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News

Why Did You Come Here?

Blazenka

In 1995-96 Australia will grant refugee status to 14,000 refugees. Refugees fleeing persecution from countries such as Bosnia and Hercegovina, El Salvador, Eritrea, Iran and Vietnam are arriving in Adelaide at the rate of two families per week. On 17 June, the South Australian Council of Churches and the Cowandilla Church of Christ co-hosted "Welcoming Refugees-the Christian Response". It was an afternoon where people of different denominations gathered to learn how churches can and are helping refugees.

As the people shared a lunch prepared by the Croatian Catholic Church, Blazenka, a woman who had fled persecution in Bosnia and Hercegovina, shared her story:

"I am from Sarajevo in Bosnia and Hercegovina. I am sure that the whole world has a clear picture what was and what is still happening in my homeland and in particular in Sarajevo, where I've been living happily with my family until the unjust war broke out.

"Maybe some of you will ask: 'Why did you come here? Why have you left your homeland?' At the very beginning I could not understand what is happening around me. Then, all of a sudden, I understood that the political commotion is turning into soldiers conflict, that people, neighbours, my friends are disappearing and I've been questioning why? Firing began. Around my house bombs are falling. People are panicking in fear. Together with their children, they are grabbing suitcases and going, disappearing. I am trying to convince them not to leave their houses, their city and villages, but I am still thinking this is only an awful dream which will pass. I still do not understand why some are disappearing, others are shooting at us. In that situation, I did not know what to do. I stayed in my own home thinking that was the wisest decision. Now I can see that was my biggest mistake.

"War is widening, getting more and more furious. Bombs are shelling above my head. Around me people are falling. More and more of those are killed. Houses are burning and falling. My family and I are hiding in the cellars and for few days and nights are not coming out. At the beginning we were counting bombs, how

many have fell, whose house has been destroyed now ...

"When the first bomb fell on my house I felt awful. It was so hard for me. Later I got used to it and only prayed to God to keep us alive. In the meantime, there is no electricity, no water, no food, no gas. Some new faces are coming, new people, strange people, saying that they are refugees from other occupied places. Each one has his own story and tragedy. They are entering other people's houses. At first they were taking out of the houses food, but later other things, like furniture, animals, anything and everything.

"Oh God, what a disaster. I am asking myself how can they take what does not belong to them? The period of unlawfulness has begun. What I mean is the law of violence. The laws of those who have weapons. Moral is zero. It is Sodom and Gomorrah. I am further questioning: 'Are they humans or is it devil in the human form?' From day to day is harder and harder and the life is in question-in danger. Shellings are day and night. My house is on the front lines, the whole city is occupied. I do not have any more strength, no courage left, so I am fleeing with my family.

"We run towards the centre of the city because we feel more secure. What a horror we experience. People were falling like the leaves from the tree in the autumn. Human corpses were torn and lying everywhere. Aged people were falling into river. Mothers were losing their children. Screaming was heard everywhere. I thought I was amongst the mentally sick. In my hand I was firmly holding my handbag. My whole fortune was in it. I do not know it myself how we came home alive. Only God knows that.

"Beside the bombs which fall everyday, there is shortage of the food. Humanitarian help continues but it is very little. You simply cannot live with it. In the city there are organisations with humanitarian help, but there is selections who can and who cannot get it. In this situation, black marketing is blooming. It exists even today. Government is overlooking it because it is not capable to feed people by itself. One kilo of sugar is about \$70, one egg \$1, One kilo flour \$18. If you want to survive you'd sell everything to buy the food. Winter is very cold -25°C.

Crisis Service Opened

New ministry in Devonport

The Devonport, Tas, church has opened a crisis intervention service.

It will be administered by volunteers training in pastoral care and counselling skills. (Currently, eleven members are undergoing a Clinical Pastoral Education course to ensure there are enough trained people to operate the service.)

The service is entitled **HOPE (Helping Overcome Personal Emergencies)** and is being co-ordinated by Pam McCulloch.

Initially, the service is being run by people working in teams of two who are on call on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 6.00 pm–2.00 am. It is hoped to increase the availability of the service as the service becomes more established and sufficient members are trained to ensure adequate counselling whenever the service is open.

Pam commented that, "Further training is being provided

in pastoral care counselling, intervention skills and a variety of specialist areas, such as suicide awareness and family violence."

Even in the founding stages, the service has received support from the police and others working in the area.

Counsellors are available to spend time with people at the point of crisis, such as following family violence, suicide or attempted suicide, accidents, deaths, assaults, rape, shock, trauma, critical illness or broken relationships.

Pam said that follow-up support will also be made available to clients. Those in need of professional assistance or advice would be referred to appropriate agencies.

While the service only started in July, they are receiving at least two calls an evening when the service is operating. There has been some publicity for the



• Pam McCulloch (HOPE Coordinator) and Ron Chapman (minister) discussing the HOPE counselling service

service and, as it becomes known among the community,

it is anticipated that the demand will grow.

Continued from page 2

"People die from cold and hunger. Every walk on the road outside of the house is a risk because of the bombs and snipers. People are killed every day. These kinds of horrors you dear and lucky people may have seen on your TV. I had to go to my work everyday, never knowing if I'll come back home alive. One day I was walking to my work with my friend. I saw him falling. He is killed. Half of his head just disappeared. I was spattered with his blood. I got frightened and I fell on the other side. I had enough strength to say 'Thank you Lord. It was not yet my time. You have kept me and my family alive.' And so like this I thanked God every night.

"At that time some people came from nowhere in uniform. They were picking men from the road, anywhere they could grab them, and take them to dig trenches for the front-line fighters. A lot of them never ever returned.

"It comes to a new affliction. Fights between Croats and Muslims. Whose side to take now? Who to fight for? Who against?

"On the 31 December 1993 enemies were celebration New Year's Eve. They were shooting from the mountain. Shells are flying over the heads of the poor people. One hit my home. I jumped off the bed, looked up and could see the blue and cold sky.

"My mother screamed, 'I am wounded.' I did not realise that the bomb had torn apart my bed above my head. We are homeless.

"That was the time we decided to run away. Despite the horrors, I pray for the enemies so that God forgives them. They do not seem to know what they are doing. They seem not to be aware that they are killing even their own people.

"Mothers are crying for their children.

"So many young ones have been killed, injured. The only consolation to the Croats of

Sarajevo is the church, because they have been neglected by everyone else.

"So with the first opportunity, we escaped from the hell city of Sarajevo. We did not know where to go or what to do. We arrived in Australia early 1995 and we are happy

that we have found a bit of peace.

"We asked for Refugee status but we disappointed because of the negative answer. The explanation was that we could go to Croatia. We have appealed and now we are waiting. ❖

You Can Help

When refugees arrive in Australia, it is usually with no money, no friends, no furniture and a limited English vocabulary. They will need help

- to register with [for example] Medicare, Commonwealth Employment Services and the Department of Social Security,
- learning how to use our public transport system,
- to obtain second-hand furniture in a clean condition to set up house,
- and friendship.

If you have time or furniture to donate, contact Christine Loveday on Tuesdays or Thursdays on (08) 232 0070 or write c/o GPO Box 2106, Adelaide 5001. Christine is the Refugee Project Worker for the South Australian Council of Churches. (Each of the state Council of Churches could place you in contact with refugee workers in your state if you are willing to help.)

Nunawading Church Closes

Avoiding confusion

20 August marked a significant event in the history of the church at Surrey Rd, Blackburn. On this day it ceased to be the Nunawading Church of Christ and became the Blackburn Community Church of Christ.

The reason for the change is very simple. The City of Nunawading ceased to exist as a consequence of the recent restructuring of local councils in Melbourne. The name "Nunawading" had become confusing and misleading, especially for visitors looking for the church.

The change of name has also given the church an opportunity to upgrade its "image". Members Mark and Roger Bentley contributed their professional skills in the area of graphic arts to develop a new

logo which will feature on all items of stationery and advertising.

In welcoming members to their "new" church on 20 August, senior minister, David Ratten commented, "Our new name in no way changes who and what we are as a church. For nearly 100 years the Church of Christ at Blackburn has been active in the community, sharing God's love in diverse ways. We have a heritage and a reputation in this district of which we should be very proud."

Over the weeks and months that follow, there will be concerted efforts to contact people in the local district with the news that the Blackburn Community Church of Christ is a great place of which to be a part.

Asian Concerns

Christian Conference of Asia Report

Recently Lynette Leach and John Gilmore represented Churches of Christ at the General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

John's article in *The Australian Christian* (3 June) foreshadowed some of the problems to be addressed. Lynette and John have returned filled with enthusiasm to help Christians in Australia understand more of these problems and how we

can provide support and practical assistance.

The Department of Christian Union is sponsoring a dinner, to be held at the Theological College, Mulgrave on 29 September to enable Lynette and John to report fully on their experiences. We invite you all to come and hear your representatives. For bookings, contact Gwen Mathieson, (03) 9580 4732, or 3/317 Nepean Highway, Parkdale 3195.

Calendar

Centre for Jewish Culture

The Jewish Museum of Australia has chosen the works of artist Marc Chagall to launch its new national centre for Jewish culture. The exhibition will display over 160 works and two major suites of work include "The Bible", an expansive work of 105 etchings and "The Exodus Story", a series of 24 coloured lithographs. In addition there will be 12 lithographic renderings titled "Jerusalem Windows", depicting the 12 tribes of Israel, and other original works. The Jewish Museum opened at its new premises on 20 July at 26 Alma Rd, St Kilda, Vic. It is open Sundays 11.00-5.00 and Tuesdays on Thursdays from 10.00-4.00. Information from (03) 9534 0083.

Leadership 2000 Interviews

Interviews for the Leadership 2000 program are now being planned. Successful candidates will share in a study tour that will take them to Los Angeles in September 1996 with a group of senior ministers. Costs will be heavily subsidised by Christian Projects. Interviews are being conducted at Nunawading, Vic, on 22 August, Northside, NSW 28 August and Wollongong on 3 November (as part of Spring Conference). Interviews in other states are yet to be arranged. Application forms are available by ringing (042) 26 5022. These must be completed before interviews.

Soul of Politics

Jim Wallis is an internationally known Christian activist who works in the urban ghettos of Washington DC. He is founding editor of *Sojourners* magazine, an activist, peace worker and speaker who has been involved in a wide range of issues relating to racism, economics, justice, disarmament and peace making. Jim is visiting Australia in conjunction with the launch of his most recent book *The Soul of Politics*, at the invitation of Pax Christi Australia for the 50th anniversary of Pax Christi International. While in Mel-

bourne, he will undertake a series of seminars and services over the period 25-28 August. Full details from School of World Mission on (03) 9347 8388 or fax (03) 9347 8052.

National Gathering of Women

Registrations for the National Gathering of Women will be received up until 11 September. Any queries about this special event in the life of our churches should be made to Mrs Marj Dredge on (08) 278 7873, Mrs Barbara Grear on (08) 337 0361 or to the SA Conference Centre on (08) 239 0233.

National Glaucoma Day

National Glaucoma Day is being held on 20 September to draw attention to the hereditary nature of glaucoma, which is one of the common causes of blindness in Australia. Recent research in Australia suggests that as many as 200,000 over the age of 40 have glaucoma but have yet to be diagnosed. Glaucoma is caused by the build up of an abnormally high fluid pressure inside the eye which slowly compresses and damages the optic nerve, preventing it from carrying complete visual messages to the brain. Further information and advice can be obtained from the Glaucoma Foundation of Australia on (02) 906 6640 or by writing to PO Box 420, Crows Nest 2065.

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Black Choir will Inspire!

Australian Glory of Easter Tour

The exciting choir of the **Light of the World Christian Church in Indianapolis** will be a feature of the Sunday worship service on 14 April 1996, when members of the **Australian Glory of Easter Tour Party** will be in attendance. The Australian contingent will be hosted over that weekend by families of this church, the largest Black church within the Disciples of Christ in America. Dr Tom Garrot-Benjamin is the senior minister.

During the weekend prior, the tour party will be based in Anaheim, California, attending the spectacular **Glory of Easter at the Crystal Cathedral** and experiencing the exhilaration of Easter Sunday spent with this world-famous church.

Other features of the tour will be visits to San Francisco, Los Angeles and Honolulu. Naturally, all of the usual West Coast

tourist attractions, including Disneyland and Universal Studios, will be "must-sees" on the itinerary! Tour leader, **Graham Agnew of Marion, SA**, says that this tour will be an wonderful experience for all those who choose to come on board. "I have witnessed the Glory of Easter on a previous occasion and it left me breathless! I have also been to the Light of the World Christian Church and to this day would regard that as one of the most awe-inspiring experiences of worship I have ever known—impacting all of the senses and leaving you with a feeling that you have truly been in the presence of God!"

More information will be available at several information meetings which are being planned:

Melbourne: 27 August at Doncaster Church of Christ 1.00–2.00 pm.



Adelaide: 25 September at Dulwich/Rose Park United Church 7.30 pm.

Sydney: 15 October at North-side Community Church 3.00–4.00 pm.

Graham Agnew will be on hand to meet and talk with those who are interested. Further details will also be available through the *Hour of*

Power, which is screened on Network 10 at 5.00 am in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and Perth; ACE TV at 11.00 am in Adelaide and on GTS at 7.00 am on the Eyre Peninsula.

For radio and cinema times contact the ministry on (02) 9959 4060 during business hours or write to the *Hour of Power*, PO Box 1407, North Sydney 2059.

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**INTEGRATION OF
THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Australian British President

Australian Is Conference President in Britain

A Queenslander, Ross Wissmann, was made Conference President of the Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland on 6 May. Ross is a graduate of Kenmore Christian College and the University of Queensland. Before studying at Emmanuel School of Religion in Johnson City, Tennessee, Ross ministered at Bribie Island and Charters Towers churches in Queensland.

Ross and his wife, Cheryl, have lived in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, England for nine years now. "It's slow growth over here," he says. "Churches as a whole in England and Wales are losing 1,000 worshippers per week! But, we are making progress." Ross and Cheryl started the Herts and Essex Christian Church in Sawbridgeworth three years ago. Within the last 12 months, they have had eight baptisms. Ross has also been ministering with the Wisbech congregation, 90 minutes north of Sawbridgeworth, while they are without a minister.

For the second half of 1995, the Wissmanns will be guest lecturers at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, Missouri. They hope to recruit more ministers for Britain. A "Timothy" from Ross' ministry, David Williams, and his family, have joined Ross and Cheryl in



• Cheryl and Ross Wissmann

Sawbridgeworth and are looking after the church in the Wissmann's absence.

Ross and Cheryl have four children, Aaron (14), Rebekah (7), Jessica (4), and Andrew (12 months). Their address in England is 2 Elmwood, Sawbridgeworth, Herts CM21 9NL, England, phone 01279 725 158.

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No Gnomes

Garden of the Year



Most of the people were away from the locked-up garden, their work finished for the day. It was proudly shown to me because it had won the garden of the year award in the area.

In Australia, when we use the term "garden", we tend to think more of lawns, trees, shrubs and flowers with perhaps a gnome or two! It is taken me a long time to get used to the fact that for most people in the world a garden is about food and staying alive.

The Misikiti gardening group received some funding from AusAID and COCOA back in 1991. They've since made a profit from their garden and invested some of their earnings. Produce is sold locally and in the nearby town in Zvishavane, Zimbabwe.

This project is one of 50 funded through COCOA in the past three years in the greater Zvishavane area. The area is drought affected and a place of urgent needs. In these communal lands, practical assistance in this way is much needed and appreciated. Those

who benefit are not all Christians. These projects are managed by a committee led by Churches of Christ people in the area and other community people are also part of the committee. Because of the valued assistance given, the church is "getting a good name for caring" in the area.

There are very strict accountability procedures for those who receive these start-up grants. One of these was my visit to the projects in May this year. The District Administrator released Dzatikona Marabela, a primary school principal and secretary/treasurer of the committee, to travel with me to see all the projects and still receive his usual salary.

The projects are as diverse as sewing, woodwork, dam building and, of course, gardening. Next time you are in your garden think of those who garden to stay alive. The garden of the year is one way you have been involved in your giving to Churches of Christ Overseas Aid.

—Jeff May

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NOW I'M COUNTING ON GOD ENDING IT ALL... BEFORE I HAVE TO PAY FOR IT!



Saint of the Seven Seas

Where Christ Wants to Be

"Do you know there is a sailor Psalm?" quipped Barrie. It was the last thing I wanted to hear as I was being violently sick aboard the *HMAS Adelaide*, battered by 40-50 knot winds and lurching through seven metre swells. In fact, they looked more like grey mountains passing through.

Last month, Chaplain Barrie Yesberg invited me to join *HMAS Adelaide* on the return leg of a three-month voyage back to Perth. "Chance of a lifetime," I thought and eagerly anticipated the adventure. A feeling that quickly passed as we turned into the Great Australian Bight.

After a visit to the sick bay and with the aid of a slow release patch stuck to my skin just below the ear, I discovered another world—a world in which Chaplain Barrie was right at home. As an officer, he mixed as easily with the captain as the cook. In fact, from conducting a small communion service with the captain present, he could then be found with sleeves rolled up peeling potatoes in the galley. Talk about versatile. Another time, he was taking off in a Seahawk helicopter to conduct a communion service on the nearby *HMAS Darwin* and returning—

with the ship pitching in huge seas. From the bridge, I could see monstrous swells just ahead as the helicopter hovered just metres above the rear deck. It descended from view behind the upper deck and for one awful moment I expected to hear an almighty crash and see rotor blades disintegrating. However, God was on board—the pilot you see was also a Christian.

So what does life on board mean for your average sailor? You may have heard that from this month government policy means women sailors will be joining the men. Space for 30 women has been allocated on the *Adelaide* and the men were being briefed by their officers. Barrie was called to assist, indicating something of the respect he has on board.

What about the sailor homecomings?

For example, after three months at sea homecomings can be anything but bliss. Barrie spends time explaining to sailors ways to help family reunions be a success. He said that a lot of his time on land at the Stirling, WA, base had to do in counselling families. Families who were coming apart due to stresses of coping with a husband and father being gone for months and then returning for a period, only to begin the cycle again.

Then there was Barrie's subtle evangelism. He left a New Testament in his overalls—standard uniform for everyone once at sea—and it went through the wash. The sailor in the laundry said "Sir you know that Bible you left in your overalls? Well I started reading it and that Proverbs is pretty good isn't it?" Barrie in an instant was exchanging a new for old copy. This is natural and opportunistic evangelism, always being ready to give a reason for his faith.

Well, the three days to Albany was an eye opener ... and a sufficient length of time. I could tell you about the ship turning into 40 knot winds so Barrie could scatter ashes from the edge of the lurching flight deck. I could tell you about a young woman officer standing on her toes to get compass bearings while she manoeuvred the \$700 million dollar ship—I mean doing zigzags with the *HMAS Darwin* less than 500 metres away. I could comment on the clear and respected chain of command that operated from the captain down; the competence; the camaraderie; the claustrophobic sleeping conditions with restricted 90 second showers; or the shot I had playing a multi-million dollar "game boy" (ie the ships radar defence system that activates half-million-dollar missiles including a "last line of defence" gattling gun). I confess to sinking the ship a number of times by failing to defend it from com-



• Barrie Yesberg (front) on deck with fellow officer off Albany, WA

puter simulated missile attacks. This is all a part of Barrie's world and he's just the man for the job—he loves it.

Barrie's faith was birthed in Churches of Christ. A faith further cultivated at Kenmore Christian College and now bearing fruit even to the remotest parts of the earth/sea. To most people, out of sight out of mind, but for me very much in sight and now in my mind. I commend Barrie to the church and indeed all such chaplains. Christ is where he wants to be ... with those who need him most. Barrie is just one of many who take him there.

By the way, the "Sailors' Psalm" is Psalm 107:23-31 (Once more with feeling!)

—Rob Ferguson
(Edwardstown, SA)



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Musical Muse

Music Pastor for Spring Conference

Russell Fragar, a musician with over 20 years experience in the music industry and music pastor of the Hills Christian Life Centre, Sydney, will be a major presenter at Spring Conference, Wollongong, 4-6 November. His theme will be *Worship in the 21st Century*.

Russell is a songwriter and has produced a number of albums.

He has taught guitar, played in rock bands and has experi-

ence as a producer and engineer.

He has also been a support artist for people such as Barry McGuire, Leon Patillo, Robert Coleman and Sandi Patti.

Russell is active in running schools for musicians and commenced a creative ministries faculty in 1995.

He has travelled in Australia, New Zealand, England and the Ukraine as a music director and seminar speaker. His popular

songs are performed all over the world.

Russell, who has a background in education, sees himself as a pastor to musicians and expresses his convictions and talents in all that he does.

For more information about Spring Conference contact Wollongong Church phone (042) 26 5022 or the Australian Board of Church Development and Education phone (03) 9326 8900.

Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to 200 words

Sexual Advice in Cleo

To the Editor,

As a World War II veteran, a member of Churches of Christ for 50 years, and with the privilege of serving the RSL in a voluntary capacity as Research Assistant, National Headquarters in Canberra, I have been more than surprised that there has never been one reference in "Letters to the Editor" concerning an issue of *Cleo* magazine, (December 1994) which contained a 64 page supplement on sexual advice to young people, all being given the "imprimatur" of the current Minister of Health in the Federal Parliament.

What, to me, is most appalling, is that the sexual "advice" promoted contains reference to acts which, without fear of contradiction, I would say that every one of my former comrades would condemn.

I simply want to ask "Why has this publication not drawn even one word of adverse comment from us as a Conference and part of the Christian community of this country?"

RSL National President Major-General "Digger" James at the recent Victorian RSL State Conference made some interesting comments. Not only is he articulating his own views, but he also speaks for every member of the largest body of Australian war veterans.

—Robert (Jock) Scott
(Curtin, ACT)

[Sections quoted from a report by James Wood on the Victorian RSL Conference:

"Free love, the breakdown of the family unit and government handouts were tearing Australia apart, the Returned and Services League said yesterday.

National RSL President Major-General William "Digger" James made a wide-ranging attack condemning de facto relationships, the Federal Government's welfare system and moves to undermine the sanctity of marriage.

General James said it was unbelievable that society pro-

moted one-night stands, sex shops, pornography, divorce, condom-vending machines, vivid sex education to primary-school children and "fallacious safe-sex guides including details of anal sex, oral sex and other sex perversions".

These issues had led to youth suicide, eating disorders and the increased incidence of venereal diseases.

General James criticised the feminist movement and the growth in child-care facilities which he said were "a means for men and women to desert their children".

"The most insidious evil present in our sick society is the move to destroy the family," he said.

The reintroduction of national service would reduce youth unemployment, homelessness and drug and alcohol abuse by the young.

"I see a great and urgent need for Australians to recognise and work to correct many terrible issues that are presently tearing our country apart," General James said."

Baptism With The Holy Spirit

To the Editor,

In reply to Ron Goodwin's letter ("AC" 5 August); in my review of Allan Norling's *Jesus the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit* I simply mentioned in passing that in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is recorded as being specially active on special occasions. I did not suggest that either then or now the Holy Spirit is only active on special occasions, then departing until next time.

The point of Allan Norling's book is that the Holy Spirit is active in and through Christians all the time, to the extent that they are open to him, as Ron himself affirms. But Allan uses the term "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" to refer to those occasions when special power is needed and special gifts required to meet special situations, as at Pentecost.

Perhaps our problem is that the New Testament uses a diversity of phrases to describe the work of the Spirit, but

that the speakers or writers never intended such phrases to describe specific unalterable categories for that work.

Ron's letter is a very good statement and I am not sure that he and Allan Norling are very far apart in their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. Maybe he will read Allan's carefully researched book.

—Gordon Stirling
(Boronia, Vic)

Missing the Boat?

To the Editor,

I must confess my patience is running out with the Creation Science debate that seems to have dominated the pages of *The Australian Christian* in recent times. There is a more momentous issue for the Movement in which Churches of Christ has its roots.

We are in the middle of it, but not noticing it. I speak of the move beyond the enlightened, rationalist and logical

thought that was the very air breathed by our founders. This they shared with the pioneers of all aspects of the modern age.

Accordingly, the biblical faith that marks the nature of the Restoration Movement is careful, reasoned, phlegmatic, and logical. But the ground has shifted. Education facilities are recreating long-forgotten faculties such as the Chair for Metaphysics occupied by Paul Davies at Adelaide University.

We live in a post-modern era. The rules are changing, and human beings are at last discovering that there are more than technological categories by which human experience can be explored and described.

A fertile ground in which we can invite exploration of the glories of transcendent faith—is it not? Let's pray that we do not miss the boat and find ourselves left squabbling on the dock.

—Dennis Ryle
(Aldgate Valley, SA)

Letters to a Travelling Companion Executive Toys

Dear Daniel,

I've finally done it! I weakened and got a mobile phone. Well, actually, somebody from my congregation gave it to me so that folk could get hold of me during my many hours in the car. (The truth is, I spend hours in the car to get away from the rotten phone!)

Some of my congregation are quite amused at the idea of my flash new car phone being installed in my 1970 model small Japanese rust bucket car—somehow the new image doesn't fit. I suggested that, if any of them where too uncomfortable with the enigma, they could update my vehicular conveyance to go along with the new phone. Suddenly their joke seemed to lose its appeal.

It seems that we ministers are finding that we need to become more and more up-to-date in our approach to the work we do. Our tools of the trade now include mobile phones, digital diaries, laptop computers, fax machines and an assortment of other electronic marvels, all intended to make our job easier and our ministry more effective.

There is a big danger in all of this, however. The risk is that we can become so hooked on these "executive toys" that we lose sight of the fact that our profession has a servant nature which is primarily people-centred. It would be easy for us to be seduced by the trappings of the modern executive image, to the detriment of our call to be servants of Christ and our community.

Perhaps I'd better hold on to that old rust bucket, Daniel. It will, at least, keep me humble.

Until next time,
Pastor Salt

Huge Rant

Fr Wrex Woolnough

For those who came in late: British actor Hugh Grant has been the subject of much media coverage after his arrest for a sexual act with a prostitute. Wavell Heights (Brisbane) parish priest Fr Wrex Woolnough comments ...

I thought somebody might have spoken up on Hugh Grant's behalf by now. But nobody has. So ...

I consider the whole thing to be obscene! It is obscene that a sexual misdemeanour that took place on a quiet residential street halfway across the world should make the front page of a Brisbane newspaper. It is obscene that a petty crime should

merit the same world-wide coverage as the Oklahoma bombing. It is obscene that the media can claim that their roles as responsible information providers can justify character assassinations, even if based on truth.

What makes the situation even more ludicrous is that the same newspapers can, two days later, carry a lead article in their Weekend Magazines about another international star, Julio Iglesias, who claims to have slept with more than 3000 women, without handing out a similar serve. On the contrary, this one it salutes as "god of love", while such mindless promiscuity suggests he is just a naughty little boy who never learnt to keep his trousers done up. One reporter (notably a woman) saw the anomaly of it all: "Those evangelising about him [Grant] from their moral soapboxes seem to be saying Hugh should have used his pulling power as a dashing leading man to pick up a woman in a bar or one of any number of LA women more than willing to cater to the whims of movie stars. Anything but pay for it. Cocktails in exchange for quickie is OK, but cash for sex in a car? Deviancy." Mind you, cash and commercialism are what it is all about. Just consider:

1. Miss Divine and the reported \$220,000 she will get for

what may be one of the worst-written pieces of fiction produced this decade as she turns 10 minutes of sexual release into "Hugh's lifelong sexual fantasy dreams come true".

2. Liz Hurley, whose reaction to the situation, at least in public, is sure to be dictated as much by Estee Lauder and its concern for its "image" as by any feeling she may have for Hugh.

3. His own responses which will be scripted by a myriad voices concerned to protect his "clean-cut" image—another interesting media projection granted his opening four words in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, which I enjoyed immensely.

4. The reportage of the media which, of course, it will be claimed will be driven only by their concern for the truth and not by any commercial considerations. Of course, their excuse will be that they are only reporting what "the public" wants and what "the public" has a right to know. I dare to suggest that, if such is the case, it is "the public" who should be on charge for "lewd conduct" and the sentence should be significantly more than \$1,000 or a year's imprisonment.

I am a member of the public. Not only don't I have a right to know what's happening in your private life, I don't want to know unless you wish to share it with me. You have a right to your private life, a right which it seems some media outlets are only too happy to ignore.

After all, what did he do? He paid a prostitute for oral sex—not my idea of an exciting Saturday night but, granted the presence of prostitution in most of our societies, not that rare an occurrence.

I don't even know if such behaviour is a regular pattern of his life or whether it was just a once-only slip. I do hope it is the latter, as the need to frequent prostitutes is not a sign of a healthy sexual maturity, any more than is having sex with 3,000 women (and keeping score!).

Even the law doesn't consider it to be in the big-time. The maximum sentence is the same as you could get for understating your income or overstating your expenses on your tax return or a second charge of being in possession of a small amount of marijuana.

There is something very sinister at work here—a grave injustice perpetrated in the name of righteousness. There is nothing new in that. It's as old as the human race. Popularly, it's called mud-slinging. And all mud doesn't have to be false.

Actually, when it's true, it carries much more force; but it's the same thing. Find a lurid detail (and sex is always lurid!) and you can ruin a lifetime of hard work and tear a person's reputation to shreds. It's a morality with an almighty big hang-up on sex. Surprising, since that is what Christians are always accused of. But Christian morality is not just about sexuality. It is also about justice; forgiveness; understanding and compassion.

Hugh Grant is an actor and he's also a human being. As an actor, he deserves to be judged by his skills on the stage (as were those who went before him, many of whose private lives did not live up to the fantasy of the screen). As a human being, he does not deserve to be judged at all, at least by you and me, but should be treated with dignity and respect and approached with compassion, understanding and support. To do otherwise is to see the end of Christian morality ... And a victory to moralising. ♦

[Used with permission.]

Think

The new missionary church of the West seeks those who will have the courage to light a new beacon, one which will illumine the age which is to come.

The strategy of evangelising the fringe can be characterised as ingrab more than outreach. It is essentially a strategy which emphasises a come to us approach to mission. Communicating with the majority beyond the fringe requires strategies which allow the interaction of the church with communities of people well away from the familiar territory of the local church.

It is vital to remember that the focus for mission is not the church, but the culture in which the church is set.

It is necessary for the church to rethink its stance entirely and to become a missionary church within the West.

—Martin Robinson
The Faith of the Unbeliever

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Sour Grapes

Nigel Pegram

One of the most disappointing events in the life of any gardener is when a crop fails. Sometimes we can take solace in the fact that it was not our fault.

Maybe there wasn't enough rain, maybe the soil was poor, possibly pests or parasites attacked the plants.

If we had taken special care to ensure that we had chosen good soil and prepared the ground properly, if we had then planted the best strains we could find, strains that would cope with the local conditions and that produced good yields. Then, if we had made sure that birds and pests and weeds were kept at bay and everything possible was done to keep the plants well-fed and watered, we would justifiably expect a good harvest. No wonder then, when the crop fails, we are bitterly disappointed.

What's more, not only do we fail to achieve the return expected, but even the little we harvest is sickly and tastes unpleasant.

Imagine your response when someone comes along and comments on how poor a gardener you are! You would be speechless. You would wonder how they could possibly come to such a conclusion in light of your careful preparation and hard work all along. Naturally, you would quickly begin to set them straight, detailing all that you have done to bring about a good crop.

Chapter five of Isaiah begins with a song that makes just this point. God, as the gardener, has done all that was possible to ensure that Israel (the vine) had every opportunity to flourish in the land. The ground was carefully chosen and prepared, they were protected from dangers round about and God set himself up ready for the harvest. Instead of pleasing fruitfulness, however, all the grapes turn out sour, unfit for consumption. (Isa 5:1–2)

The point of the song is made very clearly in the following verses.

Others are called to evaluate the gardener's actions—with the obvious conclusion that he is not at all to blame. Therefore, he is seen as quite justified when he declares his intention to remove all the protection surrounding the vineyard and allow it to be overrun by wild animals and overgrown by weeds and other plants. (Isa 5:3–6) Then, to make absolutely sure that no one could misunderstand what the point is of what has just been said, verse seven put the facts very starkly. Israel has failed to produce the required fruit but, instead of good, evil resulted.

What follows is a fairly extended and strong condemnation of Israel. Their destruction is foretold and their empty lifestyles denounced. (vv. 8–10, 13–15, 24–30) They are even called heroes of the wine bottle, who start their drinking early and spend all evening getting drunk. (vv. 22, 24) This is not a condemnation of drink, but of their excesses, one of which was their "heroic" efforts with the bottle. The themes of injustice and substituting right and wrong feature strongly. (vv. 18–20, 23)

The point of it all is that, just as the gardener was justified in his actions "against" the unproductive vines, God's actions against his people are justifiable. Notice how a statement to that effect is placed in the middle of the pronouncements of doom (or woe):

But the LORD Almighty shows his greatness by doing what is right, and he reveals his holiness by judging his people. (v. 16, Good News Bible)

This whole chapter is not so much about Israel and their wrongs, as about God and his acting in a holy and right manner—the very attributes which the people failed to display themselves.

Why bother? Some might question the need to justify God's actions, thinking that God is God and whatever he says or does is not open to question. True, a similar point is made to Job (Job 38:1ff), but even in Job the issue is God's doing what is right and just with respect to Job. Even while Job is humbled by the challenge God brings to him, he is still praised for speaking the truth about God, and declared to be God's servant. (v. 7)

An active faith will question God, it will challenge him to act concerning what is unjust and wrong, whether on a personal, community or global scale. Such a faith challenges God precisely because it is strong, it believes that God is right, just and loving and that injustice and wrong are against his will.

This brings us back to Isaiah. God's actions in removing his protection from his people, opening them up to attack and conquest, is subject to a charge of injustice. God made a covenant with Israel. He promised to bring them into the land and keep them secure (See Deut 28:1–13, especially vv. 7, 10 and 13), so how can he abandon them, condemning them to destruction by their powerful neighbours?

Isaiah chapter five makes it abundantly clear that God is not acting on a whim, in fact, the ongoing cataloguing and reiteration of the people's wrongs ensure that no doubt remains that they have already broken their side of the covenant. Just compare what is said in Isaiah chapter five with the consequences of disobeying the covenant stipulations. (See Deut 28:15–68) If this was the nature of the covenant agreement between Israel and God, then God would be unjust and false if he did not cause the covenant curses to fall. If he did not act, people would question his holiness, righteousness and

justice. It is worth remembering that the people already had a perverted image of what God was like. This image would have suffered even greater distortion if God had let the people continue in their evil while thinking that right was wrong and wrong was right.

It is not as though God had not given the people a chance. The bulk of the Old Testament is a record of God repeatedly giving his people another go. But, it finally gets to a point where he declares that enough is enough, that the people will have the consequences of their actions, consequences spelled out clearly in the covenant and repeatedly reminded about by the prophets, including Isaiah.

A question we could ponder is whether we take our covenant with God for granted, whether we presume upon his long-suffering love and great forgiveness? It is an important point Peter makes when he calls Christians to "be holy in all that you do". (1 Pet 1:15) ❖

Castlemaine Church of Christ

After 125 years of Christian witness, Castlemaine Church of Christ is moving to a new location. The final service at the present Campbell St location will be taking place on Sunday 27 August, starting at 10.00 am.

We would like to invite all who have had a previous association with the church to this service. It is hoped there will be opportunity for people to say a few words about their association with the church. The service will be followed by a fellowship luncheon at the new Blakeley Rd site.

Notification of intention to attend would be appreciated to assist with catering.
Phone Mary-Anne Revell the Church Secretary on (054) 72 4364.

Christian Unity: Have we Lost the Plot?

Peter Overton

We can be very content with what we have and what we do. We have found our place in society and we are content. We have found our niche and we want to stay there. We have a house, two kids, stable jobs and go to the same church each week. We feel comfortable with our friends there. We certainly do not want new people to join the church. And, heaven forbid, we do not want to mix with people we doubt are even Christian.

A fine Christian gentleman from my first church at Albion, Qld, remembers the days when the Catholic and the Protestant school children would not be allowed to mix. In fact, it was common to walk to the other side of the road if a Catholic was coming towards you. Thank God these days are over. Or are they?

I am a chaplain with Churches of Christ Care in Queensland, working with residents, staff and relatives of Nubeena Retirement Village and Mylo Hostel. One of the goals that we strive for is building Christian community. We have a diversity of traditions of people within our care. A majority are non-Churches of Christ people. The challenge of building Christian community

is therefore in the context of a diversity of Christian perspectives.

Each week I conduct four church services, each of these being attended by a cross section of people within our home. Over 60% of people within our Hostel and Nursing Home choose to attend the services, which are provided throughout the week and on Sundays. All denominations are represented in each of the services.

In addition to the services I conduct, the Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches conduct services on a regular basis.

The Catholic folk have only recently provided services in our Homes at our invitation. We have nearly 20 Catholic folk participating in regular Mass, celebrated within our Home by a Priest. Catholic folk from Mylo and Nubeena, enjoy this service, which has been part of their faith journey for years. It is a wonderful experience, being part of this service. I have learned most of the responses, so I can assist residents with their responses in the liturgy. These same people who attend this specific service, attend all the services I conduct within the Homes each week.

This does not deny the exist-

ence of diversity within the Christian church. These are all apparent. However, the residents, while not denying their Christian community and ecumenical ties, are building Christian community, loving and caring for one another, as Christ loved us; appreciating that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

There has been much concern in Queensland with involvement and sharing with other denominations. While voting as a Conference to join Queensland Churches together in 1993, in 1994 we voted to reduce our involvement to that of observers.

This has been a divisive issue for our churches in Queensland, with much debate within the Queensland journal, *The Christian Echo*, and at State Conference. I understand that there are similar concerns in other states, with a decreasing emphasis on the importance of our plea for Christian unity.

I have a great deal of concern over the influence of a conservative element which is creeping into our churches across Australia and threatening to undermine much of the Plea for Unity which is so much part of the Movement we call Churches of Christ.

Why don't we want to get along with each other? We have so much in common; so much

that can be achieved if only we would work together. We fail to see the wood for the trees, when we stay in our own backyard and fail to experience and take into account the richness of other traditions.

Churches of Christ had a dream once: to be very much part of the uniting of Christians, on the basis of New Testament Christianity.

Churches of Christ had pioneer ministers like E.L. Williams who were prepared to lead the way for us to become actively involved in the ecumenical movement. Churches of Christ used to have Dr Bill Tabbernee, who was our Australian representative on the World Council of Churches, and actively involved in conveying our position on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, which is contained in the Lima Document. He has edited a very useful book, *Initiation in Australian Churches*, on behalf of the Victorian Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission.

Churches of Christ have been well represented by Ian Allsop who has been actively involved in the ecumenical movement for many years. A number of people from all traditions in Queensland comment on how

Continued on page 13



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Papers

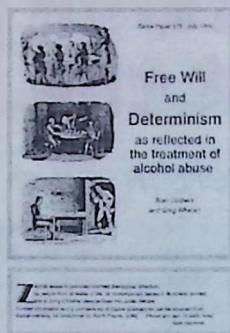
Free Will and Determinism as reflected in the Treatment of Alcohol Abuse

by Alan Gijsbers and Greg Whelan
(Zadok Paper S75) \$5.00.

There are many competing models in the treatment of alcohol-affected persons. In this paper, Gijsbers and Wheeler outline in brief detail the various options, starting with an examination of the various models. Some models place the emphasis on the drug itself and seek restrictions on the ease of its availability; others emphasise the person and their genetic or environmental predisposition to abuse the drug. They then look seriously at the determinism/free will approaches to the situation, given a Christian understanding of the issues.

In the conclusion they state: "There are a lot of conflicting ideologies struggling for supremacy (and the limited health dollar!) in providing care for the alcoholic, but central to most is the need to recognise personal responsibility as the key to recovery." I found it an interesting survey of different possibilities in the area. There are some questions for group study at the end of the paper.

Available from the Zadok Institute, 59 Scotchmer St, North Fitzroy 3068 (Phone and fax (03) 9482 6442) for \$5 which includes postage.



Books

Dining with the Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity

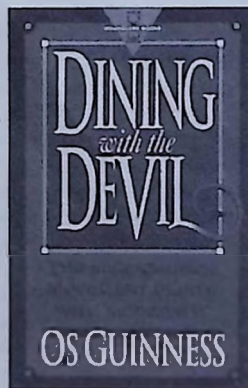
by Os Guinness (Hourglass Books, Baker Book House) \$11.50.

This book is a must for all with a serious interest in church growth. If for no other reason, it is worth having for the thoughtful opening meditation by Soren Kierkegaard on "Fishers of Men" and the delightful adaptation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* by Nathaniel Hawthorne: "The Celestial Railroad" (in which Pilgrim discovers too late that it was the Devil himself who drove the train that Pilgrim had been conned into believing offered a more effective way of reaching the Celestial City).

The book is short and easily read in a couple of hours, yet the extensive end notes show Guinness' analysis is far from superficial. Although written in an unapologetically American context, it has much to say of relevance to church growth advocates and critics everywhere.

Guinness is by no means dismissive of church growth. Indeed, he begins by enthusiastically endorsing the basic goals of the church growth movement.

Put simply, his concern is that the impact of modernity (which he defines as "the character and systems of the world produced by the forces of development and modernisation, especially capitalism, industrialised technology and telecommunications") means that "the Christian faith has lost much of its integrity and effectiveness in shaping the lives of believers". Using an Old Testament metaphor, Guinness suggests that "far from leading to an Exodus, modern church growth often uses the ideology and



tools of Egypt to make the life of the people of God more comfortable in captivity".

In seven brief chapters, Guinness raises the basic question, and discusses the roots, dangers, compromises, ironies and carriers of modernity. He then provides several "tips for discernment"—a checklist to sharpen our awareness of the benefits and pitfalls of modern insights and tools.

Packed full of colourful imagery, the book's concluding section draws attention to two paradoxes about change and success—no one becomes truly timely unless they are in touch with the eternal and, in matters of the spirit, nothing fails like success and nothing succeeds like failure. In his final comment, Guinness reminds us that Christians are free to plunder Egypt, but forbidden to set up a golden calf. "By all means dine freely at the table of modernity, but in God's name, keep your spoons long."

—Kevin Bray

Sharing the Good: Questioning the Economic Order

by Rodney Fopp and others (Justice Peace and Creation Commission of the SA Council of Churches) \$5.00 (plus postage).

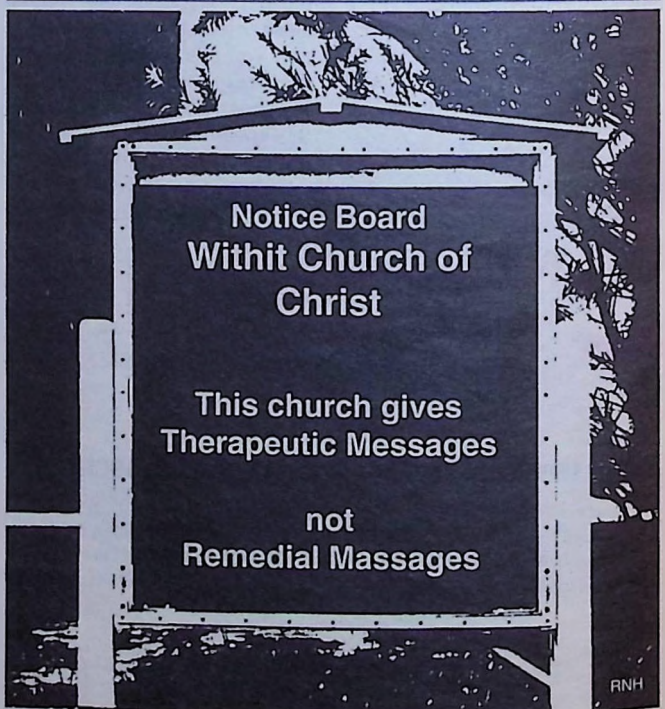
I, like many others, quickly own my ignorance when confronted with matters economic. This 83-page booklet takes away the excuses that would otherwise prevent my involvement in economic debate. *Sharing the Good* seeks to help people in churches increase their understanding of economics and contribute to discussions about economic priorities in Australia. It avoids technical language and seeks to highlight themes about the way people approach economic issues in this country.

With discussion guides for study groups, it explores a range of popular economic assumptions, discusses Australian and global economy, and paves the way for action following a reassessment of assumptions and values.

Its tone is measured, disciplined, non-partisan and responsible. I would recommend it for any church study group.

It is available from the South Australian Council of Churches, GPO Box 2106, Adelaide 5051.

—Dennis Ryle



A Church ABC

Red Cliffs is a small town some 15 km south of Mildura in Victoria's north west. Red Cliffs is located in a large fruit growing area and is on the main highway between Melbourne and Mildura. The town has a population of around 2,600, with a number of retired folk and a number who commute to Mildura for work.

The church itself was established in 1923 by a small group of people and opened their first building the next year. The church has a membership of around 46 and averages around 55 in Sunday worship. There is a fair age range in the congregation, from people in their 80s (including some who have been in that church from its early days) to babies. As in the town, they have a fairly large number of retired folk. A possible "gap" in the ages occurs in the 40-60s, which influences the people available for leadership.

The church runs a number of programs with a fair degree of community involvement. The Kids Club has 50-60 children

each Monday night. The program includes tea, games, craft, singing, and the like, and has led to people coming to the church and gives quite a good profile in the community.

Youth Group, for years 7-10,

A challenge the church faces, according to Minister, Steve Mackie, is being able to present the Gospel in a culturally relevant manner, so that the church isn't seen to be something "strange" and avoided.

Focus on Red Cliffs



is a new venture this year which is aimed at providing something for those who grow beyond the Kids Club. The numbers for this vary, from 7-18, depending on what else is competing for time and attention.

Two ladies groups run. An afternoon group runs on fairly conventional CWF lines caters mainly for older women. An evening care and share program is more informal and is quite varied, a number of non-church ladies have come along, invited by friends.

With the wide age range, needs and desires vary. In an effort to provide for all, every six weeks some sort of "varied" worship occurs. This can be a guest (eg local MP, John Forest), favourite hymns, a music service. This variety also helps with presenting a relevant image to the community.

Another challenge is maintaining the interest of the young in worship. Some of the methods have been involving them in singing, having a children's spot and letting them be in-

involved as parents participate. Being a smaller church, one of its strengths is the ability to form close relationships among the congregation, its family nature—something that is impossible in the same way in a large church. To capitalise on this, the church has had social activities such as picnics and four-wheel driving outings. Sharing in a social setting helps build these relationships. Some may be aware that Mildura has a large Church of Christ itself. Since Red Hills is quite close, some may question the wisdom of having two churches "in competition". (A question that could be asked of a number of our churches around Australia.) But as mentioned above, each have their strengths and weaknesses and both can contribute to the work of the Kingdom. Each has a role to play.

Steve Mackie also has a role as (voluntary) chaplain at the local secondary college. The church pays Steve's salary for this, so that while paid chaplaincy is being arranged, the ministry may go on. ❖

Continued from page 11

well Ian has represented us, presenting our position, and serving as the President of the Australian Council of Churches.

However, we in the churches often bury our heads in the sand and fail to see the impact we can have on secular Australia, when as diverse as we are, we can work together on issues of faith and justice.

I wonder whether there are any people out there prepared to be so proud of our Movement that they would share its attributes with other Christians?

I wonder if there are any people out there who still have this vital tenet of our faith: A Plea for Christian Unity?

Let us never relegate this vital part of our tradition, it should be up there with evangelism, not as an aside to our ministry.

Spending six years in the inner city of Brisbane taught me an important thing. When we

work together, and don't compete with one another, great things can be achieved for the Kingdom of God. Suddenly the community sees Christianity as credible. It may surprise you to know that the Salvation Army was providing toys to many of our needy families, including a number of our ministers, who while working in full-time ministry, were on part-time salaries.

It is time for us to wake up and understand that we are not the only Christians. Let us not allow our Plea for Unity to be a side issue. Rather, let us challenge the conservative, narrow view which involves us keeping our heads in the sand. Why should we stand for this when people in the past were brave enough to take our plea and make it known when many people were against them. Let us rise up against this intolerable conservatism and put the plea for Christian Unity back on the platform of Churches of Christ in Australia. ❖

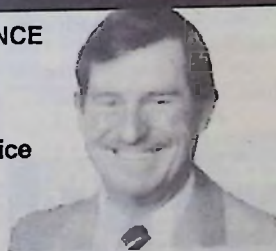
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Classifieds

DEATHS

CRISP Rhoda Eliza. Passed peacefully away 29 July, aged 84. Beloved wife of Les (dec), mother to Allen, mother-in-law to Carol, mother to Lois, Helen and mother-in-law to Peter; grandmother to Beth, Jeffrey, Vaughan, Bronwyn, Sophie and Lucy; great-grandmother to Harry. A lady of gentleness, refinement and quality. We honour her ministry with Les in Churches of Christ and in the armed services.

WRIGHT James Phelps (Phil). On 16 July 1995, loved and loving husband of Eva (dec). Loving father and father-in-law of Ruth and Jack, Margaret and Bob, Jen and Ben. Loved Pa of Leslie, Neil and Linda, John and Alison, Lynette and Andrew, James and Stella, and Philip, David and Ian. Great grandfather of Meagan, Luke and Michael, Matthew and Samantha. In God's loving care.

IN MEMORIAM

PARKER Gordon. 26 August. A page in my book of memories softly turned today. Twelve years now passed. These happy memories give me daily strength.

—Gwendolynne.

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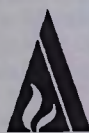
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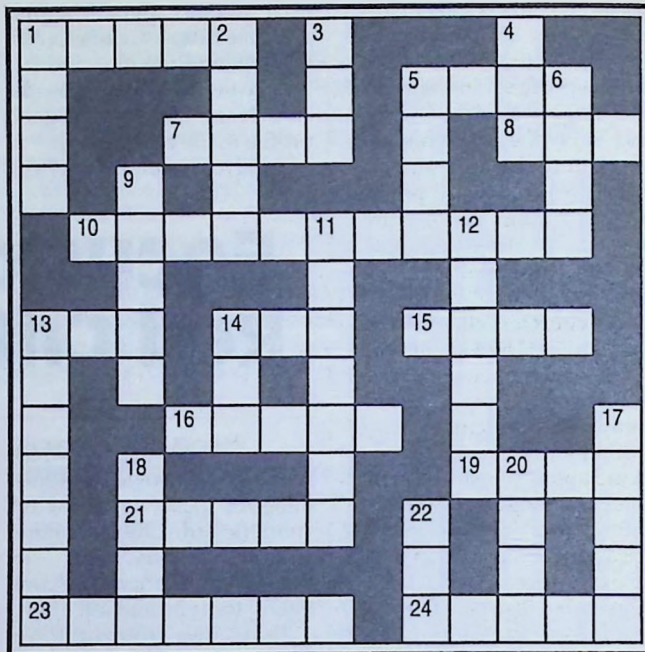
Applications are invited for 9 months training in Pastoral Care on the Repatriation Campus in this Medical Centre. Some scholarships are available for this programme.

Vacancies also exist for 3 months training in Autumn, Winter and Spring and also in the Part Time CPE Programme. No scholarships are available for these courses.

Training for the 9 month and Autumn courses commences in February 1996. The programme is an educational experience and the aim is to promote theological and pastoral professional growth and a greater effectiveness in ministering to people. Applicants are expected to have a reasonable amount of expertise in pastoral care. Applications for Autumn and the 9 month programme close on 15 September 1995.

Enquiries and requests for application forms should be made to: **The Reverend David Stark, Director Clinical Pastoral Education, Austin & Repatriation Medical Centre, Banksia Street, Heidelberg West, Vic 3081. Phone: 9496 2895.**

Crossword



Clues

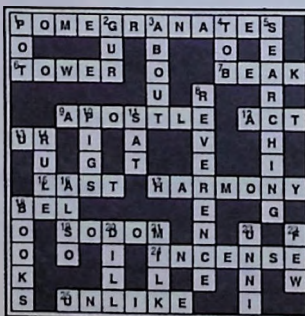
ACROSS

- 1 Descendant of Shem (Gen 11)
- 5 In the western foothills (Josh 15)
- 7 But don't put on a sad face! (Matt 6)
- 8 Grain offering cooked in this (Lev 2)
- 10 Jacob's sons answered Shechem this way (Gen 34)
- 13 Abbreviation of Biblical book
- 14 Fortified city (Josh 19)
- 15 Samson's place of refuge (Jdg 15)
- 16 He built a section of wall (Neh 3)
- 19 Gleaning widow
- 21 Can destroy earthly riches (Matt 6)
- 23 You received the Spirit of _____ (Rom 8)
- 24 Onesimus became much more than this

DOWN

- 1 What Jehu did to Joram (2 Kgs 9)
- 2 Part of a Christian greeting
- 3 Abraham's nephew
- 4 "Separate those who _____ the water." (Jdg 7)
- 5 Jacob's brother
- 6 Jesus drove out _____ demons
- 9 The Son of Man came to _____ (Mark 10)
- 11 Babylonian officials wore these (Ezek 23)
- 12 Message from Paul?
- 13 Belteshazzar could explain these (Dan 5)
- 14 One of seven in 1 Chr 5
- 17 When Jesus was transfigured his clothes were dazzling
- 18 The last word?
- 20 Had three sons (1 Chr 7)
- 22 Reply of disciples when asked if they understood (Matt 13)

July Solution



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

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The Colonel and his Daughter

Viney Longthorp

A new Russian movie, *Burnt in the Sun* has its setting in those dark days of Stalin's murderous rule in both Russia and her client states. In the 1930s. In order to secure his authority and due to his own paranoia, Stalin had thousands of innocent people executed on trumped up charges of "crimes" against the state. There was hardly a family in Russia not affected by these tragic events.

It is the true story of Colonel Serguei Kotov, an ageing military hero of the Bolshevik revolution. He was tried and executed with other major Soviet leaders. The title of the film is taken from a jaunty, popular tune of the times which runs like a leitmotif throughout the film. Many indeed were "burnt" by the "sun" of Stalin.

In this story the "horror" is the keenly felt because it is combined with intense pathos. For this story is seen through the eyes of Kotov's six-year-old daughter, Nadia. Incidentally, the original Nadia survived these events and the war which followed. She lives in Russia still, now in her late sixties.

The story is set in a dacha (holiday house) on the Kotov family estate, during an idyllic summer's day in 1936. All the family are there with many friends—a scene of typical Russian togetherness. Here Kotov enjoys the sweet life with his much younger wife, Maroussia, and her family. Into this scene comes Dimitri, a young man who was Maroussia's lover a decade or so earlier. At that time Dimitri left her under mysterious circumstances.

By means of symbols, covert glances, odd snatches of disjointed conversation and gestures, the true situation comes into a tragic focus. Unknown to all, Dimitri now works for Stalin as a member of the dreaded NVKD. At first he jokes with all, flirts and shares reminiscences. But it soon is obvious

that he has returned with a sinister agenda. As he rekindles Maroussia's memories of their former romance and as he charms little Nadia with games and stories and music, the tension between him and Kotov rises until the younger man reveals the real reason for his coming.

The authorities want no one to know that the popular Kotov has been arrested. He is unobtrusively ushered into the black limousine, waiting, predator-like, behind dense shrubs.

No one in that crowded dacha really knows what is happening. Probably the most heartbreaking scene is where little Nadia, quite bewitched by her first view of such a car, skittishly talks to the burly, boorish NVKD agents and charms them into allowing her to hold the steering wheel as they drive on to the main road. Her father is in the back seat—she will never see him again.

In a kind of postlude which serves to underscore the villainy of Stalin's pogrom, Dimitri also comes under the despot's suspicions and is driven to suicide. Thus evil "consumes all her children".

Here is an example of the film makers' art which is entertainment in the deepest sense of the word, which exposes us to an experience which may have a cathartic effect on our psyche. It also offers information which open our eyes and minds to world realities.

The director himself has had much to say in interviews about his reasons for making this film.

Above all, it was dedicated to those who suffered in the days of Stalin. Mikhalkov says: "Repentance is a duty for all those

who have lived in this era and who are still alive today. Without repentance there will be no peace or rest in Russia." Now where have we heard sentiments like that before—and very close to home? Most nations have need to repent for former acts of injustice to others.

Mikhalkov continues: "I don't want to judge an era, but want to make its tragic dimensions felt. My film tells that the perpetual charm of existence lingers, even in these bloody times with its passion and loves." Thus political systems come and go, but human values prevail. One wonders what will prevail in Bosnia?

Three years after his death in 1953, the 20th Party Congress denounced Stalin and his legacy. Many of the people who had been labelled as traitors during the Stalin era were subsequently cleared and their reputations were "rehabilitated", often posthumously, like Kotov.

It is salutary to remember that these savage events occurred in the name of liberty. Remember Madam Roland's cry from the scaffold: "O liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!"

Then there is an historical aspect. Many observers are cer-

tain that the reason the German Wehrmach cut so deeply into Russia in 1941, reaching the gates of Leningrad, Moscow and entering Stalingrad, was that the Red Army, deprived of its



senior and experienced commanders, were at first, tentatively led. Stalin had shot them all. Had men such as Kotov been available to lead, many think that the Germans would have been held to the western borders and that Russia would have been spared the horrendous civilian casualties—there were probably 10 million such—when the Germans were able to cut loose in the hinterland. To be sure, history is full of maybe's, ifs and buts, however this belief is very much in the minds of many Russians today.

Mikhalkov also claims that he was trying "to understand this era. That we have all been victims and actors of what had happened, victims of what we created." He feels guilt with others, that they let these things happen.

Mikhalkov notes: "Before the revolution God represented the law, the only law Russia accepted." Now that the former idols such as Stalin have gone, the hope of Russia lies in its vibrant Christian faith. And with this, one hopes that the Russian states will achieve political justice and an effective form of representative government. Dean Inge once expressed the belief that "the next revival of Christian faith in Europe will come out of Russia". We hope he is right and that Mr Yeltsin gets to hear about it. ♦

"Burnt in the Sun"

134 minutes in Russian with English sub-titles.

Released on 11 August in selected cinemas.

Divorce and Ministry

Phil Webber

In the 1 July issue of *The Australian Christian* Gordon Stirling wrote an article in answer to a question concerning "Divorced Ministers" and whether or not they should continue in ministry. In the article in which Gordon handled the issue with great compassion and integrity. He wrote: "I can only hope that one of our divorced ministers who has agonised through divorce and remarriage may be prepared to put pen to paper."

As a divorced person who has remarried and has continued in ministry, I would like to share my story with you and consequently comply with Gordon's request.

After completing Bible Col-

lege and entering into full-time ministry for a short time, I resigned from the ministry due to marriage breakdown. Gordon was right when he wrote that such a resignation occurs "mainly because there is so much hurt, disillusionment and embarrassment." I was overwhelmed with a sense of my own sin and failure and felt as though I "slunk out of ministry with my tail between my legs."

Divorce followed this initial marriage breakdown. I knew divorce was a sin and totally against God's will, but that was the situation in which I found myself—I was a sinner!

I was able to return to the teaching profession following my resignation from ministry

and during this time attended one of our churches which helped me greatly. The Marion, SA, church showed me nothing but acceptance and loving care. The church, together with their minister, Graham Agnew, helped to put my life back together again. They showed me grace. And what is grace? It's not just "unconditional favour", but it is "favour shown to us that we do not deserve". I was a minister who sinned and who had failed God. I deserved judgement and punishment, but instead found the grace and love of God through a caring church.

During my time at Marion, I remarried. Again Gordon was very insightful regarding this decision to remarry when he wrote: "I can imagine the anguish, soul-searching and agony that they must go through."

My wife and I have now been married for over 10 years. We have been blessed with a lovely daughter and together with our previous children we are an "ours, mine and hers family". I did not deserve a happy marriage, nor a blessed family life, but again God has given to me what I did not deserve. Not a day goes by without me thanking him for his grace shown to me through a second chance at a life with a loving family and a happy marriage.

After teaching for eight years, I received a call from the Brooklyn Park, SA, church to become their minister at the beginning of 1991. Now the soul searching really began. I felt God's call to ministry, but how could I? How could I, a failed sinner, preach the Gospel, "proclaim Jesus is the answer to life's problems" and conduct weddings?

Again I found the answer in the grace of God. I was not "good enough" to be a minister. (As none of us are "good enough" to be a Christian.) I did not deserve to be a minister of the Gospel. I returned to the ministry purely because of the grace of God. I am confident in his forgiveness of me. I do not minister with a sense of shame. I know that when the Lord Jesus died upon Calvary's cruel cross he died for sin and for sinners like me. During life's journey, I have known the wonderful grace of God shown to me through Christ. That grace made me a new creation. Through that wonderful grace, I have the privilege of being a minister in Churches of Christ and helping others who have fallen and sinned to discover Jesus' grace as well.

So I write my story, not to justify myself as a divorced minister, but to share with you my story of my encounter with the wonderful grace of God. ♦

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COLAC Vic 3250
Phone (052) 33 8387

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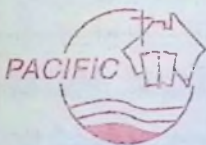
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Applications should include a voice tape of a recent preaching assignment and state qualifications, experience and references. Please forward to:

Albert O'Neill
26 Fallbrook Avenue
WOODVALE WA 6016

Telephone enquiries: A/H (09) 409 1325

Closing date: 31 August 1995.

Church of Christ, Noarlunga Centre POSITION VACANT

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The church is seeking a full-time "Minister for Family and Youth" able to start in early 1996, in response to God's call to join our ministry team.

The person we seek would have a proven ministry "track record" and would particularly concentrate on ministry to younger families and youth. High priority would be given to equipping leaders/potential leaders in Christian discipleship, leadership and outreach.

The qualities of the person would include a well-recognised personal maturity and spiritual depth; an ability to give leadership yet function as part of a team; an ability to minister on the "cutting edge"; and a caring relational attitude.

For further information and expressions of interest, contact the senior minister:

Roger Risson
on (08) 326 1153 or (08) 414 1069
3 Smith Avenue, Christies Beach, SA 5165

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES OF CHRIST OVERSEAS MISSION BOARD INC

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The Assistant Director will share with the Executive Director and work under his guidance in the areas of administration, publicity, deputation and education. The financial accounting of the Board's funds will be a particular responsibility with back-up from secretarial staff.

Salary will be as for South Australian ministers and housing will be provided if required. The Board is located in Adelaide. A duty statement is available on request.

For further details or in making application, please contact the Executive Director, Australian Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board, 180a Gray St, Adelaide 5000.
Phone (08) 212 4446. Fax (08) 212 6388.

Changes

FORDHAM, Beryl and Wallace: 96/15 Fulham Road, Rowville Vic 3178. Phone (03) 9764 1755.

DANDENONG: Minister—Peter Pitts, 2 Koetong Court, Mulgrave, Vic 3170. Phone (03) 9561 6138.

Baptisms

•Graham & Carol Dixon, **Tweed Heads, NSW** •Erika Sargeant, Emma Grover, Daniel Brownston, Chris Russell, **Belconnen, ACT** •Patricia Ruston, **Launceston, Tas** •Tracey & Peter Shadbolt, Marteen Lacey, Marilyn Kemp, **Swan Hill, Vic**

Deaths

•Mrs Jean Cugley, **Wembley, WA** •June Skillicorn, **Strathmore, Vic** •Murray Greig, Annie Tamblin, **Victor Harbor, SA** •Eric Buckmaster, Gardiner, **Vic** •Kath Edmunds, Jean Thompson, **Launceston, Tas** •Albert (Bob) Rowe, **Fremantle, WA** •Tom Palmby, **Mount Clear, Vic**

Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Buckmaster, Eric (1.8.95) Born 1904, Eric became a Christian early in life. As a young man he went to South Africa as a distributor of Bibles and Christian

literature. Fiancee Effie joined him there for marriage which lasted more than 60 years. They returned to Australia to membership at Box Hill, Vic, then at the Gardiner, Vic, church for over 50 years. A much-loved elder, whose pastoral care and wise counsel enriched many. His strong faith was expressed in exemplary character and high principles. His assiduous study of the Scriptures led him to deep convictions and faithful discipleship. He articulated his faith with logic, clarity and integrity. Eric revealed Christian love and brotherliness to all. In his 91st year, he died peacefully. We thank God for his faith, hope and love. Gardiner church was filled for the thanksgiving service when sympathy was expressed to wife Effie, Graham, Joan and Eunice.

—Les Dewberry

Rowe, Grace (14.05.95) Mrs Grace Rowe passed away suddenly on 14 May. At the funeral service held in the Latrobe Terrace, Geelong, Vic, chapel tribute was paid by her daughter Janet, son Philip and Dr Joe Mackenzie. Mrs Rowe and her family have been associated with the church for many years and she has been in membership for almost 50 years. During this period, she had served with church choirs and the Ladies Fellowship. She will be missed by all for her friendship, love, faithfulness and consistency as she served her Lord.

—D.W. Drayton

NSW

TWEED HEADS Church appreciates messages of several visiting speakers & local men, & Roger Foletta's part-time ministry with us ... Church looks forward to arrival of Bruce & Cheryl Warwick to minister with us from February 1996 ... Eight received into fellowship in last few months, two by faith & baptism, & including Ken & Rayna Whitecross back with us in retirement ... Craft Group begun by Merran Marriott.

METRO NORTH CHRISTIAN CENTRE (Franklyn Elliott, Lindsay Mckeon, Stuart Wesley) Special guest speaker over weekend 29-30 July was Dan Armstrong, National Director of Kairos Ministries in Australia. He spoke on Saturday at combined youth rally at Pennant Hills High School. At morning service of Metro North (previously known as Thornleigh C of C) he was speaker & at night at a combined churches service at Asquith Boys' High School. All services well attended.

WA

WEMBLEY (Bill Addison) Induction service for Bill & Gay Addison held 16 July. Great time of inspiration & blessing. Church looking forward to their ministry. Conference President, Des Nelson, gave charge to Bill & Gay & also the message. Foundation member, Alex Innes, brought Scripture reading ... Combined service of churches in Wembley area held in building 11 June to commission Scripture teachers in government schools & Paul Bonner as chaplain at City Beach High School.

FREMANTLE (J Caporn) Day of Prayer held 13 July. Particular prayer for newcomers ... 70 attended church family social arranged by CWF. Financial results \$215 ... At evening service, Jenny Marshall brought news of OMB's work & needs. Barry May, Police chaplain, guest speaker at tea meeting 6 August ... Sympathy to family of long-time member, Albert (Bob) Rowe, who died 2 August, aged 91.

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Church News

SA

VICTOR HARBOR (Don Wesley) CYF has about 45 primary & high school children who meet on a Friday night with the support of 10 leaders ... Friendship Centre still functioning well with opportunity for contact with some who do not attend services ... Sunday evening services start with soup & toast, followed by video of the series "Homes of Honour Parenting" series.

TAS

LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, D. Tobler, W. Kerrison) \$2,125 raised by 40 Hour Famine appeal ... 12 girls & three leaders attended State GB Camp at Camp Clayton ... ACW Fellowship Day held on our premises 31 July ... Church anniversary held on 6 August. Craig Spaulding speaker in morning & John Harrison (Caveside) at evening ... Congregation shared BYO lunch ... Thank offering received to help Caveside & Ulverstone churches.

Vic

HARTWELL (G. Rogerson) CWF Ol' Time concert attended by 180, raised \$876 ... Visiting speakers Barry Jenkins (Overseas Mission), Rev Ray Schmidt (Burwood Uniting), Viney Longthorp (Camberwell) ... Alternative worship service & tea commenced & well attended ... Old organ purchased by a collector to be restored ... Youth group activities included camp at Banksia, Sunday evening discussion groups, games night ... Youth orchestra rehearsing regularly for their part in morning worship.

LATROBE TCE, GEELONG (David Jones) John Fox from Gideons speaker 30 July ... Youth activities included mystery trip & seeing Christian College performance of "Annie" with Laura Perkins taking three parts ... Japanese students staying with Van Dort & Smith families ... Ruth Jones, George & Jan working in Barwon Prison through Prison Fellowship ... CWF met with Aberdeen St Baptist ladies ... Minister giving series of sermons on "The Holy Spirit".

ESSENDON (Ken Stothard) "Celebrate Messiah" meeting on 16 July. Nth Essendon & Essendon combining. Speaker Alan Hirsch ... Nth Essendon, Essendon & Strathmore combined in Cool Yule dinner. \$900 taken for assistance toward Ward family's effort in Fiji ... Attendance up from 30 to 40 during past weeks. **KANIVA (Paul Bauer)** Overwhelming vote invited Paul to continue ministry for another two years ... Barry Williams sustained serious hand-in-

jury ... Sunday School combined this year with Uniting Church scholars, forming United SS. Classes held each term at alternate venues ... Congregation joined Uniting Church for Bible Sunday with service addressed by Brian Good of Bible Society, who also spoke at combined PSA.

PEELST, BALLARAT (Martin Goldup) Church going through time of refreshing with minister ... Minister recently in Sydney to receive his Bachelor of Theology ... Harold Howlett from York St speaker ... New church logo Ballarat Central Church of Christ-Finding Hope in Jesus Christ ... Four small groups in operation in

Bible studies ... 7 pm service taken on new format ... All auxiliaries function well ... Glen & Pauline studying youth leaders course.

SWAN HILL (Larry Edwards) Four baptisms during July ... Carl Clayden (Wangaratta) & Barry Ward (Robinvale) recent guest speakers ... New church constitution affirmed by congregational meeting ... New format adopted for children's church program ... Youth musical group assisted at Central & Northern District Churches rally at Pyramid Hill ... Local Christian school's new property at Donnington Park officially opened by John Forrest, Swan Hill

member & Federal MHR for Mallee. **MOUNT CLEAR (Dale White, James Leviston)** Coffee Shop operating after evening service each Sunday ... Combined attendances during June highest ever ... Youth organised Christmas-in-July program to provide groceries for those in need ... Dedication services held for babies Jessica Corden, Katherine Adaway, Tessa Kent & Justin Wilson ... Minister attended Hillsong Conference, Sydney ... Recent guests have included Bram Cassidy (Salvation Army), Louis Clun (Maryborough) & Lindsay Nicholls (Operation Mobilisation).

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People

"Retired" Missionary

Theatrical Director Heads for Cambodia

On 23 July, Joy Irvine, a member of the Warrnambool, Vic, church, was commissioned prior to leaving for Cambodia as a missionary. Joy is being sent by the local church in conjunction with the Australian Pacific Christian Missions and Christian Care for Cambodia CCFC), whose representatives, Ian Rowse and Barry Jenkins, respectively, addressed the commissioning congregation, Joy's friends and family. (The Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA) is helping support Joy while in Cambodia.)

Joy Irvine, a "retired" English teacher, herself addressed the crowd on the theme of "getting the focus right", expressing the importance of focussing on God's will for our lives. "God honours effort," Joy explained, "We don't bear responsibility for the outcome, only for the effort (obedience)."

In recent years, Joy has been very active in the arena of community theatrical productions, directing *Pirates of Penzance* and *Fiddler on the Roof* in Warrnambool and *Stepping Out* in Darwin. Her Christian witness in these endeavours has been shining and constant, and her "efforts" have brought forth lasting fruit.

Joy, since her "retirement", has also spent prolonged periods in mission work in China and Vanuatu (at Ranwadi High School operated by Churches of Christ in Vanuatu), and also has close ties with the Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory.

Spare a prayer for Joy as she does God's work in Cambodia. Joy admits she doesn't yet know exactly what the work will be but expects her stay in Cambodia will have a

lasting impact on her life. At the moment, her brief is to work with CCFC helping with the re-establishment of tertiary education programs in Cambodia.

• Joy Irvine



Two Deaths in the West

Bill Gaunson and Doug Gilchrist

We are sad to report the deaths of two significant leaders in the Western Australian Conference.

On 30 July, while driving to the evening service at Southern Hills church where he was ministering, Bill Gaunson was killed after being hit head-on by a car driving on the wrong side of the road.

Over 1,200 attended the memorial service for Bill held in the Thornlie church. Bill had ministries at North Balwyn, Vic, and at Northam, South Perth, Thornlie and Southern Hills churches in WA. He also had a period as State Evangelist in WA.

On the following Sunday (6 August) Doug Gilchrist of the Inglewood church died suddenly. He has had involvement in Western Australian Conference.

Obituaries will appear in a subsequent issue.

The Last Word

A low view of law leads to legalism in religion; a high view makes man a seeker after grace.

—J. Gresham Machen

Reader: "Can you tell me where the 'self-help' section is?"

Librarian: "Doesn't that defeat the whole purpose?"

He's decided to bury the hatchet—between his enemy's shoulder blades!

We owe a lot to Thomas Edison. If it wasn't for him, we'd be watching television by candlelight.

The trouble with being the best man at a wedding is that you never get the chance to prove it.

"I'm sending you to prison for three months." "What's the charge?"

"There's no charge. Everything's free!"

The bad news is, I accidentally left my electric toothbrush on all night. The good news is, I've never seen the bathroom looking so clean.

"Who told you you're a good bookkeeper?" "The librarian."

If reincarnation actually happens, I suspect I'm coming back as a sponge.

On the way home from church a five-year-old was asked if the teacher had told them a story that morning.

"Yes" was the reply.

"What was the story about?"

After a moment of deep thought the child proudly announced, "Be quiet!"

What did the necktie say to the hat? You go on ahead and I'll hang around.

Teacher: "Name the four seasons."

Student: "Salt, mustard, pepper and vinegar."

Why don't elephants listen to the radio? They don't have fingers to turn the dial.



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