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of Churches of  
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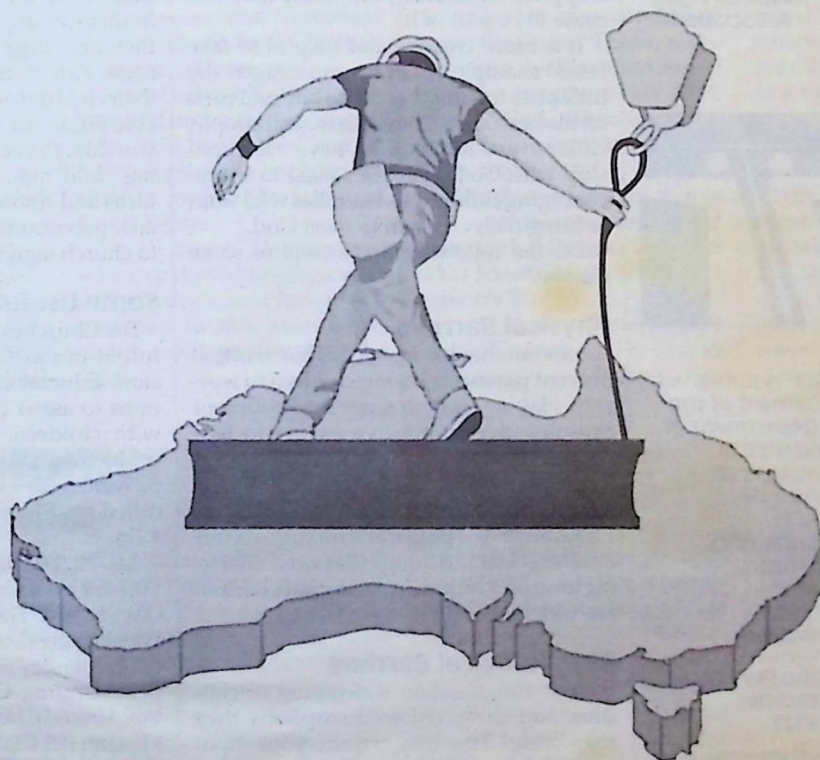
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# THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

## BUILDING BRIDGES FOR CHRIST



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# THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

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## Comment

# Children in Church

Andrea Salmon

**W**hat do we do with children who cannot sit perfectly still and be quiet for 60-90 minutes while we adults worship?

One answer might be to say, "Send them out to Sunday School, so we can concentrate." If that was the answer you were hoping for, then read on for some alternatives. Though Sunday School plays a very important part in the life of the church, we would rather explore ways of assisting children to worship with us. Always having Sunday School during the worship service means that the teachers miss the valuable worship and learning time. Also we fail to equip our young people to participate within worship. If young people do not sense that they are part of the worshipping community, inevitably they will cease to be part of it.

It is more creative and helpful to take Jesus' example when he encouraged the little ones to come directly to him and to sit on his knee. God's desire is that all people, children and adults alike, have a relationship with God. Churches need to be encouraging children and families who want to bring their children to meet God.

Do the following areas require some change?

### Physical Barriers

Some churches have physical barriers that prevent parents bringing children to worship. Having enough space for strollers or capsules gives a positive feeling to parents. A pew or two where there is a bit more room and a piece of carpet will help parents of toddlers relax in their worship. Think about the physical structure of your building. List the things that need changing around a little to indicate that children are welcome.

### Psychological Barriers

Is your congregation welcoming of children and the possible disruptions they may bring? This may require your input individually and corporately. A great way to get "negative" folk "on side" involves instituting a "foster grandparent scheme". Ask an older person to take a younger person under their wing. This may mean simply knowing their name and having a chat each week, or it may involve inviting them to sit alongside to follow the hymns and readings together. You may then be surprised how the extra noise and activity is tolerated. Do not underestimate the importance for the child of having another

adult, who is not family, to whom they can relate.

### Language Barriers

Encourage the worship leader and the preacher think about the words, songs and stories they will use. Encourage them to check that everyone will be able to understand what is said. Include children in the welcome; make use of all the senses: things to see, to hear, to feel, to taste, to touch. Is there a sense of God, of awe in your worship?

### Parental Barriers

Often parents do not know how to assist their children to enjoy and participate in the life of the church. Reassure parents that the needs of children are considered in this worshipping community and that they and their little ones are most welcome. Parents may require assistance with their children during church. Provide suitable books for children to look at during worship. Provide an opportunity (including child minding) for parents to share ideas and resources. Be alert to any assistance parents may need to get their families to church (and home again).

### Some Useful Resources

- The Churches of Christ KIDSMIN Committee of the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development functions to assist churches in their ministry with children. Resources and training, problem solving particular situations with proven ideas—the KIDSMIN team can be called on. Phone (03) 326 8900.

#### • Books

Merrit, David, and Porter, Muriel, *What Will We Do with the Children?* (JBCE); Ng, David, and Thomas, V., *Children in the Worshipping Community; Children and Your Church*, Policy for Action and Strategy Papers (Uniting Church Press) *A Place for You*, United Church of Canada, Division of Mission (85 Claire Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M8, Canada)—A manual on children's participation; Merrit, David (ed.), *Seen and Heard* (JBCE)—A summary of different approaches; Westerhoff, John, *Will Our Children Have Faith?*; Westerhoff, John, *Bringing Up Children in the Christian Faith*; Castleman, Robbie, *Parenting in the Pew*.

[Part of material prepared for the Vic-Tas Department of Community Care "Life Issues Resource Kit", issued for the International Year of the Family last year.]



## Eureka Stockade Christmas Carols

### Eureka Christmas Festival

The spirit of Christmas was alive at Eureka Stockade Memorial Park, Ballarat, Vic, on 18 December where more than 3,000 participated in carol singing.

On a night perfect for Yuletide celebration by candlelight, young and old sang in unison in what was the climax to the eighth annual Eureka Christmas Festival.

York St Church of Christ staged the event, which included a children's program in the afternoon with activities such as face painting, kite making and crafts, as well as bands in the nearby Eureka Hall for the youth.

The carols featured the church's 30-piece orchestra and a choir comprising 40 members.

Church member Fiona Johnston led the singing, while well-known 3BA radio announcer Frank Clark was orchestra conductor and doubled up as master of ceremonies.

Sydney five-piece gospel band Iron and Clay, currently on a national tour, proved to be a very popular special guest act and was complemented by solo artists Val Hoffman, Phil



Johnston and Amanda Bridges.

Mime artist Steve Bell also delighted the crowd with a performance as did Sebaclear stage band and local Christian rock group Corazan.

Larry Galbraith, senior minister and one of the key organisers, said the festival had its beginnings in the backyard of church goers Marion and Geoff Feary.

"It all began 24 years ago when we started singing carols at the Feary's, and has grown non-stop to this event—our eighth major production," he said.

The attendance this year easily exceeded the 1993 figure of about 2,500.

The one and a half hour carols program was conducted under the theme "Discover the Difference". This motto aimed to make people aware that, through God, they could have the Christmas spirit with them every single day.

"The church believes its role is to serve the community and share with it the good news of what Jesus Christ can do in a person's life."

—Dennis Torpy  
(Courtesy of *The Courier*  
Ballarat, Vic)

## The Bible Challenge

### Beneficial Bible knowledge

A joint venture between Sydney radio station 2CBA-FM and the Bible Society will be launched in NSW in February.

Called "The Bible Challenge", the venture aims to raise Bible knowledge in churches and Bible awareness in the community.

Tom Treseder, the Bible Society's State Director (NSW), says, "We trust that this quiz with a difference will bear fruit in our churches and in our community as the Word of God is honoured by Australians. What's more, the fruit of the Bible Challenge will be experienced as far away as China, where much-needed Bibles will roll off the Amity Printing Press as a result of the participants' entry fee of \$10."

The Bible Challenge will begin in participating churches, where quiz events will reveal those with the most Bible knowledge. The Bible Society will supply resource material, rules, advertising posters and even material for a children's colouring-in competition.

Up to six winners from each church will compete in area and regional finals, and then go on to the Grand Final. The winner will receive two return air fares to Hong Kong valued at \$2,800, courtesy of Trade Wind Travel.

Radio 2CBA-FM will promote and interview participants throughout the area and regional challenges and will broadcast the Grand Final on 5 November.

## Record Summer Camps

### Outstanding facilities offered

The Victorian Department of Mission, Education and Development camping program broke all previous records for attendance at its eight summer camps.

The youth camp held at Camp Banksia was the largest ever, with numbers spreading over into the adjoining Camp Ichthus. Three family camps followed during January. Pictured right are Stuart and Janet Chandler (with Katherine and Thomas), the newly appointed managers for Camp Banksia. They were commissioned at a special service on 16 January. Campers, leaders, Russ Pearce (previous manager), Depart-

ment staff members and friends took part in the service.

Two camps for single parents and their families were held at Camp Acacia in succession. Registrations quickly filled both camps, with numerous requests for additional places.

At Camp Waterman, the Kidsmin Girls Camp (for those in grades 4-6 in 1994) and the young teens "Lost in Space" camp left many younger campers committed to return in 1996.

The Adventure Committee sponsored three walks in Tasmania. Two of these were in the Cradle Mountain area, with a third in South West Tasma-

nia. The 33 walkers enjoyed the hospitality of the Hobart church at the conclusion to their adventure.

The Department is appreciative of the help from many volunteer leaders and the strong support from the full-time camp managers. They have acted as program directors, caterers and managers.

The camp sites have been busy throughout the period and offer outstanding facilities to the campers involved. A meeting being held shortly with camp leaders and staff will review the programs and commence planning for next summer.





## Great Celebration in SA

### Bible Society's 150th

On 20 March 1845 the leaders of the churches and the Christian community in the fledgling colony of South Australia came together and agreed to form a branch of The British and Foreign Bible Society; with the declared aim of providing God's Word to all people everywhere, in a language they could understand, at a price they could afford to pay.

150 years later, The Bible Society in South Australia is still meeting those same aims in a world where the demand

for God's Word is greater than at any time before.

Celebrations will include:

**18 March—Old Fashioned Sunday School Picnic** at Bonython Park, off Port Road at Beverley, commencing at noon.

There will be clowns, puppets, a ventriloquist, races, prizes, sample bags, free ice cream and raspberry cordial, and much more.

**Commemorative service** at St Peter's Anglican Cathedral **19 March** at 3.30 pm. The

preacher will be Rev Philip Oliver, Australian General Secretary of The Bible Society.

**150th Birthday Dinner** 20 March at the German Club, 223 Flinders Street, Adelaide at 6.30 pm. Guest speakers will be Rev Philip Oliver and Lawrie Edwards, recently retired Northern Territory representative—"The Flying Bibleman".

Philip's previous appointment was as United Bible Societies World Service Officer, with part of his role involving the planning of strategies for Bible Society work in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A video illustrating the work of The Bible Society will

be shown and musical items and readings of early minutes and newspaper reports will form part of an interesting program.

As a special 150th year project, The Bible Society in SA plans to raise \$150,000 to build and equip a Bible House in Estonia where distribution of God's Word is proving difficult due to a lack of proper facilities.

Tickets for the dinner are available from Bible House, 133 Rundle Mall, Adelaide—refer to Mrs Ruth James (08) 223 3833.

A Youth Event is hoped to be held later in the year.

—John Gaghan

## Future Developments

### SA Retirement Services

At the present, SA Churches of Christ Retirement Services Inc has four homes with a nursing home, hostel and independent living units and three groups of independent living units.

They have recently purchased the licences of a city nursing home and will transfer these as nursing home and hostel beds to our Reynella site, as part of an upgrade and extension of the nursing home.

This will provide a nursing home of 45 beds, 14 hostel beds and a palliative care unit, as well as 22 serviced units and 37 independent living units at Reynella.

They will also extend their self-contained unit program (providing hostel care to independent living unit and serviced unit residents) by five places and establish 20 Com-

munity Care packages in the southern area. Government establishment grants have been provided by the Department of Human Services and Health for these two developments.

Work is also under way at Roselin Court where wards are being altered to provide single rooms and a palliative care unit is being added to the nursing home. A grant to meet approximately one third of the cost has been approved by the Department of Human Services and Health.

After long negotiations and careful assessment of needs, a grant to meet approximately half the cost of establishing a 40 bed Hostel at Aldinga has been provided.

The hostel will be built in the next two years on land alongside the shopping centre and

## 24-Hour Challenge

### Biking for Bibles

On 18 March, a group of cyclists will ride around the Calder Park Raceway, Melbourne, for 24 hours. Cyclists will be on the track from 7.00 am Saturday to 7.00 am Sunday. While raising funds for literacy development in Africa, Victorian riders will also attempt to beat the record set last year by a South Australian rider, who rode exactly 500 kilometres in a similar event.

Organised by The Bible Society in Australia (Vic), this cycling challenge is part of the annual Bike For Bibles program. Bob Jane has generously provided the premier venue, IsoSport is supplying unlimited drinks for all participants

and Ansvar Insurance is financially supporting the event.

Youth groups, churches, clubs and businesses are specially invited to enter a team of 2-8 people. Less avid cyclists are welcome to ride for part of the time. Special prizes, donated by major cycle businesses, will be given to individuals and teams who ride the furthest distance and the fastest lap of the course (various age groups).

Cyclists are encouraged to collect sponsorship before the ride. The 24-hour event and similar Bike For Bibles rides organised throughout this year hope to raise \$100,000, which will provide "New Reader" Scripture booklets used to teach children and adults to read.

Are lives changed by "New Readers"? Ram Kumar Parasad, an Indian college graduate, was planning to hang himself. A set of "New Readers" was thrown from a passing car, landing literally at his feet. Reading the life-changing stories turned this man around.

Spectators and families are invited to share in the fun and there will be entertainment of various kinds in the afternoon. Admission is by donation.

For information, telephone Ann Berry at The Bible Society on (03) 888 8422.

the proposed church development.

These initiatives will provide a wide range of facilities and services in the southern area.

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## Calendar

### Awakening '95

Prayer and Preparation days are being held in all states for Awakening '95. Through Awakening '94 hundreds of thousands were involved in reaching friends and neighbours through Easter outreach festivals and in local mission during Operation Reconnect, etc. The program for Awakening '95 is three-fold; Easter '95 Festivals, March on Easter Sunday afternoon and Operation Reconnect (50 days of mission). The Prayer and Preparation days are being held on 4 March in Melbourne (Kilvington Girls Grammar School), 11 February in Adelaide, 25 February in Launceston (Community Church, Newstead), 26 February in Hobart (Assembly of God, Melville St), 4 February in Perth, 18 February in Sydney, 5 March in Canberra (St Andrew's Presbyterian Church) and 11 March in Brisbane (McGregor State High School). Details from local offices.

### Bible and Justice Lectures

American biblical scholar and justice activist Ched Myers is conducting a series of lectures and workshops in Australia in March and April. A workshop for missiologists, evangelists, church outreach workers and other interested people is being held on 29 March (2.00-4.30 pm) at the Salvation Army Training College, Royal Pde, Parkville on the topics "Who then can be saved? The reign of God as redistributive justice" and "The challenge of the Kairos documents to the First World churches". The Uniting Church in Victoria through its Commission for Mission is sponsoring the time in Victoria. For specific details and to register contact Jenny Meyers at the Uniting Church on (03) 654 2488 or fax (03) 650 4490.

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## Eureka Service

### Marking the sacrifice



### • Ballarat Town Crier (Brian Whykes) opening the service

The Christian faith and Ballarat's history had two significant parallels, a church congregation was told.

In commemoration of the Eureka Stockade battle, about 280 attended the York Street, Ballarat, Vic, Church of Christ

at a service led by senior minister Larry Galbraith.

He told them that the Christian faith and Ballarat were marked by "discovery and sacrifice".

"For Ballarat, it is the discovery of gold and the sacrifice of

those who lost their lives at the Eureka Stockade," Larry said.

"For Christians, it is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the discovery of personal faith in him, which we believe is the greatest discovery we can make."

'Eureka', said Larry, had a meaning that was woven throughout the church. "The word Eureka means 'I've found it', therefore as Christians we see ourselves as a Eureka people, who can say 'I've found it'. For us, it's an exciting daily discovery."

Ballarat's Federal MP, Michael Ronaldson, and East Ballarat MLA, Barry Traynor, gave the readings.

The service was part of the city's busy week of events to recognise the 140th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade uprising.

—Lorisse Dart

(Story courtesy of The Ballarat Courier)

## Easter Ho! Ho!

### Reflecting Easter's significance

Almost as soon as the "Ho! Ho!" of over-dressed, perspiring Santas, the pithy "Christmas songs", the tinsel of Christmas and the fevered retail pitches are over, the commercial world starts gearing up for its next onslaught. Santas make way for the cute bunnies that have come to mean Easter for the majority of Australians and stores mount their displays of cascades of chocolate eggs and colourful

Easter bunny packs, ready for the next major retail selling season.

"Did you hear that they are trying to bring religion into Easter now?" one lady was overheard to say.

Is it any wonder that this gross commercialisation, with its "feel good" fairy tale appeal, leaves little room for the unpalatable story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ? The message of the church appears strangely at odds with the gifts that are traditionally given to children, family and friends.

A Melbourne graphic artist, Curt Bjerking, is dedicated to presenting a totally different message that flies in the face of this tradition. His family company, Manna House, is producing colourful Easter gift packs with traditional Easter eggs and shortbread, but with the triumphant and joyous message of the risen Christ.

"Why can't our giving reflect the real special significance



of Easter in our lives?" Curt asks.

His variety of packs are tastefully designed to make an appealing gift that shares the Easter message to both adults and children. The added bonus is that churches and schools are able to use these packs as a fund raiser while making them available to their members.

Inquiries are welcome and may be directed to Manna House: Vic (03) 876 4722, NSW (02) 725 6343, Qld (075) 46 3184 or SA (085) 56 8417.

### Essendon Church of Christ

80th Anniversary

Sunday 5 March

10.00 am service followed by lunch.

Guest speaker Greg Strack

Friends and past members welcome.

RSVP Betty Hartney  
(03) 375 2470



## Australia

### Lutheran Information Plans

The Lutheran Church of Australia has announced that its congregations will be able to choose what wider ministries they are informed about under a new plan proposed by the church's promotions officer, Irwin Traeger. Under the new plan, only a limited number of general church ministries would be widely and extensively promoted. Congregations would then be invited to select other ministries which they wish to promote in 1995.

### TV Devotional Popular

A daily family devotional, via television, is proving to be very popular amongst the residents of the Hope Vale Aboriginal Community in far North Queensland. The project has been made possible because the community has its own inter-community television and radio network. Every weekday morning, a pre-recorded devotional segment is presented and a variety of formats is used to ensure that the segment remains fresh and relevant.

### Advocating the Faith

A special 32-page edition of the West Wyalong *Advocate* (a leading regional newspaper in the Central West of NSW) called "Christmas 1994" featured a clear explanation of Christianity, an examination of Christ's claims concerning himself, passages from the Bible presented in a "newsy" format, a bishop's call for honesty in faith, a statement of belief from a Managing Editor (secular press) and supporting comments from politicians and church leaders. The publication also included a step-by-step guide on how to become a Christian. The issue was distributed to 5% of the state of NSW. The editor, Terence Cunningham, said the aim was "To show the vitality, growth and relevance of today's Christianity over the Christmas and New Year period and beyond to people who are 'unchurched'". Copies are available in packs of six for \$15 from West Wyalong *Advocate*, 140-142 Main St, West Wyalong 2671.

## Breaking The Silence

### Confronting domestic violence

"Domestic violence is a serious problem in Australian society. Every year, a number of women are murdered by their partners, thousands injured and many more are emotionally abused.

20 years ago, no one talked about this problem and few spoke about child abuse. There was a conspiracy of silence. These problems did not even have a name.

Thankfully, these things have changed ... All sorts of organisations and individuals have joined hands to try to raise community awareness, challenge unhelpful attitudes and beliefs, and assist both the victims of abuse and their abusers. The churches are a part of this movement."

This is the beginning of a booklet, *Questions Women Ask: About Domestic Violence and Christian Beliefs*, prepared by a number of churches joining to do something about the problem. If you'd like a copy, you're welcome to contact the Qld Churches of Christ CARE office on (07) 378 0400.

"My husband can be very aggressive to me. He hasn't hit me very often, although he did push me down a flight of steps recently. The main thing about it is how it's affecting my nerves. It's coming to dominate my life. I have trouble sleeping and have to take tablets now. I know the boys worry too about when he's going to flare up again. They try very hard not to cause any trouble. He says it's just the way he is, that I knew he was bad-tempered when I married him and I can't expect him to change. Is this domestic violence?"

The booklet explains what domestic violence is and what it is like: a chronic sense of fear, a loss of self esteem, powerlessness and vulnerability. "Sometimes a lifetime is not long enough to get over a chronic sense of fear or to recover one sense of self after repeated episodes of sexual violation or emotional denigration."

The theological implications are also discussed. We are reminded that Jesus' ministry was a resurrection ministry. Wherever he went he brought hope and healing to people. Often we look to Paul for the church's teaching about marriage. The booklet points out that Jesus showed an attitude to women that was different to that of society in those times. "His choosing of women in his close circle, his kind treatment of the Samaritan woman at the well and the woman taken in adultery were unusual for a man of his day. His attitude generally was to serve humanity, including liberating the oppressed." The emphasis is on understanding Scripture, not as proof text, but in light of underlying principles. Jesus "urged the disciples not to lord it over one another or to abuse their authority". The succinct summary of the first section is: "Scripture should never be used to justify abuse".

"I left my husband a month ago, after years of beatings. I think he realises that this time I'm really serious about not coming home. Now, despite never being willing to go to worship with me, he has been going to his mother's church and says he's saved. Both he and his pastor have been putting pressure on me to go back to him. I don't trust him. I'm afraid. What should I do?"

"In the past, church communities, like other major social institutions, have been part of the problem and not part of the solution. In the church's desire to hold up a vision of the family as a grouping of people where ideals of Christian love are most likely to be made manifest, examples of how family life can go badly wrong were often swept under the carpet.

What this has meant is that when victims of domestic violence sought help from clergy or other church officials, it has made church leaders uncomfortable and the real needs of victims have often been ig-

nored. In some cases, they have been met with silence, unhelpful platitudes, or worse, blame and condemnation.

This is not good enough.

There is a slogan that says, 'Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven'. This humble attitude before a merciful God might better prepare church leaders and members to see what is really happening in many families and to do something about the great unhappiness and injustice that is domestic violence.

There are people in your church community who are willing to understand and to help with a problem of domestic violence. Seek them out. It is time we started speaking in the church about domestic violence or else, in our silence, we are colluding with the perpetrator, letting abuse continue and so justice is not done."

The booklet provides a list of suggestions for people who come into contact with someone who needs help in this area.

When **Thelma Cornwell**, a spokeswoman on domestic violence, spoke on the topic at a women's camp a few years ago, a number of women quietly came to her to confide that they were in an abusive situation. The need is there. The problem exists in our churches. Who is willing to help our people break the silence? Will you help break the silence?

—Marilyn Smith

### QUESTIONS WOMEN ASK

About Domestic  
Violence

and  
Christian  
Beliefs



Qld Churches of Christ  
Domestic Violence  
Prevention Project, Queensland



## International

### Nepalese Arrests

11 evangelical Christians being held in custody in Nepal, reportedly for proselytising Hindus, have been sent to prison without trial, according to church sources in Katmandu. They were arrested in early September and held in police custody until a trial was scheduled. During that time, they were reportedly beaten by police. According to a 1992 law, Nepalis are free to change their religion, but evangelism is still technically illegal.

### Abortion Effects

Abortion has been linked to suicide and breast cancer in two new US studies. Some 28% of women who regret their abortions attempt suicide and over half of these women attempt suicide more than once. This survey found that 36% of the women surveyed described themselves as having become self-destructive after the abortion. 20% reported having a subsequent nervous breakdown, with 10% reporting subsequent hospitalisation for psychiatric care. Only 6% said the abortion improved their lives. Another study found that women aged 45 or younger who have had an abortion are at least 50% more likely to develop breast cancer than other women their age. The greatest risk appeared to be among women aged under 18.

### Ecumenism in Austria

Austria's Roman Catholic church has announced that it is to join the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria, which until now has united the country's main Lutheran, Reformed and Old Catholic churches, as well as a number of smaller churches. Cardinal Hans-Hermann Groer, of the Austrian Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference, told a press conference that the decision had been prepared through discussions "over many years" and with the agreement of Pope John Paul II.

### Orthodox Withdrawal

A Commission of the Russian Orthodox Church has recommended that the church withdraw its membership of the World Council of Churches and other major ecumenical organisations in protest at continuing "missionary intrusions" in Russia by non-Orthodox churches.

## The First Step

### Ranwadi Office Skills Course

There is a cement step outside a building in Vanuatu with the words "We Took The First Step—1994" followed by nine names. The building is the computer room at Ranwadi High School and the names are those of the first students (six girls and three boys) to graduate from the Ranwadi Office Skills Course.

The educational arm of the Vanuatu Churches of Christ Conference moves into a new era as it addresses a problem that was identified a long time ago. In Vanuatu there are only enough places for about 20% of year 10 graduates to go on with further training/education. The remaining 80%, who are often very bright students, are forced back to the villages to tend gardens and marry young. This is fine if that is their ambition, but many of them become frustrated because this is not what they planned for their lives.

The Office Skills Course was initiated specifically to provide opportunities for these young people. The following subjects

are covered by the course: Typing (Manual and Electronic Typewriter), Communications (English/French), Business Calculations, Accounting, Computing (word processor, spreadsheets, databases), Telephone Technique, Filing and Indexing, Arranging and Organising Tasks, and "That's Working Life".

Twice during the year students perform work experience, first with an Island business and then with a business/government department in the towns.

There is a strong Christian emphasis in the course. There is one lesson of "Christian Living" each week as well as Sunday services and daily morning and evening devotions. This spiritual environment has allowed the Holy Spirit to work in the students' lives with one student being baptised and others growing stronger in their faith.

After completing the course, students can apply for office related jobs in tourism, government or private business.

They may also use their training as a stepping stone to further courses and study. Some students can use what they have learnt to run their own businesses. Whatever they choose to do with their training, there is no doubt that the training gives them hope and a greater sense of self-respect.

From the students that have graduated this year, one has a job in a post office, another looks set to pursue computing at the University of the South Pacific, another has applied to attend Banmatmat Bible College, another is doing carpentry work experience in Queensland and hopes to run his own business one day. The remaining students are actively seeking jobs, both in the towns and outer islands of Vanuatu.

It certainly has not been an easy year for me. There were the accounting books and a computer room to set up, time tables to sort out, equipment to order and lessons to prepare and teach. But thank goodness teaching is not about all these things. Teaching is about people and I must say I have thoroughly enjoyed the interaction I've had with the students and other staff such as Silas Bule and Joy Irvine.

I honestly feel as though Christ could say to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant". Then he may add something like, "Now get ready for the second year".

—Craig Francis

## FUNDRAISE with the CHRISTIAN DIFFERENCE *this Easter*

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## Letters to the Editor

### False memory

To the Editor,

The letter by Reg Brand ("AC" 3 December) was brought to my attention in my role as a member of the Professional Advisory Board to the Australian False Memory Association.

I wholeheartedly endorse Reg's advice that we should not fall into the trap of assuming that all or most claims of childhood sexual abuse are due to illusory memories recovered under "misguided therapy".

Having been a psychologist for almost 20 years and, during that time, having treated numerous genuine survivors of abusive childhoods and sexual assault, my concern has always been to assist and protect those survivors.

I am concerned that if we do not alert the community to some of the risks involved in recovering decades-delayed "memories", the true victims

of incest and abuse will be the ones to suffer most. The reason is that, as the general community becomes aware that there really is such a phenomenon as false memory, people will not know whom to believe, whose memories are real and whose are false. The danger then could be a return to the "bad old days" of psychotherapy, when most female patients were thought to be hysterics and their claims of childhood abuse were always considered to be pure fantasy.

It is reassuring to note that most people (including Reg Brand) are now able to agree that some allegations of abuse are not true. The growing number of recanters provides further evidence that many innocent parents and others have been unjustly accused and that the accusers themselves are also victims of the recovered memory work of misguided or unqualified therapists.

Sadly, the allegation of those not personally affected by these abhorrent accusations is often that the false memory associations are a cover for some other "hidden agenda" and that paedophiles seek refuge in these groups. Such allegations add to the distress of those who have been falsely accused and increase their reluctance to bring their family trauma out in the open. It may surprise others to know that many parents have factual evidence (including medical information) that would prove their innocence.

I have had long experience of witnessing first-hand the terrible devastation that sexual abuse causes to its victims and could never condone it in any way. I am now also having the personal experience of witnessing dozens of families going through the heartbreaking effects of false accusations of

sexual abuse. I would challenge anyone to observe the utter desolation, grief and loss of the will to live experienced by these parents and then be able to say "It doesn't matter". The Australian False Memory Association was established because many of us believe each person does matter—even if the falsely accused are a smaller number than the guilty. Let us all hope that justice will be done for all.

—Merle Elson  
(Black Rock, Vic)



### ON YOUR OWN, YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Christian Singles Fellowship offers friendship through correspondence with other born-again Christian singles and single-again people. Write enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:  
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Anna Bay 2301

### Churches of Christ Theological College

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The program will cater for all ages.

Food and drinks will be on sale at reasonable prices—or BYO if you prefer.

Bring a rug and folding chair if you can.

Ample parking available.

The more formal program begins around 6.00 pm. (Special provision will be made for children.)



## Letters to a Travelling Companion

### A Frightening Transformation

Dear Daniel,

I write this letter to you feeling rather taken aback. My wife, you see, has just informed me that she thinks I am emotionally unstable. Not all the time, mind you, but just when I get in the car and start driving. The cause of her rather bizarre and totally unqualified diagnosis of my emotional condition was a journey we took into the city during which we seemed to encounter every psychopathic driver who held a licence.

Now that I have had a little time to think it over, perhaps my wife was not far from the truth. I am normally a very level-headed person, but when I get behind the wheel, my emotional state does seem to go through a frightening transformation. I assume the demeanour of a paranoid and aggressive maniac, shouting and sounding the horn at any person who dares to make an honest mistake in my immediate vicinity. Once I am safely strapped into my metallic weapon of war, power and control become the big issues and love, grace and understanding are left by the roadside.

The worst thing is, Daniel, that even though I deplore such behaviour under any other conditions, I almost treat it as acceptable in the car. However, as my wife and full-time driving instructor has pointed out, it was just such misuses of power and judgmental behaviour that Jesus was so strenuously against. Next time I get in the car, maybe I'd better let him drive instead—if you catch my meaning.

Until next time,  
Pastor Salt



## People

### Aboriginal Deacon

The Rev Gloria Shipp was among a group of five ordained in Bathurst's Anglican Cathedral on 10 December. She is believed to be NSW's first Aboriginal woman deacon. The only known previous Aboriginal woman deacon was the late Rev Nancy Dick of Kowanyama, in the Diocese of Carpentaria. When she is priested in around two years time, Mrs Shipp could become Australia's first Aboriginal woman priest. She is taking up an appointment as Deacon-in-Charge of the Koorie Aboriginal Fellowship at Dubbo while continuing her studies at Nungalinga College in Darwin, which has recently awarded her the Certificate in Theology.

### Middle East Tour

Dr Don Stewart, Executive Director of Churches of Christ Care (Qld), with his wife Margaret, is leading a tour of Athens, Israel and Western Turkey, 25 Oct-8 Nov. Don's hobby is Biblical and ancient history. Cost of the two-week tour is \$4,985, with additions to the tour available. Inner Faith Travel are the tour operators and they can be contacted on toll free 008 074 426 or contact Dr Don Stewart at PO Box 508, Kenmore 4069 (phone (07) 378 0400). A brochure with details is available.

### VCC General Secretary

The Victorian Council of Churches has appointed Rev Hamish Christie-Johnston as General Secretary. His past positions have included Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (1976) and Associate Secretary of the Uniting Church Synod after its inauguration in 1977. Parish appointments have included Hobart, Corryong and East Kew. He is currently Presbyterian Minister for Westport Presbytery. Hamish has been involved in bilateral conversations in Australia between his church and the Anglican, Baptist, Churches of Christ, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. He is a past secretary of the Tasmanian Council of Churches. The VCC is a council of 15 Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches (including Churches of Christ). He will begin on 1 July, until then, Rev Douglas Dargaville will act as VCC Secretary.

## OMF Director

### Allan and Val Webb accept new appointment



#### • Val and Allan Webb

OMF International recently announced the appointment of Allan Webb as the National Director for OMF Australia, from May 1995. Allan and Val will be commissioned for this new appointment at the final service of Swanston Street's annual missionary convention, 30 April. At this service, they will be transferred from the pastoral team to the mission-

ary family, so, a vital link through support and prayer will be maintained.

1 April 1995 will mark the end of 25 years of ministry at Swanston St. Allan, Val and their family have made an outstanding contribution to the life of the church and they will be greatly missed.

During their time, ministry to overseas students has been

further developed, a vision for reaching Asia and the world for Christ has been nurtured, resulting in the church now supporting a missionary family of 42 members (21 adults and 21 children). Through the faith promise giving, over \$220,000 per annum is directed to world mission.

Allan's commitment to clear expository preaching has been appreciated and has made a remarkable impact on the lives of members. An open home, pastoral concern for those in crisis and firm belief in the power of prayer have all been aspects of these 25 years.

The church now ministers to families as well as students. It has growing and dynamic ministries to children, youth and young adults, all of which are very exciting developments.

Over 1-2 April the church will celebrate the Webb's 25 years. Further details can be obtained from the church office on (03) 663 3884.

## Mayes Moving

### Farewell after 12 years' ministry.



#### • Lindsay, Erma, Jarrod, Kristen and Nicole Mayes

Hot weather on the evening of 3 December did not deter the large gathering to farewell the Mayes family after 12 years in Swan Hill, Vic.

Lindsay began his ministry here in 1983, after graduating from the then College of the Bible the previous year. Under his ministry the church has made significant growth. All the time he was ably supported by his wife Erma and the two have become a much loved couple.

All churches in the community were represented at this public farewell, with various speakers telling of Lindsay's great love for the Lord and the Lord's people, his special gifts in the area of Bible teaching and personal counselling and his willing availability to people, within the church or outside it, who had special need of ministry at times of crisis.

In reply, Lindsay said that although he felt God's clear call to Elizabeth, SA, his family

found it difficult to contemplate leaving a church and community that over the years they had come to love. Swan Hill was the birthplace of their three children (Kristen 11, Nicole 9 and Jarrod 3) and the church had been his first full-time ministry. Pastor Peter Coles (Christian Centre) presented a special Bible from the community and prayed a prayer of release from ministry here and blessing on their future in SA.

Lindsay concluded his ministry on the following Sunday (11 December) and, after a combined morning service, the church family gathered for a barbecue lunch and outdoor activities at "Hill Top" Resort. During the afternoon, suitable presentations were made on behalf of the church to Lindsay, Erma and the children.

The church is happy to announce that Larry Edwards has been appointed to full-time ministry here and will commence early in 1995. He, along with his wife Sharon and daughters Naomi and Sara move to Swan Hill in mid January.

—Ern Rogers



# ABORIGINAL CHURCHES BUILDING BRIDGES FOR CHRIST

## BUNBURY—WA

This fellowship commenced as an outreach from Roelands Village. Now reaching out to nearby towns.

## MARBLE BAR—WA

Len & Melba Wallam reach out to tribal men through Christian Elders. Give support to the Christian Community established out of town.

## NORSEMAN—WA

An integrated church currently operating with interim pastors. Tremendous need in this town.

## LOOMA—WA

Bob & Ainslie Boska work among semi-tribal people, many illiterate. Outreach work is amongst the Kimberley communities.

## PORT HEDLAND—WA

Sonny & Frances Graham pastor the church on a tent-maker basis. As Education Officer, Sonny has many visitation opportunities.



## ALBURY—NSW

Cec & Laurel Grant pastor a virile church and have an active advocacy on behalf of the Aboriginal people. They also conduct a weekly Bible Training course.

## TAMWORTH—NSW

John & Ruth Saulo pastor a growing integrated church and extensive outreach is being done into nearby towns.

## WAGGA WAGGA—NSW

Ivan & Maria Williams pastor a small church. They are actively involved in youth ministry and establishing a juvenile justice advocacy and rehabilitation centre.

The Federal Aborigines Board is also

## BUILDING BRIDGES IN OTHER WAYS.

### CARNARVON—WA

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- ❖ Crisis Care Hostel for the hurting, the abused and the homeless.
- ❖ Community development—assisting those people with education difficulties, child care and play group activities.

### ROELANDS—WA

- ❖ Camping facilities for youth groups, church families and individuals.
- ❖ Funds generation through farming—cattle-raising and grapefruit enterprises.

### PERTH—WA

- ❖ Prison, hospital, hostel and shut-in visitation.
- ❖ Funds generation—printing.



## PORT LINCOLN—SA

Max & Naomi Wright pastor the local church. Max has a high profile in the local community and is a respected member of several local organisations. Max is also the current FAB chairman.

## MOOROOPNA—VIC

Frank & Rose Johnson are pastoring a small, growing church with outreach to Cummeragunja. Frank is aiming to develop a radio program.



# FAB ANNUAL OFFERING—SUNDAY 19 MARCH



## Books

### Captive Audience

by Albert Jones (with Ron Holmes) (Vital Publications) \$10.00.

An 800-page book would probably be needed to record the extensive life-long ministry of Albert and Thelma Jones and it would all be very readable. This 80-page book gives a glimpse into just one part of it, their ministry to prisoners during Albert's 15 years chaplaincy at the Yatala (SA) prison. Every page is gripping as it tells of the power of the gospel in the lives of men whom society has given up as hopeless. In the book, some of those changed by the power of the living Christ tell their own story. Albert became Yatala chaplain almost by accident (or was it!). He had theological and sociological training, but these seemed inadequate in the Yatala setting. So his "tools" became a belief that God could change human nature, a belief that all people can respond to love, a belief that no one is beyond God's saving power, together with his own God-given capacity to make friends with anybody. He was eating in the prison dining room one day when an officer was counting the men. One prisoner pointed to Albert and said, "Count him, he's an honorary 'crim'." I suppose that we all believe, at least in theory, that "God can save to the uttermost". In *Captive Audience* we can see it happening. The stories are a stimulus to our own faith. This is a book for all ages. It is a book to lend to our friends who are not sure about the Christian faith. It is a book that shows how God can use one man's unconditional love of people to bring them to Christ. Very highly recommended.

—Gordon Stirling

(Available for \$10.00 from the Federal Literature Dept, PO Box 101, Essendon North 3041. Phone (03) 379 1219, fax (03) 379 0015.)

### Storm Warning

by Billy Graham (Word Books) \$13.95.

It was agreeable to revisit this author, the evangelist Billy Graham, whose books I have not read for several years. Although I found the book hard to get into to begin with (Was this because the first section of the book was a rewritten section of an earlier book and the author told us so?), the book soon began producing interesting material. The Seven Churches of Revelation and the Four Horsemen of Revelation (ch 6) are the Biblical backdrop. For a reader looking for a detailed exposition of how these chapters fit into the scheme of the Second Coming of Christ, they need not read this book. Rather, Billy Graham writes as an evangelist. He examines the church today against the churches in Rev 1-3 and examines current events of the world today against the Four Horsemen. I found in that area this book was worthwhile reading.

As a preacher, I would find this book of value in providing information and statistics concerning trends in our world. The only impediment is that the information provided is largely on the North American scene. There is good material on the Seven

## ALBERT JONES



## CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

Churches and detailed description on how the present time in history can be seen as fulfilling the conditions for the Four Horsemen. For other readers of this book, besides the preacher, the worth in this book is the quotable quotes which are referred to (eg, Richard Pryor, the comedian, "Enjoy as much as you can. Even if you live to be ninety that's not as long as you're going to be dead"!); and the good practical advice on Christian living which surfaces through the book (eg, in writing concerning the inward and outward journey as a Christian in the Chapter "Spiritual Deception").

Finally, the honest Christian reader, having read this book, should find enough directions to be motivated into a lifestyle of evangelism and social responsibility in our desperate world of today. I recommend that you read this book.

—Geoffrey K. Risson

### The Making of Community

by Kevin Giles (Albatross Books) \$7.95.

The Making of Community is a concise commentary come Bible study guide on the first 12 chapters of the book of Acts. A brief sketch of the events and the way the early church interpreted them, as well as the author's own insightful and very readable editorial comment, provide more than the usual background material found in pocket book study guides.

Most chapters contain 5-10 minutes of reading that could be done before or, as a part of, a study session. Discussion questions are added in two categories: "Talking it Through" aims to ensure the readers have grasped the main thrust of the passage, while "Broadening our Horizons" looks at our contemporary response to the teaching.

Any work on the Book of Acts will encounter the question of the miraculous. The author here approaches such issues as baptism of the Spirit, tongues, healing, and the commonality of possessions with a reasonably conservative, while not overly dogmatic, spirit. The study often raises more questions than it gives answers, a stance for which the author in no way apologises. A useful resource for those who want more than a list of questions, but want to avoid the more weighty commentaries.

—Greg Murphy

With the Collapse of Communism  
the Nuclear Threat has Diminished.  
But Ominous Shadows of Deceptive  
Evil Loom on the Horizon.



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## Six Years of Service

Julie Trinnick



On 13 January, Julie Trinnick completed six years of service as the Assistant Director of the Overseas Mission Board. This followed four years teaching at Ranwadi High School Vanuatu and one year working with *The Australian Christian*. The Overseas Mission Board would like to express its thanks and appreciation to Julie for the work

she has done in the name of Australian Churches of Christ over these last eleven years.

The time she has spent in Adelaide working directly with the Board office has been a time of change and development. Julie has travelled widely interstate and overseas on behalf of the Board. She has been well-received and has had a real ministry to others. She's taken responsibility for the financial management and administration of the Board office, particularly while Jeff May has been absent overseas or interstate.

Churches of Christ owe a debt of gratitude to Julie for the way in which she has served and represented them. She is returning to Melbourne and seeking further employment. Jeff Weston has been appointed as Assistant Director of the Board.

—Jeff May  
(Executive Director)

## Certain Uncertainty

Off on a journey

In March 1993, Julie Trinnick was off on a journey to visit several missionary families in PNG. She travelled many miles by canoe and dinghy, walked through the jungle, stayed in

isolated villages, ate village food, got sunburnt and all the time expected the unexpected. This phrase is most prominent in PNG, because the only thing that is certain is uncertainty.

However I wonder if, as Julie again takes off on a different journey, if that phrase may also apply. After six years with the OMB in Adelaide, the uncertainty of leaving a secure position for a change of direction, whilst being unsure of the future, must be a rather daunting experience.

But maybe it will be of some comfort to know that at least in Australia things are usually predictable and organised and you shouldn't need to expect the unexpected. However, the most comforting thought is knowing that, as we trust the Lord and step out in faith, he is in control to guide and direct our paths.

—Pam Hine

## A Brilliant Servant

Dr Rajnikant (Reg) K. Kolhatkar

The centenary celebrations of the Miraj Medical Centre, India, were held 12 November, 1994.

Though Churches of Christ work in India has never been affiliated with this Hospital, over the years we have sent many young people there for training as nurses, compounders for dispensing medicine (but not pharmacists as we know them), X-ray and



• Dr Kolhatkar with his wife Leela

Lab. technicians, etc. The present Superintendent of our Ashwood Memorial Hospital, Daund, (Dr Philemon Powar) is a graduate of this institution, which is affiliated to the Kolhapur University as a teaching hospital for medical degrees. In the early years of missionary medical work in Maharashtra and beyond, many of the Indian doctors received their training at Miraj.

In the Indian press quite a deal of the write up centred around Dr Rajnikant (Reg) K. Kolhatkar, the first Indian Director of this the third largest Christian Hospital in India. We had the privilege of knowing him from his early teen years as a high school student in Baramati, as a young Doctor in Pune and as a highly qualified specialist, who after nine years in the UK studying and working chose to return to India to serve his own people and give them the benefit of the skills with which he has been equipped. Whilst in the UK, he represented the Indian Conference at the World Convention of Churches of Christ in Edinburgh (1960).

He returned to India in the late 1960s to take up the position of Superintendent of the Scottish Presbyterian Hospital in Pune. Then in 1974 he accepted the position as the first Indian Director and Chief of Surgery at Miraj, positions he

held till 1984 when he resigned to return to work in the Pune area which has always been so dear to his heart.

During his tenure at the Miraj Medical Centre the Institution witnessed all-round growth in the fields of education and medical specialities.

Dr Kolhatkar mentioned that though Mission Hospitals in India are providing 18% of the hospital beds throughout the whole of India, the Christian community numbers only 2.5-3% of the population. Most of these hospitals are located in rural India where the needs are greatest.

He continues to have a very close link with our Ashwood Memorial Hospital Daund, and has been Chairman of the Medical Committee of the Conference for some years. During this time, he has been instrumental in introducing policies at the hospital which have seen it upgrade the services it offers patients with visiting specialists and expanding the number of beds. His close relationship with the Superintendent, Dr Philemon Powar, grows out of the fact that Philemon was a student of his while he was the director at Miraj. We have been fortunate to have had a man of such brilliant mind and practical ability using these gifts in the service of our Lord.

—B.V. Coventry

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## Classifieds

### ENGAGEMENTS

**BLIGHT-COOPER** Gerald and Elwyn of Hoppers Crossing are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Narelle to James, son of Ron and Mary of East Keilor.

**DENTON-STOCKER** Rosalind and Melvin Denton of Blair Athol and Lorraine and Bill Stocker of Burra are happy to announce the engagement of Kylie to Brenten on the 24.12.94. God's blessings and best wishes from both families.

**GARRETT-JONES** Jan and David (Castle Hill) together with June and Frank (Box Hill) are pleased to announce the engagement of Sally and Trevor.

### DEATHS

**COLLINGS** Marjorie Gordon. On 21 January at "George Vowell Centre", Mt Eliza. Aged 92 years. Loved and loving wife of Albert (dec). Dearly loved mother of Elizabeth (dec), David, Margery (Mrs Notenboom), loved mother-in-law of Joan and Len. Loving Gran of Leigh and Ann, Dale, Glenn and Vanessa, John, Peter, Paul, Margaret and Gaylene. Great Gran of Verity, Matthew, Stephen, Lloyd, Alanna and Madeline. "In God's loving care."

**MASTERS** Lindsay Douglas, after a very short illness, passed away suddenly at home on 21 December 1994. Dearly loved and loving husband of Betty (Byard). Married seven years. Forever with our Lord.

### IN MEMORIAM

**SIMMONS (LUNN)** Helen. 15 February 1985. Remembering you with love, this day and always. Mum, Dad and Judith.

### THANK YOU

**BISCHOFF** I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for the many expressions of sympathy received since the death of my husband. The wonderful tributes paid to Harold's life and ministry, together with the loving care and concern shown to me, have been a very real source of comfort and encouragement.

—Muriel

(Current address: K2A Stuart Lodge, Greenways Retirement Village, 330 Frankston-Dandenong Rd, Seaford 3198. Phone (03) 786 5559.)

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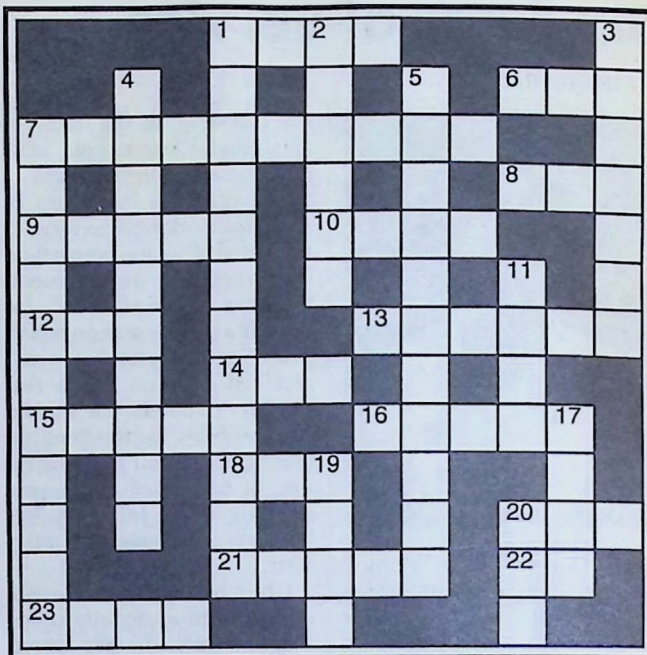
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## Crossword



### ACROSS

- 1 Jacob cooked a red one of these
- 6 What will happen tomorrow (Isa 22)
- 7 Scarlet woman described with this term
- 8 Abbreviation for book of the New Testament
- 9 What happens to the sea when God rebukes it (Nahum)
- 10 Tower-builder's concern (Luke 14)
- 12 Done today (see 6 across)
- 13 In the last days, this will no longer be cast (Micah)
- 14 Island Paul visited in Acts

### DOWN

- 15 Part of a spear (2 Sam 23)
- 16 Person ends up this way by evicting spirits (Luke 11)
- 18 May choke a stream (Job 6)
- 20 Born in answer to prayer (Gen 30)
- 21 Gold ones weighed 50 shekels (2 Chr 3)
- 22 Word used 1125 times in Bible
- 23 Often scattered
- 1 Find this in work (Ecc 2)
- 2 Done to the land (Psa 65)
- 3 God created these (Gen 1)
- 4 Town in Moab (Jer 48)
- 5 Household of this person mentioned in 2 Tim
- 7 This turned away from Jacob (Rom 11)
- 11 Exclamation used in Jer 22
- 17 Country from Gen 14
- 19 Area passed in Exodus (Num 33)
- 20 Can be breached (Prov 17)

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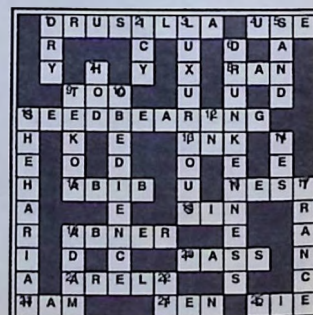


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## New Hope

# A Roof Over His Head

Bill Mills

**W**e all know the story of how the dictatorship in the nation of Romania was overcome and the people were freed. Where the Christian faith had been banned, Christian missionaries went in and were able not only to preach and teach the Word of God, but to also give much-needed material and medical aid. Under the inhuman rule that had prevailed in that country for a quarter of a century, dreadful things had been done.

Children in particular had suffered greatly as they had been underfed and many regarded as misfits had been thrust into fearful places of confinement. But with the coming of the Christian missionaries, much was done to help both adults and children. An ex-

tremely touching comment was made by one little boy whose parents had died as a result of persecution.

This boy, now in an orphanage and being looked after for the first time by caring people, said thankfully, "I am glad for a roof over my head". There are many people in the world today who cannot say that. All across the world there are millions who have been rendered homeless through war, natural disasters and other misfortunes. They have no home.

It is a tragic thing not to have a home. One misses all the warmth, security, love and care a home can provide. It is a comforting roof over one's head.

It is only proper that each one of us who has a good home do what we can to help others

who do not have that security. But the most tragic thing of all is not to have the assurance that when we leave this earth we can enter an even greater and better home.

We have a natural love of home. In the book of Genesis a person is returning to their own far off home and another makes the comment to them, "You long to return to your father's house".

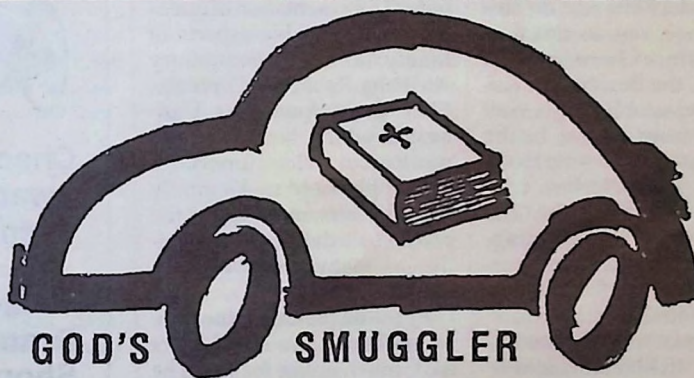
A writer of ancient times said truly, "No place is more delightful than one's own fire-side". But those who put their trust in God are assured of a home in eternity beyond their highest hopes.

Jesus Christ told all believers, "In my Father's house are many homes ... I am going to prepare a place for you." The

book of Revelation tells us of the splendour of those homes, but the greater thing is that nothing but the warmest love will prevail there. It is the soundest common sense to make sure we finally have this best of all roofs over our head.

• This is one of the more than 1,800 recorded messages written by retired minister Bill Mills used in the "New Hope" telephone ministry. To hear the latest, ring (03) 11610. Enquiries about "New Hope" may be addressed to PO Box 160, Burwood 3125, or phone Jack Edwards on (03) 568 1825.

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# Happily Ever After?

Viney Longthorp

**T**he film, *Muriel's Wedding* fully deserves the accolades it received at last year's AFI awards. It has about it a Mozartean zest—though not, mind you, the Mozartean perfection of form. Indeed, it has a lot in common with opera, but it is way above the level of standard soap opera. Significantly, it comes in three acts. Muriel is centre-stage throughout—her's is a real prima-donna performance. Again, the mood of the film can be best described in that elegant Italian operatic phrase, *Primum Giocoso*, which hints at that eerie territory where we don't know whether to laugh or cry.

In her review of this movie in *National Outlook*, Judith Gibson called it "a humorous and at times horrifying account of Australian suburban tribal rituals" of the mating type. Muriel is an ugly duckling who dreams of marriage, not so much in finding Prince Charming, as of the dress, the flowers, the ceremony and establishing herself in the esteem of her bitchy friends. As that old song has it, Muriel is more "in love with love" than anything else. The potential for a personal tragedy is that she also sees marriage as an "out" from her dreadful family.

So, thanks to a chance encounter with Rhonda, a former school friend, Muriel manages to get a job in the bright lights of Sydney, far from home. Even here, her chances of matrimony look poor. She is overweight, socially inept, unpopular and self-centred. But, eventually, she does make it to the altar and a wedding (as distinct from a marriage). But to give any more details at this point could spoil things.

The film, in one dimension, is an enjoyable romp. But what lifts it above being merely entertaining burlesque, in the manner say, of *Crocodile Dundee*, lies in a couple of significant characteristics.

For one thing, the main characters are real people, not comic cardboard cut-outs. Their problems are not automatically solved at the end. At the final curtain we are rather apprehensive about Muriel's future. It is the death of her mother which ends Muriel's disabling fantasising about weddings. Then, the permanent injury to her friend Rhonda helps Muriel change the course of her life. The new Muriel, it appears is redeemed by suffering as she devotes her life to caring for her friend. We are not far from Gospel realities here. The words of George Bernard Shaw point to the new state of affairs: "The true joy of life is devoting oneself to a cause which is mightier than you are".

The other characteristic which adds to the film's significance is that it is such an honest representation of one of the least desirable aspects of family life in contemporary Australia. Robin Boyd's phrase, "The Great Australian Ugliness", which he applied to much of our architecture, could also apply to Muriel's family life. She was most likely the product of a dysfunctional family—as many social workers would say.

At the beginning of the film, as we have seen, she doesn't have much going for her. The ubiquitous Bill Hunter plays the part of her "orrible dad", a local councillor and small businessman (read "con man") who

has delusions of grandeur. Everyone he meets, sooner or later, will hear his plaint that, "I only lost a seat in state parliament by 14 votes". His character is summed up in the heart-breakingly insensitive way he manipulated condolences from Bob and Hazel Hawke to be read aloud at his wife's funeral. His four "hopeless" kids seem trapped in this family situation. They are not so much unemployed as being rendered unemployable.

Many will ask, as they see this family, "Is this the way our society is heading?" They are too real to be funny. They point

to the destructive effects of a life-style which is not based on any kind of faith or reality except the pursuit of this world's treasure. Their priority seems to be to live in life's perpetual "comfort zone". Behind the laughs and glitz, the film is really saying, "get real" in all of life's situations: family, social, work, and dreams of weddings".

Judith Gibson's conclusion is worth noting also: "The rest of us can settle back to enjoy a film which shows that the bonds of friendship and honest relationships can make heroes of us all". ♦



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## Pontius' Puddle





# A Theology of Church Planting

Martin Robinson

**D**uring the summer of 1994, I was privileged to attend the Baptist Consultation on Church Planting called, "Digging Deeper", held at London Bible College. Not everyone who attended was a Baptist and the exchange between a variety of traditions was valuable. I was impressed with the wealth of experience, the abundance of talent and the gracious character of the contributions that came from the delegates. It is clear that a great deal of insight on the issue of church planting has been accumulated in the relatively recent past. The information that is now available on this subject was simply not in existence in the not-too-distant past.

But if the Consultation did reveal a weakness, it was surely in the area of theology. We have all been much stronger on the pragmatic aspects of church planting. It would be surprising if that were not so. Indeed, I might venture a little further and suggest that had it been the other way round, great strength in the theology of church planting and little knowledge of how to do it, I would be even more concerned. Nevertheless, theological weakness, while understandable in the short term, is not helpful to the church in the longer term.

What straws might be in the wind which will help us to de-

velop a good theology of church planting? Such thinking that does exist seems to fall into one of two categories.

First, there is the position that argues that if: the church, and particularly Paul, did it, then we must do it. The difficulty with such a position is that Paul and his contemporaries were largely working in situations where the church did not exist. That is not our situation in the post-Christian and post-modern West. There are plenty of churches in existence. The problem is that many of them have failed. The argument of those who oppose church planting is that we do not need more churches, we need more growing churches. Why not expend our efforts on helping existing churches to grow?

The second broad category covers all those arguments which are, broadly speaking, pragmatic in their tone. Some argue that, since the churches which already exist have failed, we need to forget about them and start many new churches that will succeed. Others suggest that church planting is a pragmatically effective means of increasing the total size of the Christian community and that we just ought to do it without thinking too hard about those churches which already exist.

I must confess that I have a certain sympathy for a purely

pragmatic position, but it is not enough by itself. There does seem to me to be a difference between church planting and church extension. The latter category recognised that there are places in our land where population movements are such that there is a need for new churches to meet the needs of the faithful. A pragmatic argument which suggests that the faithful need a proper provision is entirely adequate. We can hardly imagine seeing a new town created without wanting the church to be present in such a setting. Such an approach is primarily that of church extension. The Church of Scotland was particularly successful in the immediate post-war period with a program of church extension.

But the church planting is not exactly the same thing as church extension. Church planting needs to be seen more as mission than church. What we need is a missiology for the West. Church planting has an important role within the discipline of missiology. Indeed, it may even act as a highly creative stimulus for the creation of a new missiology for a post-Christian situation.

A focus on church planting as part of a new missiology will cause us to ask as many questions about what we are planting as it will address the issue of how we plant. A concern for

what we are planting will enable us to be as creative with the churches that already exist as we need to be with the churches that we want to see come into being. Church planting with a mission thrust will stop us merely replicating that which has already failed and concentrate on new approaches to the task of mission and evangelism.

We need many more consultations such as the "Digging Deeper" consultation that has already been held. Some have argued that the seeds of the 20th century decline of the church were sown by a thoughtless and huge church extension program in the late Victorian period.

We cannot afford to repeat those mistakes. The life of the church in the early decades of the 21st century will reveal whether or not we have brought good theology to bear on the task we are presently attempting. ❖

(Reprinted with permission from *Church Growth Digest*.)  
*Dr Martin Robinson will be the principal presenter at Spring Conference in Wollongong, 4-6 November. He is a Churches of Christ minister in the UK and was previously the secretary of the British Conference. Martin is now with the UK Bible Society as Director for Mission and Theology.*

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## Personal

### Baptisms

• Lynette, Kerrie and Amanda Matheson, Carra Ridley, Linda McAllister, Christine Hill, Adam Martin, Yarrawonga, Vic • David White, Boronia, Vic • Warren Maher, Geoff Hitchcock, Teresita Hitchcock, Joy Whitten, Matthew Harmer, Nathan Harmer, Susan Turnbull, Brian Mong, Dale Darby, York St, Ballarat, Vic • Mark Fraser, Hampstead Gardens, SA • Lorraine Clarke, Shane Stanfield, John Harpham, Janet Foster, Donna Hart, Noarlunga Centre, SA • Steve Ward, Heather Clarke, Warragul, Vic

### Marriages

• Coral Friebe and Daniel Clarke, Castlemaine, Vic • Charisse Woolcock and Andy Ede, Boronia, Vic • Fiona Flett and Angus Godfrey, Kylie Sims and Tim Vincent, Kathryn Ferguson and Alan Neill, Glenys Colston and Ian Harbottle, Ann St, Brisbane, Qld • Dorothy Olsen and Colin Foley, Helen Bishop and Adam Guy, Launceston, Tas • Louise Sousa and Steven Konigson, Oakleigh, Vic

### Deaths

• Ronald Watson, Bexley North, NSW • Evelyn Asquith, Pev Kennedy, Boronia, Vic • Gladys Barclay, Oakleigh, Vic • Ian Kneebone, Warragul, Vic

### Changes

**SWAN HILL:** Minister-Larry Edwards, 40 Thurla St, Swan Hill, Vic 3585. Phone (050) 32 9449 (office), (050) 33 2965 (home).

### Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

**Nixon, Ivan W.** (6.12.94) Born in 1911 at Northam, WA, Ivan graduated from COB at Glen Iris in 1940. Major ministries were in WA where he served at Bassendean and South Perth. He was active on the Youth Department and Home Mission Committee, conducted the Conference Radio Program and acted as interim editor of *The Western Christian*. 1952-53 he was State Conference President. Later he served in SA at Port Lincoln and Colonel Light Gardens. He returned to engineering work, but deteriorating health confined him to a nursing home for many years. His wife Nancy, their six children and grandchildren were joined by a large group of friends at his funeral to recall happier days and commit Ivan to his Lord.

—Ron Holmes

**Watson, Ronald Alfred Eric** (8.1.95) Ron's life has been lived totally to the glory of his God, whom he loved and served. Ron worshipped at Enmore, Hamilton, Georgetown and Bexley North, NSW, with his wife Mid and served as

## Church News

### SA

**BORDERTOWN (N. Baxter)** Sunday night fellowship encouraged in lieu of night services during January. Pool party & BBQ finalised summer fellowship meetings ... February looking month, looking forward, out, up & family ... Rock the Flock ministry very successful, many blessings & baptisms ... Church looking forward to Global Mission with Billy Graham ... Church pledging support for Donna Biddle in ministry training ... Tim Lloyd returns from WEC College in Tasmania ... Bible Club commences with good numbers.

**NOARLUNGA CENTRE (Roger Risson)** 260, including the Mayor, Mayoress and two local State Members of Parliament, attended the induction service of Roger Risson. The induction was performed by the State Minister David Brooker ... Fran Ackers, Audrey James, Kees Ravesteyn, Dawn Phillips, Kath

Christian Endeavour Superintendent, deacon and through music. As leader of the song services at Bexley North, he became fondly known as "Heavenly Sunshine", depicting the love of Christ which radiated in his life. His family, Kevin, Maree and Gwenda, and Don and their families and his brother Bern, deeply miss him. At home with his Lord. Safe in the arms of Jesus.

Menzel, Jean Griffen, Ron Scown, Elizabeth Hart & Lorna Moxham all transferred in.

### Qld

**ANN ST, BRISBANE (Bill Flett)** Successful Christmas carol service Cathedral Square shared with Indonesian Fellowship who contributed vocally & with native instruments ... All auxiliaries resumed for 1995 ... Initial CWF meeting emphasised need for Scriptures in China with appropriate themes ... Several weddings in January ... Alan & Kathy Neill & Kayla Ferguson farewelled to Cobar where Alan is geologist ... First social barbecue picnic 4 February in park under Story Bridge.

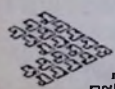
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For further information write: The Elders  
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25 Ash Drive, Banora Point NSW 2486



# Church News

## Vic

**YARRAWONGA (Keith Thompson)** Church combined with other churches for Christmas carol service 18 December ... Presbyterians joined with us for Christmas Day service ... Much blessing at both senior & junior camps held at Cheshunt ... Three young people baptised 22 January ... Forbes appeal for one year was \$536 ... 100 years ago the mother of a present member was baptised in river at Yarrowonga. 500 watched from the bridge!

**NORTH BALWYN (Keith Bowes)** Keith & Christine Wiggins farewelled in December. Keith completed valuable student ministry ... Minister & student minister conducted creative Christmas Day service ... Gordon Stirling preached on "Making a Minister" in preparation for Wayne Allen's ministry ... Jan Wilson new church secretary ... Dorothy Geyer home from hospital ... Stable Association now providing four homes for families in crisis situations; families given Christmas hampers.

**CASTLEMAINE (Ross Bourdon)** Ross Bourdon & family welcomed into ministry ... Recent guest speakers have included Greg Elsdon, Messiah Australia, David Harmer ... Recent missionary service involved members speaking about missions they support ... Church rebuilding program slowed by Council red tape ... Fellowship looking with confidence to the new year.

**BORONIA (Keith Milne, Darren Hickling)** Church showed its appreciation of Andrew Henley's five-year ministry with words & gifts on 29 January. The family will continue in membership as Andrew has break from pastoral ministry ... 5 February saw Darren Hickling inducted into team ministry with Keith Milne by Stephen Curkpatrick of CCTC. Further welcome at church dinner later in day ... Dedication of elders, deacons & auxiliary leaders followed the induction.

**SWAN HILL (Larry Edwards)** Chapel filled on evening of 3 February when Carl Clayden (Wangaratta, Vic-Tas Minister to Ministers) inducted Larry Edwards into ministry here ... Board member, Maren Chandler, congratulated on being announced "Victorian of the Year" on 25 January ... Minister, elders & board held retreat at Ultima during February for prayer, in-depth discussion & forward planning.

**ORMOND (Jonathan Moore, Pamela Longmuir)** Bethany Nursery School put on Christmas tab-

leau ... Christmas hampers distributed to needy ... All churches of district filled our church for carol service ... \$1,700 forwarded to SIMAid ... Minister & family enjoyed holidays ... Welcomed several visitors over holidays ... Paul Bauer farewelled. He will commence full-time ministry with Kaniva ... Much planning for year done ... Fete to be held 18 March ... SIMAid Mission weekend 31 March-2 April.

**OAKLEIGH (W.J. Edwards)** Church activities off to a good start for 1995. Introductory service conducted by minister on 5 February

... Three sisters—Freda Fraser (Oakleigh), Jean Wylie, Essie Fountain (Temora, NSW) reconsecrated ... CWF commenced on 7 February under leadership of Barbara Edwards ... Craft classes under way with B. Edwards & Freda Fraser ... Andrew Brown seriously ill, also Alice (Lal) Banner.

**WARRAGUL (D. & D. Buesnel)** Successful Carols on the Hill held ... Husband baptised his wife during morning worship service ... Farmer family returned from three months in PNG with successful Primary Eye Care Project ... Recent speakers Steve Ward & Ben

Crowden ... Abbott family moved to Sydney area ... Two teachers transferred to Melbourne ... Commitment Sunday planning well under way ... Ministers attended induction service for minister at Traralgon.

## Tas

**LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, D. Tobler, W. Kerrison)** Working bees landscaping church property ... Chris Brooks told CWF of his work among the street children of India ... Much sickness among the members.

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## "Support Amity Press"

### Archbishop calls for funds

After visiting China's Amity Press, Britain's Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, has called upon Christians everywhere to support the production of Bibles in China.

In a letter to *The Times* newspaper, the Archbishop strongly encouraged people to use their money to support the work of the Amity Press to enable more Bibles to be printed and distributed inside China.

"Better by far to use the money to print Bibles and to support Amity in its work than to smuggle Bibles to meet the deficit", the Archbishop wrote.

Since its establishment in late 1987, Amity Press has printed more than 8 million Bibles and New Testaments and hundreds of thousands of hymnals, most of these have been distributed to the different churches across the People's Republic of China by the China Christian Council (CCC). During 1995, total production is expected to pass 10 million.

The Bible Society in Australia is part of the work of Amity Press through the United Bible Societies. The Bible Society helped fund the establishment of the press and now contributes to the cost of

the special paper that is needed to print Bibles.

According to Mike King, who works with the Press, a spiritual renewal is occurring in China. "There is a spiritual revolution in China and God is laying the foundation through this printing plant for something greater. What is happening in China will have an impact on the future and when people give, God will return the blessing."

In addition to producing Bibles and New Testaments in Chinese, in large print and Simplified Script Editions which are favoured by young people, the Amity Press also produces Bibles and New Testaments in minority languages.

Despite the volume and variety of Scriptures produced, demand still far exceeds available supply.

According to the Bible Society, the explosion of Christian faith in China is such that three new church buildings open somewhere in China every two days.



• Archbishop Carey meets Amity Press representatives

## The Last Word

**Prayer is a two way operation—man talking to God and God talking to man.**  
—Leonard Ravenhill

How do you make a statue of an elephant? Get a stone and carve away all that doesn't look like an elephant!

\*\*\*\*\*

An excited father at the maternity hospital said to the nurse, "Quick, tell me, is it a boy?" The nurse tried to break it to him gently. "Well, the one in the middle is."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Doctor, I think I am a bridge."

Doctor: "What's come over you?"

"Three cars, two trucks and a petrol tanker."

\*\*\*\*\*

Music teacher: "Today the school band will play Mozart."

Voice from the back of the classroom: "I bet Mozart loses."

\*\*\*\*\*

A hastily written note on a faulty washing machine:

"This machine filleth with water—but it toileth not, neither doth it spin."

\*\*\*\*\*

Some people haven't got much to say, but you have to listen to them for a long time before you find out.

\*\*\*\*\*

Parents spend the first part of a child's life getting them to talk and walk, and the rest of their childhood telling them to be quiet and sit down.

\*\*\*\*\*

People wise enough to give good advice are usually too wise to give any.

\*\*\*\*\*

Psychiatrist: "Do your children present a behaviour problem?"

Parent: "I don't know. I have never seen them behaving."

\*\*\*\*\*

Opportunity looks so much like hard work that few people recognise it.

\*\*\*\*\*



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