version Of The Bible

(Word Bibles) \$16.95.

The New Century Bible was originally published in 1986 as *The International Children's Bible*. Its aim is to have a translation from the original Hebrew and Greek that is as simple as possible to read. The translators have succeeded, although inevitably some of the great passages need a wider variety of vocabulary to do justice to their style. A 46 page Dictionary-Concordance appears as an appendix and is useful for words that have no simpler synonyms. These words are identified in the text with a "d". There are also explanatory footnotes. Attention has been given to "gender language" substituting "people", "humans" and "human beings" for "man" and "mankind" when they are used in the generic sense. There are some good maps and the words of Jesus are in red, but not an eye straining red. In the text is a daily reading guide to enable reading an average of three chapters a day to cover the Bible in a year. Each day is marked with an open Bible symbol. The attempt at simplicity is good, e.g. for "he rested with his fathers" putting "he died". However, attempts at simplicity are sometimes hazardous as in Genesis 1:7 where "firmament" is translated "air" with the attendant problem of some water above the "air" and some under it. The original understanding of "firmament" of course, was that it was a solid dome. Maybe "firmament" should have been left as it was and explained in the Dictionary. And what do you think of Psalm 23:4, "Your rod and your walking stick, they comfort me?" Are we to have an epidemic of sermons on "God's Walking Stick"? However the new version is a useful addition to your collection of translations. Young people will be able to cope with it quite well. Those aiming to use it for daily readings should get from their minister an outline indicating where all of the books come chronologically.

—GRS

The Angelic Verses—Daniel Changer



People

Ron Hewitt

Bearing up

We liked this photo of Ron so much we just had to print it. At the same time we can tell our readers Ron's latest news.

Ron is currently undergoing a course of chemo-therapy for cancer and he claims that he is extremely well. This last week, for the first time in five months, he was able to drive his car.

Currently the CAT scans are showing that the growth has ceased, and either the current course of chemo-therapy is halt-

ing the growth or he is in a period of remission.

Ron is supremely confident that God has a plan for the rest of his life and he is convinced that the attitude of a person facing cancer is more than 50% of the cure. Recently, he was reading his Bible and came across the first three words of Ps. 37 which he said was God speaking to him through this time of worry and concern—"Do not fret".

Ron and Shirley have been touched by the large numbers of people who have made contact and expressed their love

through cards and letters. Ron is also amazed by the number of people in Churches of Christ he has heard about who are living with cancer.

During this time he has had many people give him literature to read.

Ron recommends, *There is Hope* by Robert J Hillman (Anzea Publishers) (if it is still available) as an excellent book which looks at the physical, spiritual and emotional side of life.

Another piece of literature he was recommending was a diary that Graeme Warne wrote



• Ron and "Ted" Hewitt

following his serious accident earlier this year.

Cowboy-Pastor-Church Planter

Bob and Rutha Bule

My first recollection of Bob Bule is of him riding a horse into Ranwadi High School on Pentecost, Vanuatu. Bob was from a neighbouring village and had been away working with cattle on a plantation. He went to Central Queensland to learn more about handling stock. On returning to Pentecost he bought two horses with him. With his hat, boots and



• Bob Bule

walk, he really looked the part. Not only that, he was good at the job and was in demand both by the Government and private cattle owners.

Bob worked on the island of Malekula and met and married Rutha who comes from a very small island called Norsup, just offshore from one of the major stations and the airstrip on Malekula. Rutha had spent two years at the Presbyterian Bible School, Tangoa, South Santo.

When Bob heard the call of God on his life and decided to go to Banmatmat Bible College, he took his horse there too! Rutha did some advanced studies at Banmatmat, but Bob found the academic side of college life very difficult. After a second try at first year, the staff suggested he should not return. Undaunted, Bob and Rutha left College greatly encouraged in their desire to serve the Lord.

They stayed around Bob's home for a while and were active in the church there, but soon a station on Malekula wanted Bob to come and work, so off they went.

Rutha spent most of her time at her island home while Bob went to work on Monday, returning on Friday. Their faith, prayers and witness have now led to 30 being baptised and the start of a new fellowship. They have already erected a building for worship on Norsup island. There has been a lot of resistance to the establishment of a Church of Christ in the area. Bob has continued to say that he had no intention of coming to start another denomination, but simply to work and witness as the Lord directed. The people themselves, including the village and area chiefs, have insisted on the building of the church house and the

church coming into being. Already, this small group has started a witness on the big island of Malekula and look to building there for worship. Also, one of their number has regular contact and work on the island of Ambrym and his witness has led to a request for a church to be established there.

At the Annual Conference in May, we talked at length with Bob and Rutha about leadership of the church. Which one of them really is the pastor? They are working so well together and neither of them seeks recognition, but they knew that there was a need for a pastor to be appointed. Finally, we agreed that we have to recognise both of them and the Conference gladly agreed to this. So now the church at Norsup has two pastors.

(Lyll visited Norsup in June and did two studies with the church. There were about 100 present on the Sunday.)

—Lyll Muller, Vanuatu

Maylands (WA) Church of Christ 90th Anniversary

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The American religious news magazine *Christianity Today* conducts an annual readers' poll on the book of the year. The 1993 winner was *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* by Richard Foster (Harper), with *Prophet* by Frank Peretti (Crossway) coming second and *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall (Inter-Varsity) third. The critics' choice awards went to *America Against Itself: Moral Vision and the Public Order* by Richard John Neuhaus (University of Notre Dame) in the contemporary issues category; *20th-Century Theology* by Stanley G. Grenz and Roger E. Olson (Inter-Varsity) in the theology/biblical studies category; *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* by Mark A. Noll (Eerdmans) in the biography/history category; *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* edited by David Lyle Jeffrey (Eerdmans) in the reference category; *Rediscovering Holiness* by J.I. Packer (Servant/Vine) in the Christian living/spirituality category; *The Silver Hand* by Stephen Lawhead (Lion) in the fiction category and *Hebrews 1-8* and *Hebrews 9-13* both by William Lane (Word Biblical Commentaries) as joint winners in the commentary category.

Christianity Today also polled its readers on which book (other than the Bible) has had the most significant impact on their Christian life? The top four books were *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer; *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster and equal fourth *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers.

Charles Swindoll's Christian radio program, *Insights For Living*, has commenced broadcasting on Melbourne's 3RPH at 7.45 am each Sunday. 3RPH broadcasts on the AM band at 1179 kHz and can be heard throughout Melbourne, parts of southern

NSW and northern Tasmania. *Insight For Living* is heard on 9 other radio stations in Australia.

Contemporary Christian music is now the third largest selling form of recorded music in the US; behind rock and country but ahead of classical and jazz. CCM has a 5% share of the market and brings in \$640 million a year in recording sales alone.

The 1991 census counted 238,657 Aboriginal and 26,721 Torres Strait Island people in Australia, an increase of 16% on the 1986 figures. In 1991 there were 16,850,540 people in Australia, an increase of 8% since 1986. 22% were born overseas, compared with 20% in 1986.

Thousands are expected to form a human blanket on the forecourt of the Sydney Opera House on 6 August for the Sydney City Mission's national Winter Sleepout. Winter Sleepouts will also be held in Penrith (Police Boys' Club), Parramatta (Church Street Mall), Campbelltown (The Mall) and Liverpool (Francis Greenway Centre). The purpose of the national winter sleepout is to highlight the plight of homeless people and to raise funds to enable the Mission to assist them. Around Australia, the sleepout begins at 6 pm and goes through to 6 am the following morning.

The World by 2000 Day of Praise and Prayer, to be held 10 September, aims to bring Christians around the world together in concerted prayer for the advancement of the World by 2000 project. The day coincides with the 8th anniversary of the World by 2000 agreement signed with 4 major missionary radio ministries, Far East Broadcasting Company, Trans World Radio, Heraldng Christ Jesus' Blessings and SIM International. The agencies are cooperating in order to identify languages spoken by 1 million or more people with no gospel broadcasts, and to divide those languages between the four organisations

and develop gospel radio programs for each of them.

On 19 June in Khabarovsk, a Russian city near China's eastern border, the first Chinese Church in Russia was established. The church is led by Rev Thomas Wang of the Great Commission Centre and 119 Chinese joined in celebrating the occasion. Between 6-20 June a GCC team had the joy of seeing 172 Chinese in eastern Russia turn to Christ. In at least one of their evangelistic meetings on a university campus the entire congregation responded to the invitation to accept Christ. There are 60,000 Chinese in Khabarovsk and a similar number in Vladivostok.

Dr Polkinghorne is well known in both scientific and theological circles. Until 1979 he was Professor of Mathematical Physics at Cambridge and is currently President of Queen's College, Cambridge. Having been ordained in the Anglican Church in 1981, he is currently a member of the Church of England Doctrine Commission. During a visit to Australia, he will be speaking at three meetings in Melbourne relating to the science/theology interface. 23 August at 7.30 pm at Brenan Hall, St Vincent's Hospital, on "New Physics: New Theology?" (Cost \$15); 24 August at 1 pm at the Centre for Science and Technology Studies at the Department of Philosophy, Monash University on "A New Natural Theology"; and on 25 August at 3 pm at Ridley College, Parkville on "Interaction of Science and Theology". His visit has been arranged by ISCAST (The Institute for the Study of Christianity and Science in an Age of Science and Technology), a non-profit company which studies the interaction between science and the Christian faith. Details about Dr Polkinghorne's Australian program or ISCAST can be obtained from Emeritus Prof. Allan Day on (03) 817 4398, or Prof. John Pilbrow on (03) 551 3432.

The Methodists have added 10 million members across 96 countries over the last

30 years, with the growth taking place in Africa, Asia and Latin America; in contrast to no growth in America and a decline in Europe, according to the latest *Handbook of Information of the World Methodist Council*.

There are almost 1 million Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Christians in Japan, a country of 124 million. The number of Protestants and Catholic Christians is essentially unchanged over the last 20 years. Japan's largest Protestant church is the United Church of Christ in Japan with slightly more than 200,000 members. The Anglican Church in Japan has been the fastest growing church, increasing from 1,300 members in 1970 to more than 57,000 members in 1990.

In the midst of repression, imprisonment and even threats of death, Iranians are currently the most open to Christianity and the gospel of any Muslim group in the world, according to a new study. The study stated this openness pertains both to Iranians living in Iran as well as those living elsewhere. According to the study, in 1977 there were 2,750 Persian speaking Christians in the world, today there are 28,000. Almost 96% of them are Iranians, with half residing in Iran and half outside the country.

Over 100 church leaders, para-church representatives and mission organisation personnel, gathered in Sydney on 24 June for the launch of the AD 2000 and Beyond project which aims to present "a church for every people and the gospel for every person by AD 2000". Australian involvement is headed by a steering committee chaired by businessman Graham Binet with Mal Garvin as coordinator. There are 10 resource networks associated with the international headquarters: saturation church planting; unreached peoples, mobilisation of united prayer, cities, mobilisation of pastors, mobilisation of national research, saturation evangelism and small group leadership development, women, mobilisation of young

mobilisers, and God's word and Christian literature. The Australian AD 2000 office can be contacted at 688 Parramatta Rd, Croydon 2132 or by phone on (02) 716 8257.

The Pacific College for Evangelism is offering a course on preaching in response to many requests. "The Art of Preaching" will be the theme of a two week course being held 18-29 October at Pacific College, North Parramatta, Sydney. People can enrol to either live-in at the College or attend on a daily basis. The course will cover the message to be proclaimed, sermon preparation and evangelical and social witness preaching with emphasis on the practical aspects. A one week course on "Personal and Social Holiness" will immediately follow the preaching course (31 October-5 November). Enquiries and registrations to Dr Alan Walker, Principal, Pacific College for Evangelism, 6 Lincluden Place, North Parramatta 2151. Phone (02) 630 0777. Fax (02) 630 0678.

In January, all the congregations of the Church of North India in the Himalayan state of Sikkim seceded to form the Council of Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Sikkim. Over the past year, growing unhappiness over abuse of power, tolerance of moral sin and doctrinal compromise within the Diocese of Darjeeling led to the establishment of Reformation Committees in most of the congregations.

Scottish Anglicans took the first step towards ordaining women to the priesthood on 18 June, when the synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church approved the first stage of legislation to allow women to become priests (and bishops). Synod next year would need a two-thirds majority for final approval. On this occasion, the bishops voted 6-1 and the clergy 51-15 (an 80% majority), the vote among the laity was 48-24 with one abstention, just short of the necessary two thirds majority.

People

Mulgrave Moves To Full-time Ministry

Appointment of new minister



• John, Robyn and Joseph Gilmore

Mulgrave, Vic, is a steadily growing, newly planted church. Having just celebrated its third anniversary, it has grown from 30 inaugural mem-

bers, to a congregation of about 100 each Sunday morning.

Situated at the Churches of Christ Theological College, using the CCTC lecture theatre for its services, the church is, nevertheless, a separate entity, with its members coming from the local area.

One or two first year college students do use Mulgrave as their church home when they arrive, and some of the faculty also worship with us when they are not preaching elsewhere. The church enjoys a unique relationship with the College.

Mulgrave, under the leadership of Alan Niven, has become a church with a great concern for people, including children and young people, who are an integral part of the

church's ministry. Its worship style links God with the realities of every day life and provides a creative focus on God and our response to him.

The Youth Band, composed of our own young people, often plays as an aid to worship and during communion. The Sunday School has grown to such an extent that four new teachers were needed this year.

Alan Niven's appointment to Mulgrave was on a half-time basis, he also served as a half-time lecturer at College. We have always included a student in the ministry team. This year, we have two students, Andrew Ratcliff and Peter Hunt.

With Alan becoming a full-time lecturer the time seemed right for the church to move into a full-time ministry.

There was a unanimous response from the congregation to the appointment of John Gilmore. John is currently in ministry at Magill, SA, church

and will take up ministry at Mulgrave on 7 February, 1994.

John began training at the College of the Bible in 1980. After graduating with a Diploma of Ministry and Bachelor of Theology he had ministries at Gisborne and Aldgate Valley/Mt Barker before moving to Magill.

Robyn, John's wife and mother of two year old Joseph, is extremely supportive of her husband and will find her own avenue of ministry within the life of the church. Robyn also hopes to pursue her career as a psychiatric nurse.

The College will involve John for a few hours a week as they see him as a person able to make a significant contribution to the work of CCTC in preparing people for ministry.

The move to full-time ministry at Mulgrave this early in our life is a significant one and a reflection of the growth of the church. —Betty Bantow

Haddon Appointment

First ministry

John Tudball was inducted as the Haddon, Vic, church's first part-time minister on 2 May. Stephen Templeton, minister of the Dawson Street, Ballarat church, and Don Smith, of the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development,

took part in the service. John has served as an elder of the Dawson Street congregation for a number of years and has moved with his family into ministry with the new congregation. Morning services now have between 60-70 attending.

A Sunday School has been established, together with a youth group.

Two Bible study groups are held during the week. Church leaders are currently looking at further activities to reach the community.

A number of members continue to worship with Dawson Street congregation on Sunday evenings.



• John Tudball

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Going "The Second Mile" to Conduct a Wedding

Adelaide-Singapore



• Graham Agnew and the happy couple—in Singapore

Graham Agnew, senior minister at Marion, SA, recently travelled to Singapore to conduct the wedding ceremony for a young couple who had been in membership at Marion five years ago, whilst studying at Flinders University.

When Veronica Seow and Swee Ain Cheng left Adelaide in 1988 to return to Singapore,

they told Graham that he would be summoned to do their wedding one day as an expression of the love and appreciation which they felt toward Marion. The church had come to mean a lot to them during their stay in Australia. The service was conducted in a lavish setting on the roof-top of a large city hotel in downtown Singapore.

Friendship Services

Encouraging response

The first of special regular Friendship Services was held at the Launceston, Tas, church on 27 June at 7 pm when, in response to special invitation cards from members, over 200 attended, many for the first time. In addition to the usual bright singing, the Sydney rock band "Watchmen" gave items and were interviewed (St Andrews Church and our Launceston Church brought the Band to Launceston where they also gave a Youth Concert on 2 July).

Youth Minister, Darryl Tobler, gave a challenging message entitled "Hello Stranger".

Mission Week at Launceston

Over the period 23-28 March the Launceston, Tas, church was blessed to have Frank and Ros Beale as their guests for their Mission Focus week.

Whilst in Launceston, they spoke at several evening home meetings, Christian Women's Afternoon Fellowship, a morning tea and to the youth of the church. The week was a great time of fellowship, sharing and

learning. The question times at the end of meetings were greatly appreciated, with Frank and Ros answering these questions in a very personal way, making all aware of what is happening in Papua New Guinea.

During his visit, Frank was interviewed on the Christian radio station WAY FM.

The worship services on 28 March were the culmination of the week, which had the overall theme of "Culture in Christ".

—George Green
(Convenor Missions Committee)

Tackling Vital Issues

Marion recommends Graham Hyman

Graham Hyman, the founding director of Youth Specialties Australia, recently visited Marion, SA, conducting a pow-

erful workshop, "Understanding Your Teenager". In addition, he preached at all three services on the Sunday.

The response from people was fantastic, with many (parents and teenagers alike) saying that Graham would have to rank among the best youth communicators they have ever heard.

Graham's workshop presentation goes way beyond mere parent/teen relationships, it's really a presentation about life and how to live it more effectively. We can heartily recommend Graham to any church which would like to see its people thinking about family values and the pressures of modern life on individuals.



• Graham Hyman

Visiting Canberra? Stay with a Church Family

A number of Canberra church families offer accommodation in their homes at basic bed and breakfast rates to help raise funds for "Home Mission" extensions in the ACT

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Desiderius Erasmus (1467-1536) The Forgotten Reformer

Bruce McIntosh

In the first article in this series ("AC" 5 June), I outlined the influence of John Locke (1632-1704) on Churches of Christ.

Who then, among the 16th century reformers, was the major influence on John Locke, and, indirectly, on Churches of Christ? Our forebears rejected Calvinism, which led many of their Presbyterian relatives and friends to believe they had "gone to the devil". They had little in common with the nationalistic and militant Lutherans, and were too "Catholic" in their beliefs to live comfortably with Zwingli and his non-sacramental heirs.

Most Christians know of Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), and Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), but few will know of Erasmus. Erasmus was a Dutch intellectual who pleaded with both Catholic traditionalists and Protestant reformers to maintain the unity of the

church. He led no breakaway group, and despite his scathing criticism of its structures and its Popes, bishops and priests, he remained in the Catholic Church until he died.

As a result, he was regarded as a Protestant by the Catholics and as a Catholic by the Protestants.

In contrast to Luther, who sided with the princely class when they ruthlessly put down the peasant revolt, and Calvin, who could have happily burned those he regarded as heretics, Erasmus pleaded for the acceptance of dissidents and "heretics". While Zwingli lost his life fighting in a religious war, Erasmus called for peace between warring religions and nations.

His influence on biblical scholarship was immense, particularly through his courageous decision to produce the New Testament in Greek at a time when Latin was the sacred language. Erasmus was constantly in danger of losing his life on a burning stake, it was his widely read writings that saved him. In the 1530s 300,000 copies of his New Testament and 750,000 copies of his other books were in circulation. (When I was researching this article, I picked up, by chance, a copy of his *In Praise of Folly* in a country town junk shop for \$1)

Erasmus was a Christian humanist who greatly influenced the English church. Paul Johnson, in his *History of Christianity*, makes the direct link between Erasmus and Locke.

Erasmus examined the Scriptures for himself, getting behind the layers of interpretation built up over the centuries.

He distrusted medieval theologians and their dogmatic assertions and urged everyone to judge for themselves what was correct belief. Although ordained, he refused to make a distinction between clergy and laity, and to accept that the clergy had exclusive rights to the interpretation of Scripture. He rejected predestination, believing people could "work out their own salvation". He believed the Old Testament was of limited value, and pleaded for a return to the "evangel" of the New Testament. Erasmus was the first real pacifist since the early church. He rejected the notion of a just war. A very courageous stand to take in a time of wars between Protestants and Catholics.

What then flows on to Churches of Christ via John Locke and the British non-conformists?

- Erasmus' desire to return to New Testament Christianity, and his plea for Christian unity. (The two basic convictions of Churches of Christ)

- His anti-clericalism and opposition to a faith reliant on dogmatic theology.

(Early British and Australian Churches of Christ had no ordained ministers and avoided the use of the term, theology)

- His pacifist convictions. (Churches of Christ believe war is contrary to the mind of Christ, and were practising pacifists until the First World War)

- His rejection of the concept of predestination. (This was one of the major differences between early Baptists who followed Calvin's teachings and early Churches of Christ who did not)

- His desire not to be seen supporting either Catholic or Protestant causes. (Early Churches of Christ saw themselves as a movement within the church, and therefore neither Catholic nor Protestant)

In the final article in this series we will look at the influence of the writings of the Apostle Paul on early Churches of Christ.

Readings on Erasmus, and the British non-conformists:

Roland Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (Lion, 1969); Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity*; William Estep, *Renaissance and Reformation*; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down—Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*.

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BIRTHS

CHAPMAN (LITTLE) Phil, Jan, Kathryn and Andrew praise God for his precious gift of Timothy David, who arrived safely on 30.6.93 at Castlemaine. A new little grandson for Margaret and Tom Chapman (Mitcham) and Isabel and Keith Little (Burwood).

Scott (Ede) James and Vanessa are happy to announce the arrival of beautiful Maximo Tyler, 26 June, 1993. Maxi you are a gift from God, filled with his love and peace. First grandchild of Tom and Julie Ede, fourteenth of Keith and Linda Scott.

ENGAGEMENTS

Leach—Parker Lesley and John Leach of Glen Waverley are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Carolyn Jane to Simeon Grant, son of Jan and Anthea Parker of Boronia and the late Grant Woodward.

90TH BIRTHDAY

GRAHAM Mary, Alan, Bruce and Don and their families are very pleased to share the special occasion of the 90th Birthday of Nita Graham (4/4 Fir Street, Blackburn 3130. Telephone (03) 878 0035) on 4 August 1993, and wish her many more years of caring and loving.

DEATHS

STREADER Edgar Donald (Don) Peacefully at the Alfred Hospital on 25 June 1993. Most dearly loved and cherished husband of Joy Margaret, loved and respected father of Christopher Donald, dear Father-in-Law of Susan, dearest Grandad of Andrew, Mark and Caitlin. Undereath the everlasting arms.

WITHERS Clara May. Died peacefully on Monday, 28 June, aged 89. Devoted and dearly loved wife of Arthur (dec). Loving and much loved mother of Les and Judy, Jean and Max, and John (dec). Dearly loved grandmother of Deb, Chris and Lisa; Michelle and Robyn; Rachel, Rebecca

and Jane. Great grandmother of nine. "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."

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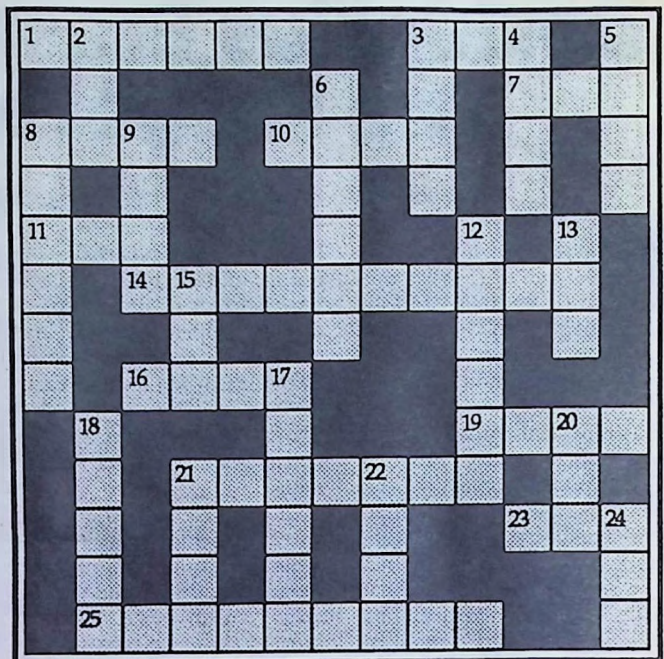
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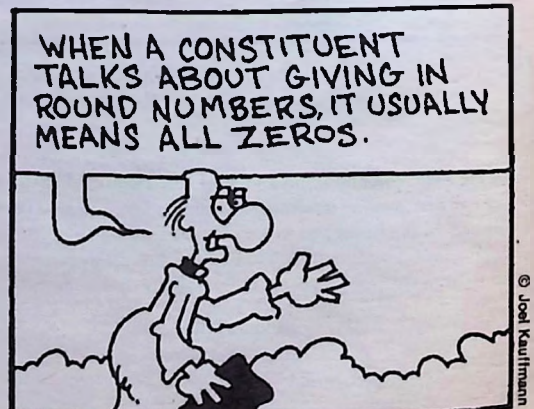
- 1 Book of the Bible
- 3 How many lights did God make?
- 7 God named the light
- 8 Part of inscription on wall (Daniel)
- 10 At Babel they said, "Let us _____ bricks."
- 11 Often contrasted with grace
- 14 Number appointed by Jesus (Luke 10)
- 16 Jacob had one
- 19 City in the Negev (Judges 1)
- 21 Grandfather of Israel
- 23 Our forefathers _____ the manna in the desert (John 6)
- 25 The Samaritan is a good _____

DOWN

- 2 Important numeral in Ephesians 4:5

- 3 Adoni-Bezek had his big _____ cut off (Judges 1)
- 4 A Prophet (2 Chronicles 28)
- 5 Musical instrument (Psalm 150)
- 6 Result of God's judgement (Jeremiah 29)
- 8 Old name for the scene of Paul's shipwreck (Acts 28)
- 9 The Gospel is good _____
- 12 Source of David's stones
- 13 Defiled one must be broken (Leviticus 11)
- 15 Son of Benjamin (Genesis 46)
- 17 Word from John 3:16
- 18 _____ a child (Proverbs 22)
- 20 Example to the lazy
- 21 Guilty of intermarriage (Ezra 10)
- 22 Nephew of Abraham (Genesis 22)
- 24 If this offends you you should pluck it out

Pontius' Puddle



Back To Bach

Viney Longthorp

On 6 June many people enjoyed the broadcast of Brisbane's Biennial International Music Festival. On that day a fine series of week long concerts came to a climax with a Bach marathon, no less. It may well have been a world first. As expected, ABC FM broadcast the entire 12-hour proceedings with a performance of those wonderful six Brandenburg Concerti. It was a mark of the genius of Johann Sebastian Bach that his music, with its infinite variety and unflinching interest, could sustain marathon treatment.

More Bach will be presented on ABC FM by the inimitable Kay McLennan, on her program *For the God Who Sings*, on 25 July (6-8 am). This program will honour this mighty man of

music who died on 28 July, 1750. Included in the offerings will be Kantate 198—Funerale Ode.

Bach is in the forefront of the world's great composers. Many of his tunes are in daily currency; most people are familiar with some of them even if they don't always know who wrote them. There are: *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring*, the *Air on a G String*, that most famous of Gavottes, and that wonderful pastoral melody, *Where Sheep May Safely Graze*. And thanks to Walt Disney, his film *Fantasia* (remember?) opened the ears of millions to Bach's awe inspiring *Fugue and Toccata in D*, which accompanied a cataract of dazzling colour.

Someone in NASA must also know about Bach, for included in the pay-load of one of the Voyager spacecrafts, now winging its way into the infinities of space, is a sample of Bach's music.

Composing memorable tunes is not in itself the hallmark of musical genius. What counts is what a composer does with those tunes. The quintessence of Bach's art was his ability to take a tune or musical fragments and build them into incredibly meaningful structures. Some of these structures are amazingly complex, but possess a perfection of form and completeness which gives the listener a feeling of deep satisfaction. Bach has the abil-

ity to lift one out of the trivial. The feeling one gets is replete with paradox: on the one hand, Bach's perfection suggests that no more can be said; on the other, his sheer inventiveness makes you wonder where else will he lead you?

Musical genius is seen also in the ability of a musician to sum up and bring to perfection all that went before him. Bach did this to a remarkable degree; he makes so many, otherwise talented, composers of the early 18th century sound thin and prosaic.

Bach was a humble and modest man. The greatness of his spirit was difficult to discern in this self-effacing Thuringian organ virtuoso, who preferred his family to fame, and who lived in almost feudal quietude. When asked to explain his life's accomplishment he simply said, "I worked hard."

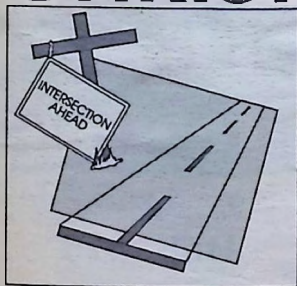
Above all else, it is as a composer of religious music that Bach is pre-eminent. He was, to use Pascal's famous phrase, "A God intoxicated person". His music is the supreme vehicle for accompanying those words which mediate the things of the spirit of the living God. In Bach, words and music are equal partners; it is so often the "music which is the message". A quick glance at our *Churches of Christ Hymnbook* (music edition) will reveal how much we owe to his tunes or to his arrangements of other's music.

Bach's music is so inherently Christian because of its purity and wondrous inwardness. In the *St Matthew Passion*, for instance, Bach is every person in that divine drama, he is in every part of the action. He identifies completely with all in that spiritual testing time which the music depicts. So much so that it has been said, "To sing the congregational chorales of the Passion is for the unbeliever to experience a suspension of unbelief."

Speaking from the standpoint of the Lutheran culture, for whose church services Bach wrote most of his music, Nathan Söderblom wrote: "The passion music, which was created within the church and which experienced a new depth, a new richness, and a new intensity in the 16th century, constitutes in its way the most important addition that has been made to the sources of revelation in the Old and New Testament. If you ask about a fifth Gospel, I do not hesitate to name the interpretation of salvation history as it reached its acme in Johann Sebastian Bach. The *Saint Matthew Passion* and *Mass in B Minor* give deep insights into the mystery of the passion and salvation."

For the moralists among us, the fortunes of Bach's music is significant. This music has remained so vital and mediated its message so vividly across the generations, because Bach's workmanship was so thorough; it was music wrought with deep integrity as Bach obeyed the profoundest principles of his art. The music of very few composers could hold up under the marathon treatment offered by our Brisbane friends in their festival. In this regard, then, the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy leap into mind: "Do your utmost to let God see that you at least are a sound workman, with no need to be ashamed of the way you handle the word of the Truth." (2 Tim. 2:15, Moffatt's translation)

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The Devil's Lament

Gordon Stirling

To the Editor,

Life was good to me until that fateful day when the Enemy's Son sent out his followers on a preaching spree. I wouldn't have called it a success. But when they came back he said, "I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven!" I didn't see anything for him to be excited about. It was going to take more than an amateur preaching mission to dislodge me.

At the time I wondered what he meant, but now I know. It wasn't only that isolated little crusade that he was thinking about, but its sequel for a couple of thousand years as insignificant little groups of his followers went about the world loving and caring and spreading what the Enemy calls the good news. (It's not good news to me!) How can I, with my cohort of devils, keep pace with all that?

I know that we are fighting for an unwinnable cause. The Enemy won the war on Calvary when he "disarmed principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them" as his Book says. Well, he may have won the war, but we are not

laying down our arms. Why do we keep on fighting an unwinnable war you ask? Because it's my nature. My only pleasures in life are to fight and to destroy and to deceive and to create chaos, and so it will be until the ignominious end. No wonder I'm grieving!

I get no comfort from my ardent followers, the various Satanist groups. They think that they do me a favour with their crass crudities. But they lack my subtlety. They forget that I have been called "an angel of light". How do they think that they will help my cause by advertising darkness. I suppose I must be grateful for their attempts to serve me, but frankly I'm not impressed.

Even my company, **Principalities and Powers Ltd** (a lot more limited than I would like!) is deep in recession. The Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall are down and the Bamboo Curtain is looking somewhat frayed. It seems that we just get onto something good when the Enemy somehow penetrates the minds of those whom we have groomed for leadership, and they start to do his will, even when they don't believe in him.

Principalities and Powers Ltd gets a good famine going and the enemy stirs up the consciences of people everywhere and they move in and wreck our work. Principalities and Powers Ltd has some good deals going with armament makers who are all on our side, as they flood little nations and nationalistic groups with weapons. But no sooner do they get up a good fracas than the Enemy stirs national governments and the United Nations to find ways of stopping their fun.

The only ray of light in my doom and gloom is some of the Enemy's most ardent followers. They give me the only good publicity I ever get. They are always talking about me

and about how clever and subtle and powerful I am. They don't realise that these are the highest compliments I can receive.

Here I am, defeated at the cross, my mission doomed, in a hopeless position, beaten and dejected, yet these devotees of the Enemy talk with awe about my successes. They even give me credit for lots of things that I never did. They lose their tempers without any help from me, and then give me the credit. They pray to the Enemy to prop up some of their little ventures and leave him to do it all, and when the ventures fail, they blame me—I love it.

Many of them are obsessed with me and talk about me all the time. I even get publicity in sermons in church, if you can believe it. Some of the Enemy's followers talk and think more about me than they do about him. They seem to have forgotten that the Enemy can't lose. That suits me fine. I love people being scared of me. I like

hearing sermons that glorify me. I am delighted when people read books that tell of my exploits, even if most of the time the authors give me credit for ordinary human failures that I have had nothing to do with. I even believe that some of the Enemy's followers look under their beds at night to see if I am there.

So all is not lost as long as so many of the Enemy's best friends remain obsessed with me. The more obsessed they are with me the less their minds are focused on him and that terrible victorious power of his that shrivels me up, even in the lives of his most fragile followers.

I am wondering if any of your readers could be interested in taking up some shares in **Principalities and Powers Ltd**. They are going awfully cheap!

Yours infernally,
Satan

(Watch for "The Jonah Problem" coming up next time.)

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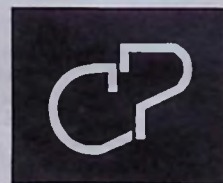
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Corporate Worship in an Individualist Society

Garry Harris

Heroes affect us. None more profoundly than cultural heroes. Deeply rooted in Australian lore is the institution of the rugged individualist, having no need of networks or support systems.

Self-reliance is proclaimed in our national literature. The tenacity of "The Pioneers"; the singular resolve of "The Drover's Wife"; and the mythical exploits of "The Man From Snowy River"; who "alone and unassisted brought them back", all applaud the solo performer.

This inevitably impacts upon the church, and nowhere more negatively than in the worship service. There is a critical tension between the individualist models of our culture and the call of the New Testament to corporate worship.

The worshipping Australian is forced to live in a schizoid world. Monday to Friday the ethos of the independent loner predominates. On Sunday

morning we attempt to put this aside and enter into a world where community is paramount.

The church is also responsible for perpetuating this mentality. Evangelical Protestantism's emphasis on the individual's response to God both grew out of, and reinforced this mind-set.

Regrettably, this has clouded our recognition of our cog-like part in the corporate whole. (See Ralph P. Martin's *The Family and the Fellowship: New Testament Images of the Church* (Eerdmans) for an excellent discussion of this issue.)

The purpose of this article is not to castigate, but to alert us to some of the difficulties inherent in the worship service. Being cognisant of these difficulties, we may take intentional steps to moderate the impact of these cultural pulls on members of our congregations as they faithfully attempt to ap-

proach God corporately in worship.

The inclusion of more overtly communal actions in worship, such as responsive readings, litanies, affirmations of faith, and prayers read in unison, will provide, as hymns do, the opportunity of hearing the voices of those around us raised to God in praise.

The congregational sharing of "the peace" will provide opportunity in the midst of the service to see, touch, and embrace other worshippers.

The corporate nature of communion can also be enhanced. One possibility is inviting communicants to form a circle around the Lord's Table.

This not only places the elements at the literal centre of the church family, it also enables members to be vitally aware of those opposite and alongside.

Some congregations with movable seating have also enjoyed the benefits of occasion-

ally worshipping "in the round".

Similarly, one of our larger congregations achieved variety and emphasised the corporate dimension of communion by placing the Lord's Table at the intersection of two aisles in the chapel. The congregation was invited to stand and face the Table. The theological impact was profound. The family of God was facing the emblems and each other, while the aisles formed the shape of a cross with the Lord's Table at its centre. The bread and the cup were not only bringing communicants into fellowship with God, but symbolically bringing them into fellowship with each other.

Many blatant and subtle tensions exist between the world and the church. An approach to worship intent on celebrating the corporate nature of the church may effectively offset cultural pulls militating against community.

Older Churches

David Moyes

In July, Epping, NSW, Church of Christ celebrates 70 years of ministry. It made me reflect upon churches that are 70 years and older—there are 20 in New South Wales alone. Only 5% of these churches have more than 100 members, compared with 53% over 20 years ago.

Churches feel the strains of age as they get older. Sadly, some of these churches either close or amalgamate. Currently, it seems to be the trend to amalgamate two or three churches to form one church! I wonder if Churches of Christ will grow by this method? Some have continued to grow after

amalgamation, but most have not.

Epping felt the strains of age about seven years ago. During that time, their membership declined from 200 to 141 and stayed there for two years. It seemed to be a dying church. Today, Epping is revitalised with a growing membership of 180 with nearly 300 worshippers every week.

What is happening to revitalise this old church? It isn't through amalgamation or a quick-fix program, but through a congregation seeing the need to do something.

Below is what Epping has done. I hope this will encour-

age older churches to be revitalised.

1. Revitalised Morale: Good programming helped people feel good about their church. We have family camps and social nights. Special worship services communicate positive aspects to the church and keep the leadership enthusiastic. Morale does wonders.

2. Revitalised Young Ministers: The church took the bold step and called two young ministers. Lester Sutton and myself, with guidance from Kevin Crawford and the support of the eldership, have seen new vitality and ideas. Significantly, some of my college peers have

also revitalised other older churches around Australia.

3. Revitalised Evangelism: We focus upon evangelism in the church prayers, through the various ministry groups, and the worship services. We teach, pray and seek commitments to Christ every week.

4. Revitalised Worship Services: We create dynamic worship services by encouraging gifted people to be involved in music, leading, presiding, welcoming and ushering. Biblical sermon series are preached and new people are made welcome. Regular special evangelistic services continue to increase attendance and offering.

The Nemesis of Poetic Justice

Stephen Curkpatrick

5. Revitalised Prayer: We have prayer groups and half nights of prayer specifically praying for our church. However, long before this, a number of good faithful members were committed to pray for the church. They are now thanking God for what he is doing.

6. Revitalised Strengths: We focus on our strengths by building upon them this is a Kennon Callahan principle. Our Playtime group has now over 60 attending.

7. Revitalised Groups: We have begun over 10 new ministry groups to meet the needs of others including a Crisis Care team, Mothers' Support group, home groups, prayer ministry, Seniors' group, and a men's ministry. The home group ministry has increased in attendance by 20%—many are new people.

8. Revitalised Building: In 1991, we revitalised our chapel and hall. We have increased our seating capacity, office space, amenities, and equipment. Our renovated building has created interest from the community and warmth and openness within the congregation.

Through risk taking and enthusiasm from the congregation, Epping church is revitalised. We give thanks to God and we look forward to more exciting growth. Closing down or amalgamation is not the way to build churches. Is your church feeling the strains of old age? Is it declining in membership? Do not despair. It can be revitalised if you act now.

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"Poetic justice" is that response we tend to attribute to the outcome of a situation in which the virtuous are rewarded and "villains" receive their just deserts through some ironic twist of circumstance. This is "poetic" justice, inasmuch as it occurs in the realm of fiction, rather than our experience of life, with fate or chance the executor of such justice. The phrase betrays a sentiment that "This is the way life should be". Some people should be ruined. Some should be rewarded. This is the hope of psalmist and sapient alike. It is that sentiment in fiction that hopes that life, in the end, will reflect a similar outcome. However, in several "well worn" parables and stories* of the Gospel narratives, this perspective of life does not seem to be affirmed. Indeed, the opposite appears to be the case.

In a culture where obedience and reward were virtually inseparable, the debauched, disobedient son is endowed with gifts by his father. In a highly moral society, a rogue is commended for his clever but dishonest behaviour; and contrary to the human code of fairness and getting our just deserts, unfair wages are paid in a vineyard. A Samaritan, who couldn't possibly enter a Jewish narrative except as the villain of the story, turns out to be the compassionate protagonist. An irreligious man is declared righteous in a sacred place, negating the criteria by which the "righteous" can be regarded righteous. In a society theologically conscious about receiving one's just deserts, maimed, blind, lame beggars are hosted at a banquet, forecasting the guests of the great banquet of the Kingdom.

Such plots could hardly affirm a perception of life based

on classical expressions of poetic justice. Even if only at a fictional level (which is ultimately the most subtle and powerful), they rupture our way of ordering values along predictable polarities. The parable is not the only genre that subverts faith in poetic justice. Jesus' acceptance of Zacchaeus, Levi, a "questionable" woman's love and kisses, his presence at parties with the "wrong" people, his reversal of patriarchal values, his flouting of culturally legitimated purity and Sabbath rules, his promise of paradise to a dying

**This is
the way
life
should
be**

brigand, demonstrate anything but the dependability of "poetic justice" in the Gospel narratives. After all, isn't this the astonished, peeved discovery of the Elder Son, whose passionate penchant for "poetic justice" is unravelled.

The desire for "poetic justice", that narrative plot which will finally reaffirm the stability of our world through the portrayal of "black and white"† characters receiving appropriate rewards or retribution, is a powerful, deeply ingrained desire, and is intrinsic to apocalyptic mythologies. In the interlocking world of fiction and reality, poetic justice is rooted in the idea that fate or divine retribution will prevail to the satisfaction of the auditors, with chaos perceived as the only alternative. This was the religious authorities' major concern with

Jesus. His subversive stories and actions could only mean chaos, at least for their world, in which outcasts must be proscribed, prodigality punished, ritual deviation denounced, and hierarchical relationships reaffirmed. For the authorities, the execution of Jesus was a most exquisite expression of poetic justice.

However, grace has its own contingent and radically different kind of justice, in which the hope of wholeness is affirmed, forgiveness is realised and human dignity, no matter how oppressed or distorted, is redeemed. Many parables and stories of the Gospel narratives are loaded with such portrayals of grace, in which that nemesis of "poetic justice", a world of polarised relationships and fixed destinies, is reversed,‡ providing an extraordinary context for unexpected encounters with the Kingdom of God. This is a world that will not confirm our ways of valuing people. Instead, it generates different scenarios of life, other than our scenarios of reward or retribution, making possible the serendipity of grace.

* I refer to "well worn" parables and stories as those which are told so frequently we often fail to perceive their devastating implications.

† The polarities "black and white" belie the inadequacy of language in which our definitions so often involve the denigration of an opposite, such as "black" to define "white" in an ethical context. The polysemic world of parable ruptures our dualistic use of language about God and people and opens the possibility of conceiving different kinds of reality.

‡ A reversal of Aristotelian reversal or peripeteia—that tragic, fated turn of events which is so intrinsic to poetic justice.

A Church ABC

As its name indicates, this is a church with a vision.

Located in the Melbourne suburb of Glen Waverley, about 25 km east of the city, is one of our newer churches—the Vision Church of Christ. The church decided on their name because they see that they do have a vision for their work—they expect the church to grow, that they will reach people in Melbourne with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly part of the large ethnic population of Melbourne.

The church began on 5 July 1992 after 3 people, who had an Asian ethnic background, believed they had a vision, or call, from God to reach out to other ethnic

people in the city. The Vision Church aims to reach out to Pakistani, Indian, Fijian, Malaysian and Sri-Lankan people. When researching the viability of such a congregation, they found that there are about 80,000 Indians in Melbourne alone, apart from the other nationalities they seek to reach. The church's location was decided based on information that the majority of people from the target ethnic groups live in Glen Waverley and surrounding suburbs (Knox, Dandenong, Springvale and Nunawading).

The church currently has 25 members, with 30 attending worship on average. They have a good age spread with 6-7 children in the Sunday School, 10 young people, and the rest being in the 30-40 age group. Having just had their first anniversary, they are excited about the future. Seventy people attended the celebrations. They expect their ministry to grow, with a vision of the church's numbers doubling in the next year or two.

The church has two main methods of outreach at present. Saturday mornings teams go out and systematically visit, doorknocking at homes in the

Glen Waverley area. Their minister, Amar Raj, commented that the results of this effort has been "a bit of a mixed bag". They have found that a lot of the community has little interest in God, but they are persisting and, at the very least, people are becoming aware of the church's presence in the area.

The second method of outreach involves friendship groups within the homes. These

participate in some form. Another difficulty has been criticism for starting an "ethnic" church, instead of integrating themselves within other congregations. They decided to follow their course because they have an ethnic common ground with the people they seek to reach and, therefore, the call to respond to the gospel is not confused with a call to become a Westerner, and so, the people do not feel as though they have to give up their culture or identity.

A further difficulty has been the formation of an identity as a Churches of Christ congregation, especially in

view of the number of people coming from other church traditions.

In light of their vision and excitement for the future, the church requested that the wider body pray for their outreach—that they will make an impact in their community. They would like to be able to grow enough to participate in more practical demonstrations of God's love in the community, especially facilitating the arrival and establishment of new migrants. However, at present, time and resources do not permit such work.

are social functions to which members invite their friends. A meal is shared and some sort of social activity takes place such as Trivial Pursuit. The evening is concluded with prayer and some comments on faith and life, but it is not a "heavy" situation. The goal is to make contacts and meet needs—particularly those of migrants who are often lonely and isolated, and thus lessen the feeling of alienation.

The friendship group's format, including a meal, is significant, as hospitality is very important in these cultures, where the guest will be taken care of even if the family themselves have to go without. So far, it seems that a few new people have started attending the church through this outreach.

The church has had to overcome a number of difficulties. One of these is that they cannot afford to pay a minister's salary, and so Amar Raj has to work full-time (in a management position) as well as pastor the church. A significant help has been the church's emphasis on each member having a function in the church, that people do not just attend, they

Personal

Baptisms

• Louise Booth, Emily Booth, Strathmore, Vic • Debbie Burrow, Leticia Phillips, Magill, SA • Glenda Ruwoldt, Horsham, Vic • Merridy Galton, Victor Harbor, SA • Shane Morrow, Maitland, NSW • Maria Harper, Murray Bridge, SA • Simon Albury, James Allsop, Timothy Hughes, Bayswater, Vic • Carol Kemp, Cheryl Hinson, Echuca, Vic • Greg Ellis, Corey Ellis, Mark Hudson, Dandenong, Vic • Rosa & Frank Faraci, Swan Hill, Vic • Jason Lees, Boronia, Vic • Gary Maddern, Strathalbyn, SA • Emma Pascoe, Linda Butt, Warragul, Vic

Marriages

• Jan Spencer to Doug Firth, Boronia, Vic • Deborah South to Stephen Earl, Warragul, Vic

Deaths

• George Debney Wren, Nallsworth, SA • Barry Peck, Carnarvon, WA • Mrs Sylvia Libby, William Stolke, Wesley Jenkins, Bayswater, Vic • Don Streader, Ormond, Vic

Changes

MITCHAM: Commencing 18 July, the morning service will be at 10 am.

MAIDSTONE: Minister—Andrew McMillan, 41 Richelieu St, Maidstone, Vic 3012. Phone (03) 317 9533.

SOUTH EASTERN SUBURBAN REGIONAL CHURCH: Minister—E.M. (Marij) Buckingham, PO Box 204, Glenhuntly, Vic 3163. Phone (03) 571 6051.

BERWICK REGIONAL: Associate Minister—Andrew and Wendy Ball, 50 Wood Street, Beaconsfield, Vic 3807. Phone (03) 707 3225.

Focus on Vision Church of Christ



Part-Time Youth Director (20 hours per week)

Bendigo Church of Christ seeks a person who is:

- able to relate effectively to children, young people and their parents
- a good organiser and promoter
- enthusiastic about the beliefs and practices of Churches of Christ
- committed to growing the church

Please write stating why you believe you could do the job (be realistic) giving details of relevant skills, qualifications and track record, including copies of references, to:

Bendigo Church of Christ
35-39 Short Street
Bendigo 3550

Applications close 30 September 1993

Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Jenkins, John Wesley (25.6.93) Wes, the son of John Wesley and Iona Jenkins, was born at Kensington 16.6.12. He has one brother, Alan. He married Daisy May Bates in 1934. He worked as a metal worker and welder, and established Smart Press dry cleaners in Preston. Wes was keenly interested in tennis with the Churches of Christ and Baptist Tennis Association. He loved the Lord and served as secretary at Coburg, and was a lifetime Rechabite. Later, he and May retired to Rye, coming to Salford Park in 1983. As Wesley's health declined he was placed in Salford Nursing Home. He is sadly missed by loving wife May, children Gloria (White) and Rex, Barry and Maureen, Lyn (Hunter) and Kevin, Wendy (Bridgett) and Graeme, Warren and Robyn, and 12 grandchildren.

—RCC

WITHERS, Clara May (28.6.93) Our churches lost a lady who had loved and served them well. Baptised in the Moreland church by the late Will Gale, at 16 she became a foundation member of the Coburg church. In December 1926, 12 months after he graduated from College, she was married to Arthur in the Coburg church, W. Gale officiating. Inseparably linked in ministry, she gave outstanding and unstinted service in every possible area, earning respect and love. Clara was President of Women's Conference 1951–2, a regular at CWF Council and Vic-Tas Conference, and an Australian representative at World Convention, Honolulu, 1982. In her latter years she worshipped at North Balwyn, maintaining close contact with CWF at Balwyn, Ivanhoe and Northcote. A well-attended service was held at Ivanhoe, the scene of their first and last full-time ministries. Ian Smith, minister, Ian Allsop, Secretary of National and State Conferences and Gordon Stirling, fellow minister and family friend, assisted in the service. B. Alcorn officiated at the Fawkner cemetery. We commend Jean and Les and their loved ones to the Lord. "Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life."

—Bruce Alcorn

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NSW

MAITLAND (R.N. Hawkins) Dorothy Holstein special guest ... New elders R. Dixon, K. Pond ... Church ladies involved in district CWF camp at Morissett ... Missionary video & prayer fellowship formed. Meets monthly ... YWAM team at evening service ... Jeff May guest at mission weekend. **GILGANDRA (P. Anderson)** Kidz Klub held Wednesday after school. Afternoon tea held for mothers ... Monthly Coo-ee Lodge service now in afternoon ... Creation Bus visit. Peter Sparrow speaker am & pm. At evening meeting film "The World That Perished" shown ... Board retreat led by Ross Wakeley, Colin Smith CDE ... Grant & Cheryl Jackson thanking God for first child Joseph William ... Minister attended Conference & retreat.

Tas

NUBEENA (C.G. Henderson) Minister & wife attended seminars on "Wholeness" ... Locals took pulpit while minister on holidays ... 12 visitors from WA churches fellowshiped with church ... Praise & worship overheads donated to church ... Elwyn Joseph & Dorothy Briggs hospitalised. Now recovered ... Church changed from offering box at door to offering bags ... Indian pastor, Benjamin Tiwari, spoke at evening service 27 June ... Gwen Henderson attended brother's funeral in Victoria.

Vic

REDCLIFFS (S. Mackle) Day of memories 10 June, when former members of Redcliffs CWF celebrated 60 years of service. Special guests Mrs S.K. Bannon, Morwell, Vic, & Mrs D. Walladge, Owen, SA. Greetings from past members. Mrs H.J. Cook, member for 59 years, gave resume of 60 years, then cut beautiful birthday cake. Donations of \$230 for Ruth Perkins, missionary in Niger. **STRATHMORE (James Pearce)** Church involved in Easter Event, taking story of Easter to 900 primary school students. James coordinator of Event, involved all churches in Strathmore ... Maureen Jenkins spoke for CWF Sunday ... Mrs Turner & Jenny Forrest visited Vanuatu, taking gifts from the church to Ranwadi High ... Louise & Emily Booth baptised.

Church News

GLEN WAVERLEY (Ron Elbourne, Howard Sanders) Ron Elbourne recently in USA providing input for Leadership 2000 program ... Young people successful in State Youth Games ... Support given to Aborigine Evangelical Fellowship through Op Shop gifts in May ... Annual Meet the Need Fund offering received ... Nolan family retained as Living Links. **MALVERN (Andrew McMillan)** Welcome to new member Onosai P'aniolo who comes with his family from Samoa ... Samlyn & Duncan Crockett back from NZ tour ... Joyce Ussher at the organ while Barbara Ramsay off to Darwin ... Great combined service with Indonesian Praise Church for Pentecost. Preacher Peter Lee of Grace Church. Great fellowship & fun time ... Ecumenical studies for Pentecost with Presbyterian & Uniting ... Daisy overcoming flu. **BAYSWATER (R.C. Cambridge)** Sunday School anniversary, under leadership of Ian Hughes, again a highlight, this year with their performance of the musical "Let there be Light" ... Church saddened by several deaths, but gladdened with confessions of faith. Details reported in the appropriate sections ... Further transfers in have also brought encouragement. **ECHUCA (Arthur Symes)** Church renovations will begin in early September. The maintenance team will be here for three weeks ... Singing group is looking for more members even though the few they now have are very good & a pleasure to listen to. **ORMOND** Alan Niven guest speaker 68th anniversary services ... Extensive renovations being carried out on manse by voluntary labour ... Good Companions girls won junior section of Kidsmin State games at Burwood ... Hospitality box in foyer continues to bring in food items for needy families in community ... Bethany Nursery School is already booked out for next year. A valuable source of contacts. **DANDENONG (G. Foon, D. Perkin)** A great concert held 19 June to raise funds for clothing bin ... Family breakfast held 4 July, followed by a family service. The breakfast & service was run by our group SAMUEL (Singles And Marrieds Under Everlasting Love) ... CWF held birthday with 97 attending. Speaker Marj Swales from Campaigners for Christ who spoke on her work in prisons. **SWAN HILL (Lindsay Mayes, Tim Green)** Graeme Sonsie

joined ministry team, serving three days each week ... Record attendance at Halls Gap family camp Queen's Birthday weekend ... Married couple baptised ... Overseas emphasis over three weekends in June–July with Brett McHutchin, Mark & Lisa Nichols & Sunny Philip as guest speakers ... Husband & wife musical team, Andy & I, special guests over weekend 16–17 July. **BORONIA (Keith Milne, Andrew Henley)** Vic-Tas CWF President, Maureen Daniels, recent speaker ... Young people involved in presentation at State Conference celebration ... CCTC final year student, Carl Lee, serving in honorary capacity ... Evening service focus change will reflect note of celebration, all welcome. Andrew Ball first guest speaker ... 35 represented Boronia at State Youth Games ... Study group for YP held Sundays, followed by tea & evening service. **WARRAGUL (David & Debbie Buesnel)** Building fund commenced for urgently needed Sunday School rooms ... Successful CWF regional rally at Warragul ... Glenys Reaby speaker on CWF Sunday ... Church anniversary speaker George Warren. PSA with Lowanna Singers ... Harvey Miller speaker at recent men's breakfast ... Additional seating purchased for church & Sunday School ... Combined Civic service held at West Gippsland Arts Centre ... Guest speakers Ian Allsop & Dr Kilbourne.

WA

CARNARVON (K. O'Brien) A great time of inter-church fellowship enjoyed at BBQ & meeting with Bible Society team ... Ladies greatly encouraged by three session seminar with guest speaker Margaret Jacobs ... Church witnessed & participated in dedication of Kevin & Jillian's baby Sinead Farrah ... Noel Cuttifford commissioned as deacon. Portfolio of transport ... Kevin O'Brien presented message over radio 6LN. **ROCKINGHAM (Keith Ware)** After-church luncheon held recently to farewell John & Andrea Lee, before returning to Bible College. Church has confirmed invitation for John to return as associate minister for three years ... Jack Stewart to assist pastor part-time ... Church hall extensions to commence shortly ... Rob & Glen Bruce left for Africa on missionary service ... Four couples welcomed to fellowship by transfer.

Church News

Old

REDCLIFFE (Adrian Risson) New chapel extension showing worth, with various activities organised using complex ... Musical evening with New Tribes Mission choir 29 May ... Missionary weekend 10-11 July—guest speaker Ray Overend (South Seas Evangelical Mission) ... Family camp to be held 3-5 September at Mount Tamborine ... Plans underway for 37th anniversary 18-19 Sept ... Increased attendances at both morning & gospel services.

SA

VICTOR HARBOR (Don Wesley) Friendship is celebrating their eighth birthday in June ... Church camp held at Point Sturt with 60 people ... Mission weekend held in June with displays set up from Bible Society, Federal Aborigines, World Vision, Wycliffe, Leprosy Mission, MAF, Overseas Mission ... Farewell & fund raising dinner held to say thank you to Ruth May. Over \$1000 raised toward church centre debt.

KENSINGTON PARK (Darren Kittel) Our minister chosen to be part of Leadership 2000 training & development program trip to USA, sponsored by Christian Projects, to visit large & medium sized churches. Church looking forward to sharing in results of this experience ... Discussion continuing on proposed merger with neighbouring Maylands ... One third of membership share weekly Bible studies ... Friendship Club weekly & monthly lunches continue to meet needs.

NAILSWORTH (D. Telfer) Preparations have commenced for home meetings during Community Contact Week in August ... 74th church anniversary 20 June. Morning speaker Ian Allsop, evening international missions emphasis speaker Ray Laird ... Recent Day Fellowship coffee morning raised nearly \$300 for overseas missions, Helen Nolan guest speaker ... Money raised from Walk for Bibles will help care for children's spiritual needs in Australia & overseas.

MURRAY BRIDGE (M. Munyard) Church encouraged by baptism of young woman & commitment of Shaun McNamara ... Rick & Helen Nolan, PNG, gave illustrated & informative talk at monthly family tea ... Captain Black-Eye visits children & parents of "Action Stations" for term end ... CWF enjoyed instruction from over 50s aerobics ... M. Munyard conducted local ecumenical service in Catholic Church ... New informal format for evening services appreciated.

PROSPECT (S. Schmaal) AGM being held 8 August ... Centenary celebrations 19 & 23 September. Clos-

ing date for invitation 18 July. We welcome hearing from interstate or country past members who wish to join us ... Mobile Mission Maintenance team have worked well on alterations to hall ... Harvest Thanksgiving 11 July. For two years we have chosen this time of the year to better serve the community.

COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS (Adrian Clark) Sunday "Family Lunch Time" commenced. Soup, bread, jam & cream provided & folk may bring something along to share. ... Successful camp held at Victor Harbor. 18 members of 50+ group enjoyed time of study, fellowship & fun ... Authentic

Chinese meal served at monthly tea & social night. Organised by Han Zhou ... Enjoying closer working relationship with local Baptist Church. Monthly evening services shared.

STRATHALBYN (Grant & Julie Simpson) Gary Maddern baptised after youth discipleship classes. All young people gathered on platform to witness occasion. Everyone signed book & included Bible verse or whatever to show encouragement ... Friendship Centre planned to meet lonely & other needs. In main shopping centre—a great witness with new signboard. First meeting planned, then every fortnight ...

Bible Society coffee morning held in church.

HAPPY VALLEY (Russell Allison) "50s Plus" meeting monthly ... Many participated in 40-Hour Famine ... Youth camp at Macclesfield, June long weekend—enjoyed by all ... Guest speakers evening services include David Thompson (Albert Park), Gary Wheatcroft (Radio Altamira FM) ... Combined Pentecost service held at Baptist Church ... Church packed for basketball service—guest speakers Willie Simmons & Scott Davie (Chaplain to Adelaide Super Sixes), musical items from Reflections (Nailsworth).

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Marsden

Keep the Faith

Neil Marsden

There used to be a time when the world was such a happy place, when things went how they should and people did all that they were asked. The family was the family, love was love and duty was what one naturally did. Everyone was nice to each other and every dream seemed attainable. Everything was perfect and everything was great. Problems were just little things and difficulties were only heard of. The news never showed anything really bad, the papers were truthful, all politicians were honest and no one was interested in self-gain or pleasure. That's how it used to be. There was a time like that; wasn't there?

Of course not. People often speak about a "Golden Age" as if it was fact, but the term is wrapped and warped by regrets, shattered expectations and an inability to accept change. Simply put, there never was a "Golden Age". The world has always been a terrible place and much has always been hidden away. Problems and difficulties have always made life harder than what perhaps we like to think it ought to be. That's the way it unfortunately is.

It's in the very nature of people to blame things for what they see has gone wrong in their lives. It's so much easier than taking responsibility and getting on with it. People can get trapped in

the blaming cycle, in which they wear rose coloured glasses to see the past and the "would have been" future. They blame others, and for some reason think if they keep on blaming others long enough everything will work out OK.

It doesn't work that way. Blaming others, or even God, doesn't make anything better. Living with regrets and handing God our own plan of how our life should be (or even accepting other people's plans) never makes everything all right. We have to stop fighting and accept God's way because that's what we were created to experience.

We have to understand the world has always been a terrible place, and will continue to be until Jesus returns to rule. It's not anybody's fault, especially God's.

Every situation can be turned to good,

every difficulty can strengthen us, but only if we understand ourselves and keep the faith. Jesus is eternal and created the world.

He has seen, suffered and experienced much more than any one of us, so we can trust his limitless knowledge and strength. Jesus wants us with him, not blaming him. We have to keep the faith and love the Lord. That's what it boils down to—keeping the faith.



The Last Word

Be kind. Remember everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.

—T.H. Thompson

Father: "What did you learn in Sunday School this morning?"

Son: "We learned about how Moses went behind enemy lines to rescue the Jews from the Egyptians. Moses ordered the engineers to build a pontoon bridge. After the people crossed, he sent bombers back to blow up the bridge and the Egyptian tanks that were following them. And then ..."

Father: "Did your teacher really tell it like that?"

Son: "No, but if I told you what he said, you'd never believe it!"

What is more blessed to give than receive? Advice.

An executive is a person who can take two hours for lunch without anybody missing them.

Employee: "I have been here 11 years doing three people's work for one person's pay. Now I want a raise."

Boss: "Well, I can't give you a raise, but if you'll tell me who the two others are, I'll fire them."

Employer: "How long did you work at your other job?"

Job seeker: "Fifty-five years."

Employer: "How old are you?"

Job Seeker: "Forty-five."

Employer: "How could you work 55 years when you are only 45 years old?"

Job Seeker: "Overtime."



McKendrick

"We are here today because it is raining"

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