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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

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Comment

Battered Believers and Abused Christians

Alan Matheson

February was not a good month for Christians.

In Parramatta, NSW, a congregation attempted "to starve the devil" out of one of its members. Later, she died.

In the Victorian country town of Antwerp a woman died after another group of Christians "expelled 10 demons from the womb and out of her mouth".

Such events pose real dilemmas for churches.

One of the most disturbing books, published recently, is Ronald Enroth's, *Churches that Abuse* (Zondervan). The book provides both an insight into how such happenings occur and what to look for in churches that batter and abuse their members. According to the author, it's "about people who have been abused psychologically and spiritually in churches ... abuse which leaves scars on the psyche and soul".

Abuse

The book describes and analyses churches such as the "Set Free Christian Fellowship", the "Church of Bible Understanding", the "University Bible Fellowship", the "Power of Life Ministries", and even the "No Name Fellowship". In Parramatta, it was the "Gospel Truth Fellowship" and in Antwerp it was a house church of "spirit-filled Christians". However, before this is dismissed as yet another study of a marginalised minority and very disturbed congregations, the author issues a salutary warning.

It is time, he insists, since, for the most part, these congregations do exist on the margins of the mainstream evangelical circles.

Nevertheless, the central theme of Enroth is "that spiritual abuse can take place in the context of doctrinally sound, Bible preaching, fundamental, conservative Christianity."

What is disturbing, given our churches' weakness for embracing all things American, is that at least three organisations referred to in the book have links in Australia: Bob Weiner's Maranatha Christian Ministries, Christian Growth Ministries and John Wimber's Vineyard Ministries. And lest we become too complacent it's

even more disturbing to read that some of the churches that abuse, have links with our own churches. The most prominent being the Boston Movement or the Boston Church of Christ which is described as one of the most controversial and most publicised of the authoritarian congregations discussed. (See further Adrian van Leen's article, "AC" 23 September 1989)

Signs

Of the 50 or so books and some 60 files that sit on my shelves on "sects", "the new religious right", and "televangelism", all have a number of common themes which characterise those which have the potential to bruise, batter and abuse their members and followers.

The themes, in themselves, provide warnings and signs of danger.

First, abusive churches are authoritarian churches. There is an "unhealthy form of dependency, spiritual and otherwise, focussing on themes of submission and obedience to those in authority". Enroth concludes that, "the disquieting truth is that many Christians do indeed fall into the trap of authoritarianism because of an inclination toward the black and white mentality that abusive churches cater to. If you have the type of personality that is drawn towards groups that offer wrap around security and solutions to all your problems, you are vulnerable to spiritual abuse."

We live in a rapidly changing society which, for many, is confusing and troubling. Bewildered, many have "a need to create evangelical gurus, Christian celebrities, super-pastors in mega-churches, and miscellaneous other "teachers" and "experts" we place on pastoral pedestals."

What is it asks, Enroth, about people, "that explains this apparent need for authority figures, the need for someone to consign for our lives."

When one of our elected leaders suggests, in conversation, that our churches are less democratic than he has ever known in our history, then perhaps its time we took a new look at the way we exercise authority and power in our own churches.

A second sign is isolationism. The "conscious effort to limit input from outside the

church—in other words, information control”.

Beware, warns Enroth, of the church which consistently denies outside speakers access to its pulpit, and where other churches are regularly denounced, belittled or ridiculed. Its leaders are usually loners. A Salvation Army Officer, after the Antwerp funeral, warned of “lone rangers who did not come with the blessing or authority of a recognised denomination”.

Authoritarian leaders do not function well, or willingly, in the context of systematic checks and balances.

Such isolation and “one man shows” (rarely are they led by women) are accountable to no one.

Some of our leaders see the local congregation as the beginning and the end of the church, and, over recent years, the significance of the democratic processes embodied in our conferences, in some states, has been reduced. Any attempt to reduce checks and balances is fraught with dangers.

A third sign of future problems is the unhealthy preoccupation with “discipline” and expulsion of those who do not believe.

Be careful of churches, says Enroth, that continually warn of judgment and doom if a member leaves “the family”, “the covering” or breaks “the covenant”.

An overwhelming majority of ex-members that he interviewed found that “abusive leaders are cold, almost cruel, in their treatment of people who leave”.

A signal of trouble, and that a congregation is headed for the margins of the mainstream, is when family relationships are not only significantly disrupted but when leaders actively encourage breaking ties with relatives.

Enroth concludes that, “in our homes, in our churches, and in our programs of Christian education, we must strive to cultivate critical discerning minds if we are to avoid the tragedy of churches that abuse”.

Fair Weather

Fun and funds for Mt Clear church



On the weekend of 26–27 February the Mt Clear, Vic, church held a Twilight Fair and White Elephant Sale, that was an enormous success.

It was a valuable event, that attracted a large number of people from our local community, and was a worthwhile fundraiser, raising \$2,592 for different organisations of the church.

Highlights were a tug-of-war challenge, involving 15 teams from different churches in the Ballarat area, and Members of Parliament and local councillors being dunked over and over again.

Overall, the weekend served to show the local community that the church is alive, and welcomes any newcomers.

—Pam Sutcliffe

Official Opening

The official opening of Mitchell Go Karts was held on 11 March. The Chief Minister of the ACT, Ms Rosemary Follett, is pictured opening the business watched by Lindsay Roberts, President of Belconnen Youth Ministries Inc. The opening gained great prominence in Canberra with all three commercial television channels running it as their lead story that night and *The Canberra Times* giving it prominence on Page 3 the next day. See the 6 March issue of the “AC” for the full story of the Belconnen church’s involvement in this venture.



Camp Seaview Developments

Camp Seaview’s enthusiastic management committee is actively pursuing its objectives for development. High on the agenda for 1993 is a commitment to fit out the accommodation facilities in the recently constructed ground floor section of the new main centre. The current goal is to have these new facilities operating by late 1993. Additional work in landscaping and the continuing updating of the existing facilities is also proposed. The increasing use of Camp Seaview by Tasmanian Churches of Christ and other Christian groups is encouraging.

The tourist emphasis in Tasmania also means the managers, Graeme and Marion Spaulding, have many enquiries for overnight and short-term accommodation. A feature of the summer season is the number of backpackers who

seek accommodation. There are opportunities for faith sharing and discussions of the Scriptures through copies being available in various foreign languages.

Income estimates for 1992–1993 are on target and should mean the budget will be achieved. Colin Orr continues as project manager for the building program.



• Committee members following a meeting with Vic-Tas DMED director, Don Smith, in February.

National Revival

Astounding events in Argentina

Over 50 were crammed into the Vic-Tas Conference Centre at the Ministers' Association fellowship and sharing day, hearing of something totally beyond our experience—a national revival.

Along with China, Peter Wagner would say the nation of Argentina is "the" flashpoint for church growth in the world today. Churches, until recently, averaged less than 100, with the lowest growth rate of all Latin American nation. Now it is common to see churches, formerly of 50 members, with 1,000, and several with more than 5,000. Vision of the Future Church ministers to 90,000 people.

It is common to find backyard churches with 300–400 members led by pastors in their twenties. Hector Gimenez, a layman, was able to plant a Buenos Aires church of 20,000 in less than six months. Carlos Annacondia, an evangelist, leads an average of 1,000 people a day to Christ and has led over 1 million to Christ in less than four years. In La Plata, Alberto Scataglina used to minister to 400 a month. When revival broke loose, that jumped to several thousand. Norberto Carlini, of Rosario, moved his congregation out onto a playing-field in anticipation. In three years the church grew from 700 to almost 5000.

The church of Argentina has grown more in the last four years than in the previous 100!

Such events make nonsense of the concept that growth within the church is exclusively a matter of program and structure. They remind us that the explosive life of the early church is not banished to past history, but is still generated.

We are reminded that such an event in the church is an activity of God which is ready to happen at any place, and at any time, of his, and our, choosing.

—Ron White

Easter '93

Proclaiming Easter's true meaning

During Easter 1990, 20,000 from Sydney and six other cities and towns participated in the Easter '90 event, which culminated in a march of 18,000 through the streets of Sydney.

The following year, Canberra and Melbourne joined in, along with 28 other cities and towns. By 1992, every capital city, with the exception of Adelaide, along with 105 other cities and towns participated. This year, with the news that Adelaide is marching on Easter Sunday along with the rest of Australia, the number participating is expected to double.

The Reclaim Easter movement had its birth in Canberra in 1988. 50,000 Christians gathered in the largest ecumenical prayer gathering in Australia to pray for the new Parliament House. The difficulties facing Australia became obvious as we left the 80s, and the question arose, could we not continue this fellowship, taking a productive united message of hope to the nation, particularly at Easter.

If we could reclaim Easter as an Australian Christian family celebration and demonstrate that Easter is about the death of selfishness and the coming alive of care, maybe the Christian church together could play an important role in helping the nation rediscover its spiritual roots.

The aim of the Reclaim Easter program is to change the way ordinary Australians see Easter, to convey the central story of Easter in a way that is cultur-

ally relevant and done in the context of the Christian church, coming into the streets and marketplaces in visible unity and celebration.

It is expected in Victoria there will be about 50 regional community celebrations, in NSW a similar number, with other celebrations right across Australia.

One new element this year is that Easter '93 and Easter '94 will be preparation for an international March for Jesus on 25 June, 1994 when we march together in every capital city around the world.

There is a video available, and kits that will give churches all they need to be able to do something for Easter '93 in your area. For these, or information, contact your Easter '93 office: National and NSW, 688 Parramatta Rd, Croydon, 2132, Ph. (02) 716 8247; South Australia, PO Box 320, Christies Beach 5165, Ph. (08) 382 8536; ACT, PO Box 841, Woden 2606, Ph. (06) 290 1424; Western Australia, PO Box 24 Victoria Park 6100, Ph. (09) 221 3488; Victoria, 15 Cromwell Rd, South Yarra 3141, Ph. (03) 827 1086; Tasmania, PO Box 81, North Hobart 7002, Ph. (002) 34 9127; Queensland, First Floor, 83 Castlemaine St, Milton 4064, Ph. (07) 368 3622 and Northern Territory, PO Box 315 Sanderson 0812, Ph. (089) 27 7230.

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New Church at Ourimbah

Outreach in area with few churches

A new Church of Christ is to commence worship services in Ourimbah, NSW, on 7 March. The new church, to be known as the Ourimbah Community Fellowship, will meet in the Ourimbah Guide Hall in Ourimbah Creek Road, Ourimbah at 9.30 Sunday mornings.

Between 15 and 20 from the Wyoming church will form the core group. They have been meeting as a weekly home group on Thursday evenings since 11 February. The group is enthusiastic about starting a new work in an area where there are very few other Christian churches.

The minister and his wife will be Leigh and Linda Orton. Leigh graduated last year from Carlingford Theological College, NSW.

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A Great Start to a Different Way of Training

Theological education in NSW



• Incoming students at Orientation Week

The "Integrated Training Model", begun at the Churches of Christ in New South Theological College with an Orientation Week in mid February, had a very good start with 44 incoming students. Of these, 37 will be training in a "full-time" capacity (Austudy definition). The Wollongong Ministry Centre has proved to be very popular with 23 incoming students (16 full-time). Twelve have done previous studies with the Institute for Contemporary Church Leadership (established by and located at the Wollongong church). The Carlingford/Telopea Ministry Centre will have 21 incoming students (all full-time).

Approximately 80% of the students are from New South Wales. Of the 44 there are 36 who are undertaking the combined Bachelor of Theology/Diploma of Ministry Course, seven a Diploma of Ministry Course, and one the One Year Retirees Course.

Each trainee will be supervised throughout his/her course in areas of Spiritual Formation, Integration of Theory and Practice, and Practical Ministry. Approximately 50% of the training will be undertaken in the context of the "field" (a ministry location).

We are encouraged and excited by the response to the new model of training.

No Horsing Around

Christian message at Quarter Horse Show

Recently a long term vision and dream was realised for a small group of Christian cowboys. Cowboys for Christ Australia, a Christian organisation with the desire to reach the equine industry, was invited this year, for the first time, to conduct two church services this Easter at the All Australia Quarter Horse Congress being held at the Royal Melbourne Show Grounds.

Kevin Oswin and Stephen Sharman have had an interest in the Quarter Horse industry while they both served in their ministry in Christian camping at Log Cabin Lodge, Creswick, Vic. Both have focussed on how God could use horses and their impact on people to reach them with the gospel. This form of outreach saw many young people come to know the Lord.

In 1992 they flew to the US to join with Cowboys for Christ at the All American Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, Ohio. On returning to Australia Kelvin was contacted by Jack Cooper, President of the Victorian Quarter Horse Association, inviting them to take part in the Australian Congress. A vision was realised. Two church services have been planned with



• Cowboys Kevin Oswin and Stephen Sharman

help from Christians already working in the industry such as Paul and Joanne Devenport of Devenport Training Stables. As members of Cowboys for Christ Australia they have been using their business to reach out to the horse industry for many years.

Ted Pressley, founder/president of Cowboys for Christ in the US is coming to be the speaker and popular country band "True North" have been booked for the day.

Ulverstone's Cantata

"Song Unending"

The cantata "Song Unending" was performed by the Ulverstone, Tas, church prior to Christmas.

The choir of 18 travelled to Caveside on the evening of 6 December to present the cantata as a full dress rehearsal.

It was great at the morning service on 18 December when 76 including children attended. This was the highest attendance of regulars since Tom and Ruth Edge have been in Ulverstone.

From a poor attendance at initial rehearsals the choir, under director Ruth Edge, gained confidence as rehearsals im-

proved. This is the second cantata that Ruth has conducted.

—Dawn Newman

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Bible Boom

Scriptures Now Translated Into 2,009 Languages

Since late 1992, when the Forum of Bible Agencies released the news that 2,000 languages have a book of the Bible, a further nine languages have been added to the total.

According to the United Bible Societies (UBS), 31 languages received at least one or more books of the Bible for the very first time in 1992, seven with complete Bibles, 19 with just the New Testament and five which are the first recorded Scripture publications in their language. Estimates as to the number of languages in the world range between 5,000-6,500.

First Bibles

Of the seven languages which received complete Bibles for the first time, three were published by the Bible Society of India in Naga: Konyak, Sora and Zomi, which is also spoken in Myanmar (formerly Burma). Two were published by the Institute for Bible Translation (IBT) in Stockholm, Sweden, in languages spoken in the former Soviet Union: Modern Georgian and Tajik. The Bible Societies in Malaysia and Kenya published the other

two: Iban, spoken in the Sarawak region of Malaysia, and Maasai, spoken in Kenya and Tanzania.

"Living" Languages

The Bible also appeared in completely new translations in Danish, Finnish, and Gaelic, languages which have had the Bible for years. This illustrates the continuing need to put the Bible into the "living" languages understood by people today.

Of the 31 "new" languages, five received complete New Testaments for the first time: Nso in Cameroon, Nobanob in Papua New Guinea, Obolo in Nigeria, Quichua: Pastaza in Ecuador, and Yamba in Cameroon.

The remaining 26 languages received "Portions", one or more complete books of the Bible.

Fourteen New Testaments appeared in languages that were without one previously.

"Joyful News"

The Scriptures listed in the report are published by many different agencies, and often the end result is a joint effort by

organisations cooperating to give people the best quality Scriptures. The Magar New Testament, for example, titled "Joyful News", was translated by SIL, published jointly by the Bible Society in Nepal and the IBS in 1991 and dedicated in the offices of the Bible Society of Nepal in January 1992.

The UBS is involved in 609 language projects, of which 410 are languages in which at least one part of the Bible is being translated for the first time.

Dynamic History

In the statistical summary below, all languages and dialects are included in which Scripture publication has taken place at any time since the mid-15th century when Johann Gutenberg printed the first

book from movable type in the Western world.

Some of these are ancient languages which have not been spoken for centuries. A listed language does not necessarily mean those Scriptures are currently available in that language, but all languages are included because each is a part of the dynamic process by which the Bible has been transmitted through the centuries to people of varying cultures and diverse linguistic traditions.

A Statistical Summary of Languages with Scriptures

A summary, by geographical area and type of publication, of the number of different languages and dialects in which publication of at least one book of the Bible had been registered as of 31 December, 1992.

Continent or Region	Portions	Testaments	Bibles	Total
Africa	231	223	122	576
Asia	227	167	104	498
Australia/NZ/Pacific Is	160	139	26	325
Europe	105	24	60	189
North America	43	20	7	70
Caribbean/Central & Sth America/Mexico	142	197	9	348
Constructed Languages	2	0	1	3
TOTAL	910	770	329	2009

"The Lemon Hospital"

Medical work in India

"Just ask for the "Lemon Hospital", we were told, "everyone knows it". And so we were looking for a yellow-washed building, or perhaps one set in a grove of lemon trees—but we found neither! Instead, we found flat-topped, various-coloured hospital buildings, set around a courtyard and a grove of mango and lychee trees.

Dr Lehman and his wife (pronounced "Lemon" by the locals) had established their 115 bed hospital in Herbertpur in UP, India, (about 250 km north of Delhi) on a large compound in 1936, using their personal fortune. After working there for 38 years they have retired to

England. But the work of the hospital continues under the jurisdiction of the Emmanuel Hospital Association, and under the very able superintendency of ophthalmologist, Dr Thyle. There are seven doctors on the staff, including five specialists, and all are Indian nationals.

A new building under construction is for staff quarters and COCOA (Churches of Christ Overseas Aid) is sharing the cost. This is where Dorothy Holstein has her home and office, and it is from here that she travels for six months of each year to visit her rural health workers who are

scattered in 17 project locations in four states. It is easy to say, but rather more difficult and hazardous to do, on the crowded public transport system. It was here, too, that we met up with our daughter, who had been spending her annual holidays lending a hand in the X-Ray Department.

Dorothy first went to work at the Daund Hospital in the early 1960s and she has made a tremendous contribution to rural health programs since. At present she is at home in Taree, NSW, for much needed recuperation and will be undertaking some deputation later.

—Edda Thomas

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New Faculty Appointment

Alan Niven to lecture in pastoral studies

The CCTC College Board is delighted to appoint Alan Niven as a full-time member of faculty in the area of Pastoral Care, from the beginning of January 1994. Alan is well known having served as the first minister of the Werribee, Vic, church for 10 years. This followed student ministries with Richmond, Brunswick, Ivanhoe and the DMED. In 1990 Alan was called to Mulgrave to plant the new church and, at the same time, to undertake a half-time appointment to the faculty, teaching in the area of practical ministry.

In addition to his wide practical experience, Alan has an abil-

ity to "earth" his teaching, and his warm and open personality enables church members and students alike to have the freedom to respond and grow. In his teaching he is committed to the development of the student as a whole person.

Alan has a BA (Hons), from Leeds (UK), a Dip Ed, a BD and a Diploma in Ministry from COB. He is currently working on a Master of Social Sciences in Family Studies. Following his graduation from COB in 1979 Alan accepted an invitation to serve as a part-time member of faculty in the practice of ministry, and this has continued alongside his pastoral ministry for 13 years. Minis-

try with a local church community will always be for him a joy and privilege. Alan provides an excellent model of pastoral care that will inevitably give authenticity and credibility to his lecturing. Alan is married to Chris and they have three children, Andrew, Nick, and Claire. Chris has always been actively involved in ministry with Alan both as an elder and teacher in her own right. She works three days a week in College administration, in a voluntary capacity, and is con-



• Alan Niven

tinuing her fruitful ministry of faith discovery groups for those who are completely outside the normal church.

Launching Out at Launching Place

Change of location and ministry

After 18 months since inception in 1991, the new Upper Yarra, Vic, congregation is moving from Woori Yallock to the Launching Place community. The church is an outreach project of the Montrose congregation. The new move to the Launching Place Primary School should enhance outreach opportunities in a community where there are no other churches.

Kim Thoday will be inducted as the part-time minister on 7 March. Kim is well known for his ministry with the Kensington Christian Network which he completed in January this year. He plans to commence full-time study for a Master of Theology degree with the Melbourne College of Divinity in the area of New Testament Studies. Kim will work two days a week with the Upper Yarra church and bring his experience of church planting from Kensington and Lynch's Bridge to the Upper Yarra project.

His work with the Kensington Christian Network was most appreciated both at a local level and by the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development which sponsored the project.

The involvement with the Upper Yarra church is a further link with the joint Department and Properties Corporation CROP initiative.



• Kim Thoday



CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN NEW SOUTH WALES

108th Conference
April 28-May 1, 1993

Dennis Nutt
Conference President

WEDNESDAY April 28*

7.00pm

President's Reception
(all invited—RSVP by April 23,
to telephone (02) 630 7533)
(Cost \$20.00)

THURSDAY April 29

10.00 am

CWF Conference—Auburn

FRIDAY April 30

9.30 am

7.45 pm

Ministers/Spouses Session—Telopea
Mission Rally—Telopea

SATURDAY May 1*

9.00 am

12.30 pm

2.00 pm

5.00 pm

(\$10 Cover Charge for Lunch,
Morning/Afternoon Tea.
Please order lunch on arrival)
Business and Inspirational Session (1)
Lunch
Business and Inspirational Session (2)
Close

MONDAY May 3-6

Ministers/Spouses Refresher
—Stanwell Tops

* At CYTA CENTRE—2 Clyde Street, Silverwater
(Plenty of Parking)

Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to
200 words

A Woman's Place in Timothy

To the Editor,

Roger Tomes writes: "Although the author uses rather suspect theological arguments why women should not teach, we may suppose that the position of the church in society had something to do with it." ("AC" 20 February).

Having been born, reared and educated amongst village folk in India until I was 18, and now living amongst Southern Europeans, Middle East, Indian, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist people in Fairfield, NSW, I believe I can appreciate the social position women have had in these countries for thousands of years. There is no doubt that all men in Roman Empire days and many 2,000 years since, keep their women in "purdah" i.e. behind curtain, completely covering the head and body expressing subservience to men. In India, the Middle East and Africa this is still practised. No wonder Timothy, Titus and Paul said women should keep quiet in church and not teach. The wonder is that they needed to say it. Perhaps they were interrupting the services by whispering to one another? This is not a new supposition but just needs to be said again. I'm amazed that a male lecturer should give this teaching in his lectures. It may surprise you to know women still cover their heads to go into temples, mosques and synagogues (1 Cor. 11) as in Paul's day. —Margaret Goninon (Fairfield, NSW)

Today's Hypocrisy and Ungodliness

To the Editor,

Henry Harding's letter ("AC" 6 February) goes right to the heart of the debate. Paul's words have left women in a strange dilemma, saved but not reinstated. The stigma of being the first to disobey God has not, apparently, been fully removed by the sacrifice of Christ. His blood was not sufficient for such a deep stain. She must

earn her salvation through good works and child-bearing.

How many Christians really believe this today? How many priests and prelates uphold Paul in this? And yet many churchmen and women will use Paul's words to keep women from speaking and holding office in our churches.

Can anybody tell us where the law is found (in the Scriptures that we have today) forbidding a woman to speak in a church meeting? What law was Paul referring to in 1 Cor. 14:34? And wasn't Paul speaking about general orderly behaviour in church meetings, rather than making an all time rule for women?

As for 1 Tim. 2:11-15 Paul is alone! No other writer corroborates him in this; Paul does not claim God's endorsement, but says, "I do not allow them (women) to teach or have authority."

Paul was a Jew as well as a Christian. We are not slaves to Jewish traditions. I commend Bruce McIntosh and Roger Tomes ("AC" 20 February) for more accurate expositions of Paul's problems in forming the New Testament church, also David Allison's letter (in the same issue). —Gladys Butler (Bruce Rock, WA)

Reader's Digest and the WCC

To the Editor,

Despite the letter from the National Secretary, about *Reader's Digest* and the World Council of Churches, ("AC" 20 February) it seems from the information in the Digest that the WCC has become involved with the work of organisations which are beyond what could be expected of the Council. The *Reader's Digest* is a reputable and well resourced magazine and, if every point could be seen in the light of a favourable Christian perspective, then information should be published to justify the Christian churches participation in some of the very doubtful activities which have now come to light. Has the truth come out at last?

—K.W. Ludgater
(Ann St, Brisbane, Qld)

British Churches

To the Editor,

The sad story of the decline of the British churches and the eventual dissolution of their Conference is recorded in the book *Let Sects and Parties Fall* (Berean, 1980) written by David Ward, the last president of the former Conference.

It is not true, as Bruce Burn ("AC" 20 February) claims, that churches which rejected amalgamation with Congregationalists and Presbyterians in the United Reformed Church were "independent" and "uncooperative". Ward offers several reasons why 27 of the churches rejected amalgamation proposals. These included fear of being swallowed up in the larger entity and the compromise of traditional Church of Christ principles. After the British Conference was dissolved in 1980 to allow individual churches to affiliate with the URC a number of churches reconstituted themselves as the Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ire-

land. Arguably it might have been preferable for these to have gone into the union and nobody has suggested through these pages that they constitute the "true" churches of our movement. It should be noted, however, that the Campbells never taught unity at any price, otherwise they would not have broken first with the Presbyterians and later with the Baptists. Baptism was an issue for the Campbells as it was for some of the British churches.

The fact remains that some 20 churches continue to this day as cooperative Churches of Christ. Some assistance is received from independent Christian churches in the USA and this is generally welcome. But it would be unfortunate if we were to allow these churches to become isolated from the cooperative wing of our communion in Australia, with which they have strong cultural, historical and doctrinal affinities. When we have such a wealth of talent in our churches, it is sad to report that

Letters from Tertius

Envy

To the Editor,

I don't remember feeling envy very much ... that was until my mate in the office jumped over the top of me for promotion.

I can see now that he had better qualifications for the sort of work involved and that the management probably had more confidence in his ability to manage a very exacting job. Also he has a big family and our management is not indifferent to that sort of thing.

But at the time it knocked my self esteem. I was bitter and resentful. I was so sorry for myself that my moods must have driven the family to distraction. And I bored to tears anyone who would listen to my tale of woe. I have always liked my job and the security it brings, but envy of my mate made me dissatisfied with it and I thought of changing it, which would have been a disaster.

That was a year ago and I don't ever want to feel the pain of envy again. It nearly destroyed me as a person. I had always thought that envy was some sort of sin in the catalogue of sins, I didn't realise that it is lethal to the sinner.

Incidentally I notice that my mate is now arriving at the office well before starting time, and leaving much later than the rest of us and the worry lines on his face seem a lot deeper. So I'm really glad that I didn't get the promotion. Or are these observation of mine a sign that some envy is still lurking down inside me somewhere?

Do you ever envy editors of religious journals who have no circulation and financial problems? If so, I hope that it doesn't hurt too much!

—Tertius

Letters to the Editor

the church at Mildenhall in Suffolk recently closed because unable to obtain ministerial assistance.

Incidentally, the point about the Kirkby church is that it represents a stream within Churches of Christ which predates Campbell-Stone movement in the USA by at least 100 years. —H.E. Hayward

—H.E. Hayward
(Berowra, NSW)

Travel to Israel

To the Editor,

Readers considering joining Inner Faith Travel's (IFT) Easter Pilgrimage to the Holy Land (regularly advertised) should be aware of some unfortunate aspects of the tour. IFT was set up with the responsibility "to move the body of Christ throughout the world." Leaving aside the theological implications of such reasoning IFT does appear to have another agenda which is not so clear.

First, it denies the reality of the Holy Land. It constantly refers to the Holy Land but makes no mention of the Occupied Territories. Yet it is in the Occupied Territories where many Christians live out their faith.

Second, despite having time to visit a kibbutz, the Velvet Castle and the waterfalls of Pammukale, eat "an Israeli breakfast", no time apparently can be found to visit "the living stones" of the Holy Land.

The Christian church is alive and suffering in both Israel and the Occupied Territories. It is a church living under occupation, traumatised and brutalised. Yet no time can be found to pray and worship with them.

Finally, why ensure a visit to the Holocaust Museum, (as they rightly should), to be shocked at the capabilities of evil men, of 50 years ago, yet have made no attempt to enable Palestinian Christians tell their current stories of horror and hope. Could it be that the Israeli Government authorities, which will provide all the buses, all the accommodation, and all the tour guides have prevented such contact. What other explanation can there be? It can not be because of igno-

rance, for IFT claims "to have more expertise in Christian tours to the Holy Land than anyone else in Australia". It cannot be because it is "dangerous", the Uniting Church's tour group has just returned from visiting all parts of the Holy Land. If you're thinking of going, why not as a part of your package, request a meeting with Christians in Nazareth and Ramallah, take a taxi to Gaza and see the refugee camps, and spend an hour or two at St George's Cathedral. With a little planning not only will you experience "the stones of history", but you will meet and worship and strengthen the witness of the church in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

—Alan Matheson
(Hawthorn, Vic)

Crime and Punishment

To The Editor,

I am grateful to Ken Stothard for drawing attention to my comment, "To Fit the Crime," ("AC" 6 February) because it was my intention to invite thought and discussion. I wish to make three comments in reply to his letter ("AC" 6 March):

1 Ken's understanding of the meaning of "retribution" is different from mine. He may be right. One dictionary meaning of the word is "retaliation". I understand "retribution" as more an emotional reaction than a deliberate moral action.

2 I am not sure that I said that "capital punishment is the only (adequate) moral response" as quoted by Ken. I said it may be. I did not intend to assert anything, but to raise a question for reconsideration and discussion.

3 To compare my suggestion to Russia, Germany, Argentina, and Uganda, seems also out of context. I have no objection to reporting the evidence, the argument, or the sentence; but then the matter is closed, except, perhaps, for a notice in a legal column that the sentence has been carried out. This is different from turning these tragic events into sensational reading for the purpose of making money. —Allan Clark

—Allan Clark
(Croydon, Vic)

Bosha was born in Melka Oda in Ethiopia. Her parents did not earn enough from their hard labouring on a farm to give her the medical attention she needed and sadly she passed away.



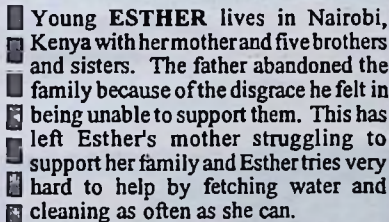
It's not too late for some...

Reality is a terrible thing. Yet our field workers have to face it every day. They watch helplessly as children die from hunger and disease. In fact, 40,000 children like Boshha will have died before the sun sets today.

CHARLES comes from a single parent, family of five living in Nairobi, Kenya. His mother goes down daily to the markets selling the charcoal she has gathered from around the area. This activity does not earn her enough to feed or clothe her five children and they are constantly in desperate need of medical attention they cannot afford.



Young **ESTHER** lives in Nairobi, Kenya with her mother and five brothers and sisters. The father abandoned the family because of the disgrace he felt in being unable to support them. This has left Esther's mother struggling to support her family and Esther tries very hard to help by fetching water and cleaning as often as she can.



You can save these children from a fate like Bosh's. For just \$25/month you will provide a child with nutritious meals, health care, and an education. Founded in 1938, Christian Children's F is one of the world's largest child care organisations caring for more than 650,000 children in developing countries, regardless of race, sex or religious beliefs. CCF guarantees at least 80c in every dollar directly benefits your child & their community.

Yes I want to sponsor a child like **Esther** or **Charles**. Enclosed is my (please circle) cheque / money order for my first sponsorship gift of **\$25** or please debit my Bankcard / Mastercard / Visa. I'd like to sponsor a boy/girl living in Africa / Asia / Latin America.

[illegible]

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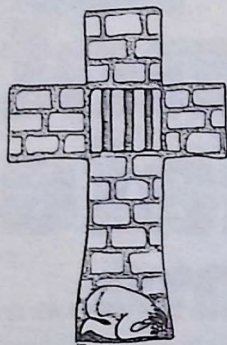
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Media Review

Forgiving Sin and Punishing Crime

by Keith Mason QC



Zadok

Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society provides the study of biblical truth to everyone in Australia. Part of its work is directed to providing specific materials dealing with issues of importance to Christians in Australia, discussing Christian perspectives in culture, economics, and political events.

criminal punishment system is under discussion at the moment (including some recent articles and letters in *The Australian Christian*). This paper is an excellent introduction to many of the issues and should be read by anyone with an interest in this area of concern.

Using a biblical framework, Keith Mason explores the concepts of law, sin, punishment, restoration, deterrence, retribution, forgiveness and mercy.

Available for \$5 from Zadok Institute, Locked Bag 23, Kew PO 3101.

—CRA

Books



Destination Dark Ages

by James Dunn (Kingsway Publications) \$5.95.

The main character is a boy named Gaz (his full name is George Albert Scully). He was given a piece of paper with a puzzling mixture of numbers and letters on it by the Reverend Henry Phipps, the minister of his church. He went home and into his Think Tank, the attic, where he put the numbers and letters into a computer. The last numbers, were 112. He pressed return and found himself in the year AD 112. He, with a number of other Christians, including a

girl named Cleo, is arrested. He and Cleo are nearly killed by lions, but they find the door to the Think Tank and escape to another time. Each time he types a different number into his

computer he goes to another time. There are three different times that Gaz travels to. They are dangerous and exciting. I am looking forward to the next book. This one was very exciting and scary at times.

—Talitha Pearce

(Distributed by Christian Marketing Australia)

Doing What Comes Supernaturally

by Peter H. Lawrence (Kingsway Publications) \$12.95.

Peter H. Lawrence is Vicar of Christ Church, a small inner-city Anglican church in Burney Lane, Birmingham. In *Doing What Comes Supernaturally*, he has written what he calls "a sharing book". "It is not," he says, "about the best way to do it—it may not be a good way to do it—it is about the way we did it."

The "it" he refers to is ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. Lawrence has directed his book at those people who don't think that it is something they can do. He says that he has primarily tried to answer the question, "Where do we start?"

Of course there are always those who will feel that it would not work in their situation. "With these people in mind," he says, "I have included a number of accounts of what happened when we took our teaching to other places." Some of those accounts are quite startling.

It all began in 1986 when Lawrence attended a Wimber conference. This conference was different from others he had attended. He returned home with some methods of approaching ministry, believing for the first time in his life that God could use *him* in this way too.

In the six years since then, he says, "Nothing has happened to change my mind. We have begun to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit at Christ Church and I feel sure, as we have managed to start, anyone can. Just as it was passed on to me, so my aim is to pass it on to others."

His book does this very effectively, in my view. It is a very practical honest book. Failures are dealt with as honestly as successes. And with the honesty, there is a natural humour which gives his writing just that extra bit of zest. Through it all shines the love of God who wants to minister to and nurture his children.

Christians are very good at posing questions to which no-one seems to have answers. This is a book of answers to the ministry questions that are really important, and will be a very valuable tool in the hands of anyone who is honestly, as John Wimber puts it, wanting to "do the stuff".

—Alan Williams

(Distributed by Christian Marketing Australia)



Going Round in Circles?

First circuit ministry



• Maurice Honeychurch (Mt Barker), Peter Wilson (Milang), Grant Simpson, Ron Roberts (State Minister), Julie Simpson, Cyril Edwards (Strathalbyn), Graham Yelland (Pt Sturt) and Don McMurtrie (Strathalbyn) with Bronwyn and Shannon Simpson in front

Warm feelings prevailed on the historic occasion of the induction of Julie and Grant Simpson to the newly-formed Southern Churches of Christ Circuit. This took place on 31 January in the 120 year-old Strathalbyn, SA, chapel, where the temperature hovered around the old century mark.

All four churches were well represented—Mt Barker, the "baby" of the four, not yet 10 years old, but planted in one of the quickest-growing country towns in the state—Strathalbyn, rich in history and service to the community—Milang, more isolated, but diligent in its outreach to the mainly farming community, and Point Sturt, "grandmother" of them all, two years older than the 135 year-old Milang church, and set in motion by church-founder Thomas Magarey himself not long after Charles Sturt explored the area.

Notably, most of the congregation were farming folk, and the richness and simplicity of the lives of those who live closely to God's creation is a tangible thing. When these people speak of sheep and harvests, sowing and reaping, birds of the air and soils and seasons, we are able to catch something of the quieter rhythm of their lives, and the quality of their faith, which has endured much hardship, and

endures it still.

Songs, old, and new, were part of the service, with Peter Wilson, of Milang, leading a session of choruses. Roger Burt, of Strathalbyn, presided over communion, challenging all to support and encourage Julie and Grant in their shared ministry.

Grant and Julie were inducted by Ron Roberts, State Minister, and stood with their children, Bronwyn and Shannon, to make their commitment to the churches.

Marj Dredge, Conference President, was present, as were representatives of the active denominations in the area.

Julie preached, speaking with joy and assurance of the high hopes she and Grant hold in this exciting new adventure.

Grant and Julie will rotate their ministries between the four churches, (Point Sturt only being used occasionally) with guest speakers continuing to be used on some occasions.

Grant and Julie come to the Southern Churches of Christ Circuit after seven years of ministry at Naracoorte, SA. Grant, a former farmer and shearer, is happy to be maintaining his rural connections. For the past two and a half years Julie has been a social worker with the South East Aged Care Assessment Team and she was ordained in November 1992.

Ron Hewitt

A word of thanks

Ron Hewitt wishes to thank the hundreds of concerned Christians around Australia who have visited, written, rung or just prayed for him in recent weeks.

Following a period of hospitalisation and tests, he has been advised (12 March) that he has a tumour in the pancreas and secondary cancers in the liver. He is currently undergoing therapy to ensure that his blood sugar levels are raised and that

the pancreas begins operating more normally.

His doctors have advised that, if his condition can be stabilised successfully, he should be able to have a good future ministry; however, it would need to be one with less stress than his current appointment with the NSW Conference.

Ron wishes to thank readers for their prayers and to let folk know he appreciates their concern. He says he is unable, physically, to reply to all the cards, letters and calls, but appreciates very much the love shown to him and Shirley.

Gold Medallist at Glen Waverley

Skilled Member

A member of the church at Glen Waverley, Vic, has the honour of being a Gold Medallist in the National Workskill Competition. Matt Hollard initially won the Victorian competition in the field of detailed joinery and, recently, won the gold medal in the national titles. Later this year he will be travel-

ling to Taiwan to represent Australia against other national contestants from around the world.

Matt is an employee of Slattery and Acquero in Melbourne. He is the son of Roger and Helen Hollard and the grandson of the late Eric and Mrs Fern Hollard.

"FROM JERUSALEM TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH"

is the theme chosen by
Dr Isabelo Magalit

President, Asian Theological Seminary,
Manila, the Philippines

when he speaks at the
22nd Annual Missionary Convention
of the
Swanston Street Church of Christ,
Melbourne

over the weekend of
26-28 March

Friday 26 March—in the church at 7.30 pm.
Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 March—in the Pharmacy
College, 381 Royal Parade, Parkville.
Saturday at 7.30 pm.
Sunday at 10.00 am and 7.00 pm.

You are most welcome to join with us.

Happenings

Bern Watson, secretary and treasurer of the Enmore, NSW, church was recently honoured by the Marrickville Municipality. The award reads: "The Municipality of Marrickville on behalf of its citizens are proud to acknowledge Bernie Watson, resident of Marrickville Municipality, has established through personal commitment to community life, goodwill and fellowship, standards which serve as an example to all. Marrickville community honour you and thank you on behalf of all those who know you as a quiet achiever."

The first woman Anglican priest to be ordained in 1993 in Australia was ordained on 2 February in Perth. Cassandra Nixon is the 93rd Anglican woman priest in Australia.

Former Panamanian leader General Manuel Noriega has been baptised in Miami's Federal Courthouse, according to Christians who performed the baptism and then administered the Lord's Supper. Noriega, who is serving a 40-year sentence for drug and racketeering convictions, was guarded by US marshals during the service.

To enable churches to learn more about the spiritual needs of Turkey and what they can do to help, Friends of Turkey has released a booklet "Turkey and Your Church". The booklet outlines the facts about Turkey and how, through mailing Gospel letters, praying, being pen-pals and going, the Gospel can be spread in Turkey. For details write to Friends of Tur-

key, PO Box 10154, Adelaide St, Brisbane 4000 or phone (07) 261 4037.

Kel Richards, well-known radio personality and Christian author, has linked up with Impact Evangelism and will play a vital role in the activities of the Sydney-based outreach agency. Kel is the author of two best-selling detective novels that tell the New Testament story. He can be contacted for speaking engagements and related outreach activities by calling Impact Evangelism on (02) 982 4092.

Rev Richard L. Hamm, was selected, on 1 February, by the Administrative Committee as its choice as nominee for general Minister and President of the 1 million-member Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. He is currently regional minister of the

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee. His nomination must be confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the General Board which meets 17-20 April. He then stands for election during the Disciples General Assembly (15-20 July) and must receive a two-thirds majority of assembly votes.

Statistics released by the Lutheran World Federation put the total of Lutherans in the world in 1992 at 58.3 million. Worldwide, 16 churches have more than 1 million members. Largest is the Church of Sweden with 7.6 million members. Germany is the country with the largest number of Lutherans, its 15 Lutheran churches have a combined membership of 14.8 million.

Juan Davila, a Scripture Union worker at their centre for street kids in Iquitos, Peru, and a one-

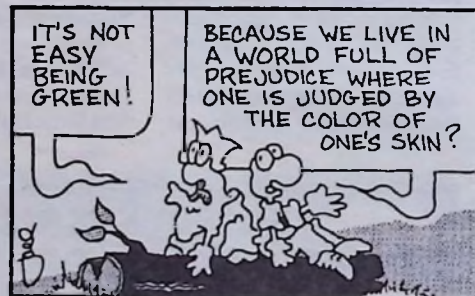
time street kid himself, has been drowned in a tropical rainstorm. He had travelled home by bus with Chico, a converted ex-prostitute who is one of the 120 boys being cared for at the centre. Chico begged Juan not to get off the bus because the street where Juan lived had become a lake. But Juan wanted to see his family, and on his way home fell into an open manhole.

Kim Young Sam, President-Elect of South Korea, is the first active Christian to hold the office, as well as being the first civilian President in three decades. He is a "Bible-reading lay leader" of Seoul's 25,000 member Choong Hyun Presbyterian Church. A twice-imprisoned veteran of dissident politics, he was the candidate of the ruling party, which was formed by a merger of three parties three years ago.

Up to 10 million people worldwide are infected with the AIDS virus, with 40 million expected to be by the end of the decade, according to the World Health Organisation. A researcher predicts that the now-increasing populations of Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Rwanda will actually drop in the next 10 years.

The commissioning service for Fred and Patricia Forbes, from the Yarrowonga, Vic, church, is being held at the Burwood Church of Christ, 280 Highbury Rd, Burwood at 5 pm on 21 March. They will be involved with the Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board as business manager at Madang, Papua New Guinea. The Yarrowonga church is farewell the family at a special service and fellowship meal on 4 April at 5 pm.

Pontius' Puddle



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The Victorian Overseas Mission Committee have organised an evening meeting with Rev Anand Chaudhary, President of the Rajasthan Bible Institute in North India, for 24 March at 7.30 pm, at the Burwood Church of Christ, 280 Highbury Rd, Burwood. The proposed meeting to hear Dr Ben Wati on 6 April has been cancelled, as Dr Wati has not been able to obtain a visa to visit Australia at this time.

Former Watergate "hatchet man", Chuck Colson, has been awarded the Templeton Prize for Progress in religion, a \$1 million award. Since his release from prison he has established Prison Fellowship internationally and has had a consistent Christian witness.

1993 Gospel Celebration

Wanted...

Wanted: 100 children, 100 adults/young people and seamstresses

"Let There Be Light" is the theme of this year's Vic/Tas Conference Gospel Celebration to be held at 7 pm on 2 May.

Produced by Alison Pitt and Fraser Wood-Burgess (Doncaster, Vic, church), the plan is to have over 200, from churches all over Victoria and Tasmania, participating on stage in an inspirational and challenging worship event. We can't tell you too much more because then it won't be a surprise! We can, however, tell you that you can get involved.

We need approximately 100 children (primary school age) and 100 adults or young people (high school age and up) to form part of our cast. The only skills you need are the willingness to sing as part of a large choir and the confidence to do some simple movements. You don't need to be able to sing like an angel or do a tap-dance routine, but you need to be prepared to "have a go".

All participants will be required to attend four rehearsals.

On-stage participants will also be required to pay a small fee. Adults—\$15 will cover the cost of a special "Let There Be Light" T-shirt, your music book tea, coffee and biscuits at rehearsals, and a picnic tea on the night. Children—\$20 will cover the cost of your costume (which means you can keep it!), cordial and biscuits at rehearsals, and a picnic tea on the night. The maximum charge per family will be \$40.

Perhaps being on stage is not your thing? We also need seamstresses—lots of them!

Willing to help? Contact Alison Pitt, c/o Doncaster Church of Christ, 680 Doncaster Rd, Doncaster 3108. Phone (03) 848 1546 or (03) 848 9490.

Strong Growth in Victoria

Peak growth years compared

Victoria's strong upward membership growth trends evident in 1992 are among the largest gains recorded since the 1920s.

The actual net growth of 476 new members in 1992 represents a result only exceeded by the peak years of 1959, 1952, 1926 and 1924. The results of the previous peak years have very distinctive features about them. The outstanding results of the mid 1920s were the direct results of the evangelistic work undertaken by evangelists of that era. The outstanding figure was E.C. Hinrichsen who commenced his work in the mid 1920s. The 1925 Home Mission report to the Victorian Conference reported 1,182 additions by faith and baptism, with tent missions conducted by EC Hinrichsen accounting for 515 of that number. In 1923 Jesse Kellems and Charles Richards of the United States held a mission at Wirth's Olympia resulting in 490 commitments and some 321 baptisms. These were peak years for an evangelistic emphasis with the missionary dominating the scene. By 1928 church membership had increased by 2,686, or 27% from 1919. The evangelistic activity coupled with the vigorous church planting program were the basis of the growth. Many of the missions were held in church planting settings.

Two Remarkable Years

The two outstanding growth years of the 1950s were 1952 and 1959. 1952 marked the holding of the World Convention in Melbourne, to be followed by the Snodgrass-Pollock mission, again located at Wirth's Olympia. This great evangelistic event, plus the vigorous work of many local churches, resulted in a membership gain of 561, to be followed by a gain of 711 in 1959, the year of the first Billy Graham Crusade in Melbourne. These two events were

repeats of the success of the earlier years and the only years when membership gains exceeded 450 in any one year for the whole period since the beginning of the 1920s. Some of the gains for 1952 flowed from the new churches being established at that time in a vigorous post World War II climate.

New Momentum

The current situation of membership is all the more interesting in that the growth has not come from the special evangelistic events so clearly in evidence as the major contributors of the previous years. A detailed analysis indicates that the growth is spread across the state. In the growth of the previous year, 1991, 80% came from the new churches affiliating with Conference. While good news in itself, the result was less than satisfactory when viewed in broad strategic terms.

In 1992 new churches accounted for 40% of the result and all but two suburban regions evidenced membership increases. A feature of the growth is the outstanding results from country churches in the larger regional centres. In broad terms practically every centre is in a growth mode which is increasingly apparent from comparisons noted by the Department in its studies from 1986 when detailed analysis began. 1992 also marked a year when the smaller churches in

lower population rural centres also recorded growth after showing downward trends in recent years. The growth trends of inner city churches are also significant with increases of 15.5% in the four years 1986–1990, a further 14.9% in 1991, to be followed by 4.7% in 1992.

A detailed analysis of all regions and individual churches is available from the Department of Mission, Education and Development at a cost of \$1.

The significance of church planting to the growth pattern is quite evident and the results are consistent with all the literature and experience on this subject. On the assumption that the momentum will continue, the Victorian membership should soon pass the peak years of an earlier decade.

The good news is that many people from many diverse backgrounds are finding our churches places of significance in their own quest for meaning in life. The 1990s appear to be reflecting a new period of internal confidence, a better grasp of growth methods, more effective assimilation processes and a greater priority afforded to evangelism, outreach and creating new points of entry. The challenge is that we face a far larger population with a vastly changed base from the earlier, largely Anglo-Celtic, composition of Australian society. As the whole church grows, so will our potential for even wider activity for the Kingdom of God. This is a time to give thanks to God for the achievements, and seek God's guidance for our future mission task. —D.H. Smith.

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

If you would like to enjoy friendly "one of the family" hospitality in Canberra write for particulars to:

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34 Yiman Street,
Waramanga 2611
Phone (062) 88 2050

Barbara Kennedy
6 Sharp Place,
Melba 2615
Phone (062) 58 1360

Advance bookings appreciated

Ministries

Commissioning for Launceston Team



• Don Smith, John Powell (Chairman of Elders), Darryl Tobler and Craig Spaulding.

Craig Spaulding and Darryl Tobler were set apart in a special service of commissioning at Launceston, Tas, on 14 February. Don Smith, from the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development, preached and led the formal act of commissioning.

Craig and Darryl have previously served in part-time ministry capacities with Rod Foster, who has now moved to Queensland. Craig's role is in pastoral ministry, whilst Darryl's is as youth minister. They are both working in a full-time capacity.

Third Generation Minister

Liz Lloyd (nee Thomas) inducted at Chadstone

On 7 February Liz Lloyd was inducted into a student ministry with the Chadstone, Vic, church. Liz follows her father, Don Thomas, and grandfather, J.E. Thomas, in ministry within Churches of Christ. Liz's uncle, Colin Thomas, has also ministered in Churches of Christ.

She will be involved in ministry with Peter Bradley at Chadstone and her main role will be with christian education and the development of work amongst younger children.

She will also share some chaplaincy support with Peter at the Churches of Christ Nursing Homes at Oakleigh and Murrumbena.

Prior to commencing studies at CCTC, Mulgrave, Liz was Director of Nursing at Fred Combridge House, Northcote. At the recent college garden party Liz received a scholarship for being the best first year student. Her husband David is supporting her in her ministry.



• Liz Lloyd

Induction at Box Hill

Jim Longbottom inducted

In a moving service, Jim Longbottom was formally inducted to the ministry of the Box Hill, Vic, church on 29 January. One hundred and forty were present, including Greg Elsdon, Principal of CCTC who preached, Cr Tom Thorpe and Mrs Thorpe, representing the Box Hill City Council, and Ted McMillan from the Box Hill Baptist Church, representing the local Inter-Church Council. Representatives from the Uniting and Chinese Christian Disciples churches were also present.

Jim, who has been the student minister at Box Hill for the

past four years, graduated from CCTC last November. Together with Michelle, and children Matthew and Eleanor, they came from the Kalamunda, WA, church. A memorable part of the service involved the laying on of hands by various church members who represented the various parts of the church body—elders, deacons, women, children and young people. Jim and Michelle were warmly congratulated by church members and guests over morning tea, all pledging to continue support and prayer for the next five years. Many new initiatives are either un-

Mitcham Ministry

Mark Butler installed at Mitcham



• Glenn Quantrelle, board chairman, welcomes Mark and Nicola Butler

Mark Butler began a ministry with the Mitcham, Vic, church on Sunday, 7 February. He is the first full-time minister at the church since 1979. During the past two years the church has increased in strength and is now able to support a full-time minister. The chapel was filled to capacity for the service of installation which was con-

ducted by Jim Wright. The occasional address was delivered by Greg Elsdon, Principal of the Churches of Christ Theological College, Vic. Clive Ward, president of the National Conference Council, brought a message to the congregation. Mark Butler grew up in the Canberra church. He has had student ministries at Dandenong and Bellarine Peninsula and was ordained last November after graduating from the Churches of Christ Theological College at Mulgrave.

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People

Warm Welcome for Joint Ministers

Whyalla breaks the drought



Photo courtesy The Whyalla News

• Graham and Bev Burgan settling in at Whyalla.

Whyalla, SA, turned on a "warm" welcome for joint ministers Graham and Bev Burgan. A heat wave did not deter the Burgans whose arrival brought to an end a three-year period during which the local congregation was without a minister.

"We've had wonderful welcome, and not only from church members," Graham said.

Graham and Bev took up joint ministry at Whyalla following their first ministry at Essendon North, Vic.

They were very familiar with the area as they had lived in Port Pirie for many years, where Graham worked for Prests Limited, funeral directors.

Both Graham and Bev recognised their calling to work in the ministry while living in Port Pirie, working in a lay capacity for the congregation there.

"In hindsight, I realise that our calling came about 10 years earlier, but I resisted it," Graham said. "An advertisement in a church paper about Melbourne's Churches of

Christ Theological College changed all that. It leapt out like a neon sign," he said.

Bev said once their youngest child was at school, she considered various options for herself including study.

The need to attend the college "hit" them at the same time and they have been working together in the ministry ever since.

They have four children—Jodi, Matthew, Leon and Greg.

Starting a youth club to "complement" the city's existing youth activities is one of the Burgans' aims. "We already have a thriving kids' club on Friday nights," Graham said.

Goals also include strengthening families and helping to direct the congregation in serving the community.

Graham and Bev were inducted into their new ministry by Brian Phelps, a member of the State Board. Eyre Peninsula District Conference representative, Tony Young, also attended.

Janet Lowrey

Belated Memoriam



• Mrs Lowrey with Mrs Ivy Funston

On 9 September, 1992, a special lady passed away at the Christian Guest Home, Oakleigh, Vic.

Janet Lowrey had been a resident at the home for 21 years, a record unlikely to be repeated! Over those many years Mrs Lowrey was an active participant in so much of the Home's

life. These activities ranged from sending sympathy cards to the families of deceased residents to delighting children with her myriad soft toys, the sale of which brought in thousands of dollars for the Department of Community Care.

Mrs Lowrey's sometimes brusque manner disguised a heart of gold, the riches of which were distributed liberally over a lifetime of service within Churches of Christ.

Mrs Lowrey became a member of the Social Service Committee in Victoria in the 1940s and for the next 26 years took charge of the catering for CWF and general Conference. Amongst the youth, Mrs Lowrey's curried rice sausages and plum pudding became famous, especially during the war years when food rationing was stringent. She was an example to inspire us all.

—Peter Bradley
(Chaplain, Christian Guest Home)

Gill Memorial Fund

Twelve months ago Dr Athol Gill died. Honoured as a brilliant teacher and scholar, Athol is also remembered for his warm humanity. His influence extended across denominational barriers and embraced an extraordinary range of people.

Athol served Whitley College (the Baptist College of Victoria) from 1975, as Dean, and then, from 1979, as Professor of New Testament.

As a lasting tribute, a scholarship fund has been established at the College. The Fund will provide financial assistance for students from the two-thirds world to study at Whitley. Gifts to assist the fund can be sent to Mrs L. Iles, Whitley College, 271 Royal Pde, Parkville 3052. Make cheque payable to Whitley College: Athol Gill Scholarship Fund.

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HENLEY (BROWN) Andrew and Lee-Anne are delighted to share their good news—the birth of Bethany Eliza, born 6th March. 8lb 4 oz. Beautiful sister for Benjamin and Tessa.

DEATHS

NORRIS Reta Mavis. On 4 March at Stirling Hospital, SA. Dearly loved, and loving wife, of Harold. Mother and mother-in-law of Alice, Glenys and Dean, Shirley and Rolffe, Rhonda and Rob and Lynette and Ian. Loving Grandmother of 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Loved lady of the manse. She never sought the limelight, she lit the light for others. Aged 84 years. Now at home with her Lord.

RACKEMANN Ellen Maud. On 28 February at Maryborough, Qld. After a long illness. Dearly loved wife of Harry. Loving mother of Alan, Joan and Beth. Nana to nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

IN MEMORIAM

CHALK Doreen June. 29.3.87 In God's care. Her presence we miss, but memories will always last. Lovingly remembered by husband Graham and all her family.

THANK YOU

GORDON AND LESLEY STIRLING say thank you to the Boronia church and their family for "Recognition of their 57 Years of Ministry" held on 6 March. They say thank you to those who attended from as far as New Zealand, to those who sent letters and cards, and to those who spoke on behalf of churches, departments and conferences whom they have served.

FAMILY REUNION

BROUGH family and descendants. Sunday 28 March 1993 from 12.30 pm. BYO lunch. Venue: Wattle Park, Riversdale Rd, Burwood (if wet Surrey Hills Church of Christ Hall). Further information (03) 808 2815 or (03) 700 1277.

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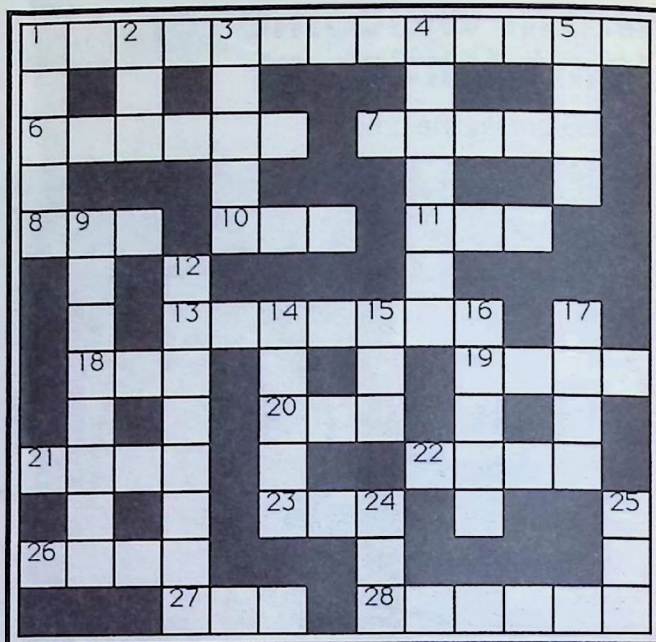
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February Solution



Crossword



Across

- 1 Sea mentioned in Bible
- 6 City mentioned in Ez 27
- 7 Ostrich saw it and laughed (Job 39)
- 8 Should not build foundations using this (1 Cor 3)
- 10 Son of Noah
- 11 Number healed in Luke 17
- 13 Son of Shemaiah (1 Chron 26)
- 17 One of these is holy
- 18 One of these is holy
- 19 Aramaic word for My God
- 20 A giant at Gath had an extra one (2 Sam 21)
- 21 Eli's sons cheated on this (1 Sam 2)
- 22 Scattered by sower
- 23 Jesus likens himself to this bird
- 26 Word used in describing Noah (Gen 5)

- 27 Quoted in Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin
- 28 There are few of these (Luke 10)

Down

- 1 Minor prophet
- 2 Daniel shared with the lions
- 3 Made edgy by sour grapes
- 4 One of twelve
- 5 Ally of Abraham (Gen 14)
- 9 Friend of Daniel
- 12 Clarity of New Jerusalem (Rev 21) [Plural form of word]
- 14 What an Arab will not do in Babylon (Is 13)
- 15 Woodworking tool
- 16 Naaman was one (2 Kings 5)
- 17 Product of Havilah (Gen 2)
- 23 Jeremiah's covenant
- 24 Jeremiah's covenant
- 25 Basket was coated with this (Ex 2)

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The Picaresque World of Audacious Risk

The parable, the Dishonest Steward, affirms neither a moral or an immoral world. It doesn't affirm a world where immoral actions will be met with swift complimentary justice. A world where "crime doesn't pay" is ultimately an ideal world, for we know it does pay for some. Neither does the parable confirm a world of chaos, where justice has no hope of being realised.

The parable anticipates the picaresque hero, the fictional trickster-rogue who breaks social conventions, but is applauded for doing so, even if only for cunning not vice.* The picaresque character finds an empathic audience as they seek to survive by their wits, even if at times a little less than morally so. Although the picaroon may transgress the moral norms of their own society, those norms may not reflect a "just society", especially in the face of anomalies which can make the "law an ass".

The parable works as a metaphor of cunning equivocation. It neither affirms the moral milieu of the parable's society, nor does it deny it. Instead, it reflects that quirky dimension of life which touches us all at some time with its anomalies, twists and turns of circumstance. Life in which "prudent" conventions can become superfluous, and the uncharted ethics of survival seem more imperative, and indeed may make

more sense. The parable reflects that world of behaviour in which people may respond to sudden crises and reversals of situation with genuine candour, but not necessarily with moral finesse.†

The steward's dishonesty is of a picaresque nature—audacious but not malignant.‡ Beyond this, the story does not tell us enough. It leaves us with tantalising gaps to fill using our imagination, and taunting silences for the reader with a propensity for textual closure.§ The parable equivocates at this point. It ruptures our judgments of human behaviour in the face of anomalous circumstances. It depicts a seemingly incompetent "dishonest" man as a most clever, resourceful protagonist in the face of a crisis. On the one hand, he is about to be sacked, yet, on the other hand, he is praised as clever. The parable both affirms and denies our capacity to judge another's responses to life's anomalies. Can we really judge what is morally competent in such situations? Can we ever have enough primary information to do so?

As metaphor for Christian life, the parable subverts smug satisfaction in one's expressions of moral competence as being an adequate response to the presence of the Kingdom. After all, what level of competence are we to assume is adequate, even in our perceptions of good morality? There is al-

ways a Gandhi, a Martin Luther King, an Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, or a Fred Hollows whose vision of justice and compassion make our moral fibre look like fairy floss.

Ultimately, it is the willingness to be thrown back onto the resources of imagination, risk, and courage in the face of crisis which enables a person to be receptive to the presence of the Kingdom. As an equivocating metaphor, the parable neither affirms or denies the standards of moral behaviour demonstrated by the dishonest steward. It is told because of his audacious nerve in a crisis. He personifies the imagination, risk and courage which are intrinsic to our response to the Kingdom. He does so all the more sharply because his moral behaviour commends nothing to the auditor other than his decisive, risk taking response to a crisis. A "morally" competent character might muddy such waters. A definitively immoral person may well be perceived to deserve such difficulties as "poetic justice". This would be an inadequate dis-

closure of the compassionate nature of the Kingdom.

However, an ambiguous character, who is both incompetent and clever, fool and scoundrel depicts the resilient, creative side of human character in the face of life's anomalies and crises. The parable affirms that the reality of God comes as such a crisis in the auditor's lives and solicits a response of imagination, risk and audacious nerve. —SC

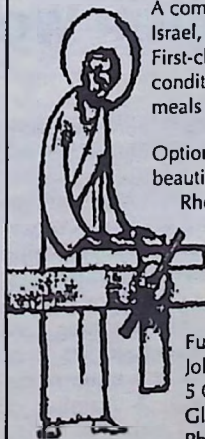
* Dan Via first suggested the parable has picaresque qualities.

† Don Cupitt points out that this is part of the genre.

‡ Indeed, he may have only been incompetent in the sphere of his dishonesty. Some commentators (Derrett & Fitzzyer) argue the "unjust" steward is in fact taking off the unjust interest incorporated into the total accounts owing. This would make his action "just", but not for altruistic reasons. He is "unjust" in as much as he participates in his employer's injustice ... until it is convenient for him to change practice. Therefore, he is still a rogue.

§ Luke has at least three interpretations of the parable.

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A Church ABC

A "Friendly Church" is how the folk of the Nowra, NSW, church like to feel people find them. In many ways they have to be because of the large number of folk moving in and passing through.

Nowra straddles the Shoalhaven river and is located about 2-2 1/2 hours south of Sydney (about 1 hour south of Wollongong) and 1/4 hour from the coast. There are about 22,000 people in the town which is itself experiencing significant growth, with many people moving from Sydney to escape the high cost of living or the "rat race". The main industries in town are paper milling, dairy and construction (especially because of the many new folk). Nowra is also a popular tourist destination as it is close to magnificent beaches, the mountains and picturesque locations such as Kangaroo Valley.

The church itself has a membership of about 100 and, with 19 baptisms and people transferring in, has been showing steady growth over the past few years. A significant proportion of the congregation (about 20%) comes from the two nearby Naval bases (Albatross and Creswell). By their very nature they stay for only a short time. This means that normal practice of getting to

know someone before they serve/participate has to be waived, and, of course, this extends to their families also. The church has a large number of older and young folk, but finds itself fairly light on in the



Focus on Nowra

46-60 age range, and consequently, teenagers also. This is a bit of a problem as it creates a dearth of leaders in certain areas. The large numbers of young marrieds with young children means the church has a large Sunday School (55-60 children) and a significant form of outreach through three "play times" (play groups).

The church is trying to continue its growth through an emphasis on outreach into the community. Their minister, Clinton Wardle, writes a monthly article for a local paper.

The church is planning a divorce recovery workshop in May and a week of evangelism, with college students, in August. In conjunction with conference departments, they also have an application before council to build a 40-bed aged care hostel close to the church

(they hope to start building in 12 months).

Home groups form a significant part of the church's life, with the majority of the congregation being involved. On the whole the groups are sim-

ply families that meet together for fellowship, support and study; however, there are one or two special focus groups such as a KYB group. These home groups form a significant means of integrating new folk into the life of the church. Through the groups relationships and friendships can grow, and so people more quickly feel they belong and will stay.

An important emphasis the church has is that any who come are "newcomers", there being no distinction between visitors and those whose attendance is more likely long-term. Since no distinction is made between the types of newcomers, all new people are welcomed enthusiastically. This, naturally, makes the church feel a warm and generous place to be.

One interesting aspect of the church's worship services is the "thanksgiving bowl". Evi-

dently they borrowed the idea from the Boronia, Vic, church. Anyone who wishes to give thanks for anything comes and puts some monetary offering in the bowl and then tells people what they have to give thanks for. The amounts do not have to be large, nor do the events have to be earth-shattering. This has brought a sense of excitement, and even a laugh into the services (once a biscuit was put in the bowl!). People give thanks for all number of things, anniversaries, birthdays, family visits, the list is endless.

From its beginnings with 3 people in the 60s, the church has come a long way. Now, even though the buildings are only eleven years old, and will be paid off at the end of the year, they have a lack of space. One Sunday school class currently meets in the manse. Later this year they will be holding a "car boot sale"—similar to a garage sale—to raise funds for partitioning to enable the church space to be used with greater versatility. This would mean the manse class could be brought back into the church. Ten percent of the proceeds from sales goes to the church. Last year they raised \$1500.

Both in terms of its friendliness and its future, Nowra is a positive church.

World News

National Evangelism Workshop

St Louis, USA

The Australian Board of Church Development and Education has received program information concerning the National Evangelism Workshop to be conducted by the National Evangelistic Association of the Disciples of Christ in St Louis 13-15 July.

The program includes major speakers Leith Anderson, on planning for the 21st century, and Maxie Dunnam, well known for his writings on spirituality. Included in the 15 specialist workshops will be Barry

McMurtrie of Wollongong on the theme "Leading the Church Through Change". Other electives include topics such as small group ministry, evangelising mature adults, reaching baby boomers, worship issues, Church Growth through spiritual growth and setting a vision. The event attracts large audiences from a range of denominations. A number of Australian Church of Christ ministers plan to attend under the auspices of Christian Projects. Programs are avail-

able from the Board's office, 77 Capel Street, West Melbourne 3003, (03) 326 8900, for any who are interested in further details.



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Growing Spiritually

Production Costs

Ross Pollard

As a teenage Christian, some 45 years ago, I had expectations of a spiritual growth imposed from without and from a zeal within. Since 1948 circumstance has enrolled me in the school of a farming experience, where growth and achievement revolve around one's own effort and diligence.

Over the same period I have constantly attended the spiritual university where nourishment comes not from a well equipped ministry team, teeming population, and modern technology, but from the "common" folk who have crossed my path—often just when needed—the small country church. Many may not identify with this heritage, but all may learn and grow in contemplation of three areas common to both these seats of learning.

Lush is not often a sign of productivity. A tree does not

bear useful fruit on the strong visible growth around the perimeter, but on the seasoned wood which nature, pruning, and patience bring to its fruit-bearing purpose.

The fig tree which happened to be in Jesus' path, condemned itself, not by appearance, but by lack of fruit. Popular opinion was to fertilise and force feed more lush growth. Horticultural wisdom would prescribe grafting in a fruitful variety, pruning off surplus growth, allowing it to suffer a little for a year, or as Jesus suggested, removal, to make way for another. The people of the small churches will have suffered these indignities, but grown a little because of it.

Some may identify with the "survival years". The times when acts of nature, other people, or our own errors of judgement mean there is no fruit, no growth, and seemingly, no life. Programs and lifestyle are pruned to the prevailing circumstances, and "giving up" is "unthinkable". Out of these lean times comes an appreciation of the good years that have been as a promise of the times which will certainly come again. Even greater is the realisation that survival is the measure of a growth which supersedes the fat years. Elijah at Cherith, Jesus in the temptation desert and John on Patmos displayed a growth not evident on a rostrum before 5,000.

We grow and produce only according to our nature. Environment can batter, distort, hide, defer or glorify, but can never change the nature within. We often need to assess our "true to type" nature against the measure of the True Vine who decrees the nature and fruit expected.

This is the common thread through all of our growing experiences, if there is no life there is no growth. But empowerment by the life of God himself, nothing can measure or contain that growth.

Mellowed with the years? Resigned to mediocrity? Failed? There is no apology for those early aspirations falling short of accepted yardsticks, but rather the firm conviction that God expects us to graduate in the university of life on which he enrols us. His emphasis is productivity rather than growth alone.

The Lord calls every single one of us to do something for him. The problem is finding out what it is. That can sometimes seem the difficult part. Yet it will, somehow, be revealed to us.

The Lord isn't hiding it from us, so we have to spend our lives looking for our special role. He's not laughing in the distance, shouting, "Come and find it! Come and find it! Ha! Ha! Ha!" Our "mission" in life will occur naturally and can never be forced. It may suddenly spring upon us in a flash, or slowly develop within us until the day we know what we

We All Have A Role To Play

Neil Marsden

must do. It may take a long time to accomplish, it may not. It might be hard to work towards, it might not. No one can tell.

There was a man once who had been working very hard all day. It had been a hard day and he had worked and worked but had failed to catch any fish at all. I'm sure a lot of people can relate to this experience—I can. Anyway, this man brought his boat back in and was cleaning his nets when a man who was teaching the crowd wanted to use his boat. After the teacher had finished teaching, the fisherman was asked to go back out and lower the nets. Not really wanting to, the fisherman did as the teacher asked and hauled in so much his boat nearly sank! Simon Peter had no idea that the Lord's plan for his life would be revealed that day. Peter would soon become

not a catcher of fish, but a catcher of men. Jesus had revealed his plan for Peter, but it still would take Peter years and years to fulfil his task.

Our essential task though, is to go out among the people and tell them about Christianity. We're not supposed to force them or to keep away from "undesirables". So many people don't want to go to different places and do different things because it's "un-Christian" and they may comment, "but they're not Christians"! Unbelievably, Jesus preferred the company of the "dirt of the city", the prostitutes, the tax gatherers, and all the rest, and no-one can be more Christ-like than Christ himself. We may have to get into the "dirt", but, when we wash away the dirt, we may find gold. Sitting down devoutly with a lovely angel

face isn't going to make the gold just appear. We have to go out and clean all that "dirt" off, we have to offer the people out there the Word of God. We may find a heart as hard as stone, or we may find a heart of gold, ready to be polished and accepted by the Lord. No matter what the Lord calls us to do, this task is at the very centre of the wider plan.

Whatever we have to do, whatever our role is, an exciting one, a boring one, a fast one or a slow one, we can all be assured that it is work the Lord needs done. He needs all of us, but we still need him more.

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Do We Have The Right Connections?

Keith Farmer.

The initial findings of the 1991 National Church Life Survey have been published in a book *First Look in the Mirror* (Lancer, 1992). One of the clear indications from these initial findings is that the church in Australia has entered a "Post Denominational Age" (p.90). A decline in denominational loyalty has made congregational life "far more fluid". I particularly want to address the challenge that Churches of Christ "connect the traditions which make up (our) heritage with the contemporary culture and (the) symbols of those with whom (we) seek to be in mission" (p. 91).

Our forebears in the Campbell-Stone Movement seemed determined that, in seeking to bring unity on the basis of New Testament Christianity, for the purpose of effective outreach, we remain a Movement and not become a Denomination.

In fact, long before this time, for all practical purposes, we have become a Denomination in terms of having our own traditions and identity. Many of the traditions with which I grew up are more clearly identified as "Churches of Christ tradition and practice" than uniquely Biblical e.g. the practice of the Sunday evening "Gospel Meeting" with people being asked to make a public confession after coming to the front of the meeting, the form of our weekly Communion service, etc. We need, therefore, to accept that the challenge "to connect traditions with the contemporary culture" applies as much to us as to any other Denomination. However, I believe we do have some factors which might help us to do this "connecting" more quickly and more effectively than some others (I do not say this in a competitive sense, but because of the urgency of the need).

Positive Factors

What is happening today could seem like a dream come true to our forebears. They

longed for a post-Denominational era—a time when historical divisions meant less and factors which unite meant more. Today, the choice of a church seems to depend more on the effectiveness of the individual congregation in making connections and offering meaning, than on the denomination of the congregation. This is not quite the "New Testament" basis of our Movement, but it could be seen as a change in that direction and, if handled correctly, an opportunity to be grasped as an impetus towards "unity on the basis of the New Testament". We do not wish to foster or support a "consumer" mentality towards church affiliation, but, if what is happening indicates a desire by people to link with vital Christianity, which includes the presentation of a straight forward counter cultural, Biblical message, then that is in harmony with Churches of Christ's heritage.

The fact that we have a shorter history than other denominations and have never been "an established" or State Church in another country" (the definition of Mainstream Protestant in the survey) may allow us to listen to our contemporary context more quickly and effectively. Even our "non-conformist" or "anti-establishment" leanings of the

past can be positives in the quest for making constructive connections. Also, our relatively informal approach to worship appears to be compatible with the preferred style of today's younger generations.

A key observation from the NCLS data is that connections which are effective will be different from one location to another. The way a congregation operates will require local initiative, with decisions being made without too much need for assent by authorities outside the local church. Thus the informed practitioner is the key, rather than the professional administrator. This does not overlook the vital role Conference plays, and should continue to play, but it does indicate that the need for radical rethinking and revision by the church should be felt in all facets of our work, including what congregations do together through Conferences.

Most of the statistics which indicate whether effective connections are being made or not show Churches of Christ to be placed between the Mainstream Protestant Denominations and some of the newer groups, e.g. some Charismatic congregations. We have been more open to church growth

principles and more ready to accept the positive qualities of the charismatic movement than most other denominations. But we must keep moving.

Much Is At Stake

The book *Faith without the Church, Nominalism in Australian Christianity* (P. Bentley, T. Blombery and P. Hughes) suggests that there are very deep questions being asked of the Australian churches.

Some commentators on youth in society (e.g. Richard Eckensly, *The Age* 2 August, 1992) believe that time is running out for a society which lacks a belief system and has no coherent basis for any future optimism for its young (Zadok Book Reviews 1992, p.38)

What is at stake is not only the institutional church in Australia, including Churches of Christ, but the well being of the Australian people, particularly the young.

Please accept that the spirit of this paper is not one-upmanship or competitiveness. I firmly believe that the division between denominations is a scandal. There is a chance to move beyond that division and I believe Churches of Christ can fulfil our heritage and be helpful to other groups in leading the way towards making effective connections with the 80% of Australian people who presently find the church, basically, irrelevant.

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National Social Justice Committee Report

John Somerville

The National Social Justice committee met recently in a teleconference. As the operator was phoning around gathering us together the background music playing was:

"When you walk through a storm keep your head up high.

And don't be afraid of the dark ... Walk on walk on, with hope in your heart

And you'll never walk alone, you'll never walk alone."

I recalled that the New Zealand World Convention choir in Auckland in 1988 sang it on the day we celebrated Alexander's birthday.

It provides a theme for the National Social Justice month of April 1993.

Walk on. With Hope. You'll Never Walk Alone

This year is the International Year of Indigenous Peoples. Ron Wilson, at a media forum looking at some of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody, said in part, "No issue is more important to Australia in this decade than change. Change directed to restoring the indigenous people, the original owners of this country, to their rightful place in a united Australia. Part of this

process is directed to changing the attitudes of non-Aboriginal Australians. We have to realise the reality and richness of indigenous culture, and recognise that it's a vital part of the heritage all Australians inherit. We need to feel something of the suffering caused to indigenous people by the dispossession, dispersal and brutal treatment that has accompanied European settlement, and the continuing disadvantage and injustice Aboriginal people suffer. We must build a commitment, and eagerness to change, to establish a new relationship to take us into the next century. This must be a relationship of unity and peace founded on justice, equity and mutual respect, and hopefully shown in a document of some kind. Another aspect of change is the promotion among Aboriginal people of a willingness to recognise the process of change underway within non-Aboriginal Australia and to be prepared to trust the sincerity and goodwill that lies behind the offered olive branch."

Walk on, with hope. You'll never walk alone.

The National Social Justice committee has prepared a pam-

phlet on the important issue of unemployment. We would appreciate hearing reports from individuals and/or churches on any action they have taken in this matter. The paper aims to help us clarify and understand the extent, the causes and consequences of unemployment; reflect on the issue in the

light of the biblical record; look at what we can do and encourage



ages us to affirm all people as persons and beings of worth, whether they are employed or not. Employment is not the benchmark of worth for God and disciples of Christ. The paper will be available shortly.

Walk on, with hope. You'll never walk alone ...

The Churches of Christ have been represented on an ecumenical committee preparing a document on immigration which will be available for study and action late 1993. Charles Wilson has been our representative on the national committee. Andre Jacques in

his book *Strangers within your gates* says, "Throughout the Bible, the experience of exile and the treatment of strangers are used as tests of faithfulness to God, to God, who sides with orphans, widows, the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers and who, in Christ, identifies with the poor and the oppressed." Jesus himself "had nowhere to lay his head". Jacques concludes his series of case studies with this challenge. "Migration in our day is a complex issue ... the effects of migration are far reaching and wide-ranging. The human suffering involved is immense ... Christian communities everywhere face an enormous challenge."

Walk on, with hope. You'll never walk alone ...

The Old Testament reading from Isaiah 50 for Palm Sunday is recommended for reflection as the prophet says, "The Sovereign Lord has taught me what to say, so that I can strengthen the weary". Remember we are using the whole of April as the month during which congregations are encouraged to think and pray about matters concerning Social Justice.

Walk on, with hope. You'll never walk alone ...

**Churches Of Christ
National Social
Justice Month
April 1993.**

This is our only source of finance and we encourage individuals and congregations to give generously.

Please send your gifts to:
**The Secretary
National Social Justice
Committee
PO. Box 140
Carlingford NSW 2118.**



Changes

Maidstone: Secretary—Faye P. Freiberg, 35 Churchill Ave, Maidstone, Vic 3012. Phone (03) 317 7221.

Lundgren, Dan and Judy—7/12 Walnut Street, Cherokee, Iowa 51012, USA.

Baptisms

•Melanie Bell, **Victor Harbor, SA**
•Ken O'Neill, Rowena O'Neill, Lynette Haworth, George White, **Nowra, NSW** •James Diggins, Sharon Diggins, **Bowral, NSW**
•Patricia Perry, **Dalby, Qld**

Deaths

•Lorraine Smith, **Box Hill, Vic**
•Elizabeth McRae, **Carnarvon, WA**
•Pauletta Jackson, **Nowra, NSW**
•James John Farr, **Gilgandra, NSW**

Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Potter, Edward Thomas (Ted) (27.1.93) Born in 1915, Fremantle, WA, where Ted's parents were already well established in the local Church of Christ. It is pleasing to note

WA

CARNARVON (Kevin O'Brien) A family lunch followed induction service of Kevin O'Brien 28 February ... Kevin with wife Jillian & children Jashub & Martika have settled quickly into new ministry ... Mrs Fawn Law Davis is president of ladies group & plans bimonthly outreach meeting involving craft work & themes of special interest to women. Alternative months to be for prayer, praise & planning.

that, for the next 78 years, Fremantle was to be Ted's spiritual home. It was here he made his commitment to Christ in his teen years and, in 1942, to take Joyce Jefferies as his chosen life's partner. His health suffered as a result of more than six years of Naval service during the war years. He was a very practical man who remained helpful and resilient. On the Sunday morning before his sudden passing, he presided at the Lord's Table and included as the closing hymn, 'God holds the key of all unknown'. Sympathy is extended to Joyce, and sons Russell, Trevor and Brian, and other loved ones. A well-attended service was conducted at Fremantle by E.J. Sewell

—E.J. Sewell

NSW

NOWRA (Clinton Wardle) Blessed time over Christmas with Carols by Candlelight service on the lawns ... New Year's Eve social followed by worship service, at 11.30, to pray in the New Year ... Recent decision of Ken O'Neill exciting ... Youth groups growing ... Board retreat a good time of fellowship & bonding ... Recent funeral of Pauletta Jackson was a real celebration—just as she wanted.

BOWRAL (Garry Towle) A Church Development & Education seminar entitled "Rise & Shine—Restoring Our Spiritual Passion" presented on 14 February by Ross Wakeley—great encouragement to those who participated ... Church has adopted a vision statement & is adapting a strategy to implement it ... Kids Club, Big Kids Club & Solid Rock have resumed for 1993 ... Bethel series (second time through) recommenced.

GILGANDRA (P. Anderson) Church saddened at home-call of loved member (Jim) James John Farr after painful illness. Sympathy extended to Lillian & family who cared for him so well. We will miss him ... Monthly service at Coe Lodge well attended ... Gilgandra hosted well attended World Day of Prayer meeting.

SA

VICTOR HARBOR (Don Wesley) Smorgasbord evening services are being well attended ... Three welcomed into membership ... Church supporting High School chaplain Hayden Lush ... AGM moving in positive forward direction & is setting up committee to look at second minister ASAP ... Church Centre debt has now been dramatically reduced by donations & auxiliary using building.

HENLEY BEACH (Ron McLean) Evening services & monthly prayer breakfasts with Flinders Park & Brooklyn Park well attended ... Greg Stuckey youth worker ... Val & Wilf Stevens renewed wedding vows on 7 February, relatives & friends present. Val continues as student minister at Henley Beach ... Auxiliaries have commenced ... Extra children at Sunday School ... Chinese folk attending church ... Mark Dodd has commenced studies at CCTC.

MURRAY BRIDGE (Morrie Munyard) We took evening service to "Church in the Park" during January & February. Featuring visiting artists "Flame Players", clowns "Nip & Tuk" and puppets "The Muldoons". Short topical talks & up-to-date testimonies plus singers & guitarists Daryl Goodwin, Greg Munyard, Ian Payne, Chandra Cox & rock bands "The Strangers" & "Daddy's Little Boys". Numbers doubled, local press supportive & Morrie Munyard interviewed on radio. Planning similar venture next year.

HAPPY VALLEY (Russell Allison) Home fellowship group studying *Understanding Churches of Christ*. KYB groups studying prayers of the Bible ... Church celebrated 14th anniversary. Norma Robinson made cake ... Fortnightly evening services commenced in February. Guests include group from Hawthorn, Al Cranney & Co from schools ministry group, Year 7 performed puppet play ... Dorothy Allison gave message at World Day of Prayer, Nita Baggs led program.

NAILSWORTH (Darryl Telfer) Recently appointed youth coordinator Stephen Toon & family were welcomed in February ... Regular fortnightly youth suppers after Sunday evening services are planned ... In February Rob George (OAC Ministries) addressed morning service preparing for Community Contact Week proposal for August ... Kingsley Congdon (Compassion International Australia) showed video "Children on the Edge" outlining work ministering to children & families in developing countries.

Churches of Christ in New South Wales

Applications are invited for the position of

Conference Secretary

Responsibilities include the day-to-day activities of the Conference Executive and supervision of the transition to the new model of organisation and compatibility with its principles, as accepted at the Special Conference in September 1992.

The position requires a proven ability in administration, organisation and financial management coupled with the desire to serve God and his church through the ministry of Conference.

Remuneration package will be aligned to that of a Senior Minister with appropriate car and house allowances, superannuation and long service leave.

The successful applicant would need to commence duties at the earliest possible date.

Applications should be in writing, together with a current curriculum vitae, marked "Confidential" and submitted by 2 April 1993 to—

The Conference Secretary
Churches of Christ in NSW
PO Box 140
Carlingford 2118

Church News

Old

DALBY Local men are preaching until arrival of Tony & Gail Ochse who commence ministry on 1 April ... A full team of Sunday School teachers have been dedicated ... First term sees trial of new format for worship services with the sermon towards the beginning of service & communion at the conclusion. Sunday School is held during sermon time.

BRIBIE ISLAND (Bruce Roberts) Host this year for World Day of Prayer. 170 were challenged by Bruce's message to be God's people, instruments of healing ... Evening service last Sunday of month ... Kid's Club recommenced ... Bill Hill celebrated his 90th birthday ... CWF enjoying varied programs ... Beryl Wiltshire & team came & shared their ministry, caring for those in need ... Church concert 27 March.

Vic

MOUNT CLEAR (Dale White) Successful Twilight Fair raised \$2,591 for church ministries & auxiliaries ... Record attendances during February, average 151 am & 77 pm ... David Jones appointed pastoral assistant (half-time) ... Commissioning service for church leaders, teachers & auxiliary coordinators ... Free "welcome dinner" held for Christian students coming into local University ... Nine members teaching CRE at local Primary Schools ... Five Home Fellowship groups in operation.

GLEN WAVERLEY (Ron Elbourne, Howard Sanders) January attendances highest on record ... New elders Louis Anokotta & Barry Crittle appointed ... 16 small groups, meeting varied needs, commenced ... Ron Elbourne now in 23rd year of ministry ... WALK course, monthly leaders support started second year ... 46 attended Newcomer's Dinner ... Matt Holland won gold medal at Australia-wide Work Skill Olympics ... Four young people dedicated as they enter Bible Colleges for studies.

STRATHMORE (James Pearce) Focus in 1993 to be on Overseas Missions. Social night in January raised money for two world globes for Ranwadi High. Barry Jenkins and Julie Trinnick guest speakers in February. Six new members welcomed into church family. Sunday School went to Wye River for a weekend camp in March. A new manse purchased and old one sold. Pearce safely moved.

TOOTGAROOK (Mal Giezen-danner) February saw all auxiliaries

back in action after holidays ... Weekly prayer & Bible study ... CWF in full swing. Meeting well attended. President presented her theme "Walking with God" in a series of readings & mime ... Church hosted World Day of Prayer. Challenging address by Dawn Holmes on "God's People: Instruments of Healing". About 130 present. Free-will offering \$358.

NORTHCOTE (F.B. Alcorn) Our focus for 1993 is on "Commitment" & for March is on "The Living Word & the Bible as the Written Word" ... James, Pam & Joshua McLee farewelled to Canberra ... Norm Murphy (FCH) received into mem-

bership from Oakleigh ... Flo Prideaux in St Georges Hospital ... CWF has commenced year with Joyce Huggan as President & Pearl Alcorn as VP ... Minister elected President of ICC.

REDCLIFFS (S. Mackle) Harvest Thanksgiving on 28 Feb. 10 boxes & two bags of goods sent to Oakleigh Guest Home ... New club—KOFN (Kids On Friday Nights) started for young High School students. Steadily building up. They spent a night on Mansell's paddle steamer, *Impulse*, recently ... New families welcomed into the church ... Kid's Club activities in full swing.

Tas

LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, D. Tobler) Kit Ling exercising special ministry among overseas students at Launceston College & Launceston University ... Leaflet drop made concerning bus service to Sunday services ... Students from Sri Lanka, PNG, Nigeria, Malaysia & China attending ... Speakers from Gideons preached 28 February & George Green 7 March ... 30 young people attended State Camp at Bicheno over long weekend ... Clean up church buildings & grounds 6 March.

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Poetry

Who Me? Walk on Water?

Guess what? I'm scared of walking on water!

When Jesus told Peter to "Come",
he leaped out of the boat and started walking.
Actually he even suggested it to Jesus,
"Order me to come out of the water to you."

But not me.
When Jesus says, "Come. Walk on water with me,"
my first response is to look behind me,
hoping he is talking to someone else back there.

Then I try,
"But, Lord, I've not had any experience at that.
Aquatics isn't my thing!"

Or, "But, Lord, I'm a woman.
Are you sure it's theologically correct for me to do that?"

In the face of his quiet, repeated, "Come", it's honesty to
"Lord, I'm scared."

Once I was scared of diving.
So I got some friends to push me into the water
Until I realised that fear was unnecessary.
Then I could dive.

"Lord, do you think you could get into the boat behind me
And give me a push?
Once I'm out there, walking with you,
I know I'll be all right!"

It might even be exciting!

—Fay Christensen

The Last Word

Without a crucifixion there is
no resurrection.

—Stuart Briscoe

Money talks ... It says goodbye.

★★★★★

During an army war game a Commanding Officer's jeep was stuck in the mud. The CO saw soldiers lounging nearby and asked them to help get the jeep out of the mud. "Sorry, sir" said one of the soldiers, "but we've been classified dead and the umpire said we couldn't contribute in any way." The CO turned to his driver and said, "Go drag a couple of those dead bodies over here and throw them under the wheels to give us some traction."

★★★★★

General: "Now, Private, if you stood with your back to the north and your face to the south, what would be on your left hand?" Private: "Fingers."

★★★★★

The young recruit turned up his nose at the Army stew and complained to the mess sergeant, "Don't I have any choice here?" "Certainly," replied the sergeant, "take it or leave it."

★★★★★

What do they do with the church flowers after Sunday services? They take them to the people who are sick after the sermons.

★★★★★

A child was writing the memory verse for the day on the blackboard: "Do one to others as others do one to you."

★★★★★

Sunday School teacher: "What must you do to receive the forgiveness of sin?" Pupil: "Sin."

★★★★★

A patient with a pain in the side went to see a doctor. The patient was told it was appendicitis and they must have an operation. The patient decided to get another doctor's opinion. The second doctor told the patient that it was heart trouble. The patient commented: "I'm going back to the first doctor. I'd rather have appendicitis."



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