

THE AUSTRALIAN

Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 99 No. 15, 7 September 1996

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“What is now at issue is not so much whether churches can grow; it is whether the members of a particular church are ready to make growth a sufficient priority that they are willing to make necessary changes in the life of their church.”

Martin Robinson, “To Win the West”

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Vol. 99 No. 15, 7 September 1996

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Editorial

A Great Task

DON SMITH

As this editorial is being written our state representatives of the Australian Board of Church Development and Education (ABCDE) are meeting in annual conference. There is an encouraging spirit of unity and cooperation between our states. There is also diversity within the life of our national church. This is common to Australian society as a whole. Regionalism exists. Regionalism has various characteristics which may include differences of history, geography, size, population and economics. * These aspects are part of our corporate make up as Australians and



as members of Churches of Christ. Sometimes distance and other social factors have made for suspicion, disunity and dislocation. Recent decades have seen our states drawn together. We have witnessed convergence and experienced a stronger sense of cooperation and unity. For this we give thanks to God. * Given the sheer size of our continent and our social and political history, it is natural that the practical base for our work is within each state and territory. Common sense supports that. But in areas such as the work of the Board our states come together nationally to share in the whole ministry of church development, which includes concerns for mission, evangelism, church planting, education, youth ministry and the like. * This is a time to be encouraged. For all the problems and negative forces challenging our churches, there is much more to be thankful for. On every hand there is encouragement, achievement and signs of growth. There is an essential vigour and confidence abroad. * What we need now is a developing national vision and a sharing of leadership resources so that states can support each other. But beyond this, we must develop a new national vision which is linked to sound strategic planning. All this requires the exercise of the creative imagination. Ideas are fundamental as we find ourselves amid tides of change in Australian society. Understanding these issues and speaking to needs is paramount if we are to sustain and develop the growth already evident. This is a great task in which we can all unite. The nationwide leadership within the Board is already deeply committed to the task. They need your support and prayer as we move towards the new millennium. *

Local Outreach

In our feature on the Australian Board of Church Development and Education, we look at issues in the Board's work, and particularly issues involved in role with local churches.

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The Australian Christian welcomes letters from its readers. Short letters up to 175 words stand the best chance of publication. All letters may be edited. We reserve the right to omit letters altogether.

Triple J

To the Editor,

I was interested to read the article, "Triple J Comes to Bendigo" ("AC" 3.8.96), and in particular the comment that "JJJ is the call-sign of a Melbourne commercial radio station".

JJJ is, of course, an ABC network. Given the ABC's funding squeeze at the moment, you may be prophetic in suggesting the future status of our youth network, but for the moment we should set the record straight.

The confusion could have arisen for your writer given that the story was about the employment of new staff ... something which may happen in commercial radio but, alas, is most unlikely within the ABC!

Finally, congratulations on the revamped "AC".

—David Busch

(ABC Radio Religious Programs, Brisbane)

[Whoops! —Ed.]

Southern Cross

To the Editor,

Congratulations on a new look *The Australian Christian* especially the use of the Southern Cross in your logo!

Its five stars remind us of the wounds of Jesus—his bloodied brow, hands, feet and side which, in turn, are symbols of a life lived and lost for others.

And just as the symbol of Jesus' life helps us find our way through life, so too, the Southern Cross.

When its long axis is extended 3.5 times it marks due south, making it a compass; it orbits the earth every 24 hours, making it a clock, on the same day of every year it points due north, making it a calendar.

Of course "Southern Cross" is but our Anglo-Christian name for this distant constellation. One Koori tribe knew it as "The Tree of Life"—a giant gum tree in the night sky—"a symbol of growth and shade and happiness".

Somehow, these two understandings seem complimentary: is not the "body" of Jesus a Tree of Life?

I have long dreamt that one day there might emerge in this land a "Church of the Southern Cross"—a place of growth and shade and happiness. Of course, this is much more than changing a name or adopting a new logo it is a matter of spirit.

Indeed, I wonder if we would be worthy of such a title or true to such a symbol?

—Mike Janssen
(Preston, Vic)

Homosexuality

To the Editor,

In his letter ("AC" 3.8.96) Dr Jago makes some statements about homosexuality as fact but offers no evidence. His comments serve only to add fuel to the fire of misinformation which burns in minds of those easily lead on such issues, the homophobic among us and those scared of their deepest feelings.

Homosexuality is not a choice, nor is it an orientation, nor is it a condition one can catch. It is an inner state of being which is with someone regardless of their upbringing. It cannot, therefore, be overcome. Homosexuality is not a wrong to be righted.

Tens of thousands of homosexuals in monogamous and loving

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Letters to the Editor

relationships are leading healthy and normal lives.

Promiscuity among gay men, lesbians and heterosexuals represents a dangerous lifestyle and this should be of more concern to Dr Jago and his ilk.

Dr Jago's comments are most dangerous when read by parents who have just learned about their child's homosexuality. His words will only add to the guilt they feel and the pain they suffer as they consider how to cure them of this evil choice they have made.

What Dr Jago wrote is wrong.

—Mark Fletcher
(St Kilda, Vic)

Followship

To the Editor,

Thanks ever so much to Rob Wilson, Narre Warren, for his forthright and timely letter on "Followship". All I want to say is that "he sure hit the nail on the head", and not only with an ordinary claw-hammer but with a very heavy sledge.

Thanks again, Rob.

—Doug Holloway
(Queensland)

Followship

To the Editor.

Bravo, Rob Wilson! Your letter on "Followship" ("AC" 3.8.96) is a sad reminder of the problems experienced by so many in our churches, and it gives all of us the opportunity to further discuss not only leadership models but also their consequences.

Rob Wilson's letter describes the painful results of his experience of an autocratic style leadership in the form of an eldership who appear to take on a form of "papal infallibility" and who demand obedience.

Instead of quoting Scriptures on "obedience" it may be more appropriate for such leaders to carefully examine the advice given by

Peter who, as an elder himself, writing to early church elders (1 Peter 5), urged them to nurture their flocks.

There is no mention of treating their congregations like sheep! What is so sad about Rob Wilson's letter is that it had to be written at all. Worse, though, it is a telling indictment on what appears to be an unhappy trend in our churches. Unless this issue is more carefully examined, we can expect to not only hear about more churches in turmoil but also about many, hurting individuals.

—Ian Field
(Mt Waverley, Vic)

Gun Control

To the Editor,

I must write in support of Tom Frazer's article ("AC" 20.7.96) concerning gun control. I feel Greg Foot does not understand the implications of firearms. Mr Foot claims there is no move afoot to ban or abolish firearms. The Tasmanian Firearm Owners' Association has learned from the Police Minister that all Tasmanian firearm licences will be revoked, 57,000 of them. He expects only about 10,000 to be renewed.

Mr Foot mentions gun deaths in the USA, UK and Japan. He does not put them into relatable figures such as numbers per 100,000 of population. A WHO survey of 1989 gave the USA a murder rate of 10.8:100,000, Japan 0.8:100,000 and England and Wales

0.6:100,000. El Salvador had a murder rate of 129.4:100,000. Australia's rate was 2:100,000.

As for the removal of firearms from society making it a less violent place, research in England and Wales shows that as the number of firearms was reduced

in the hands of the public, the number used in robberies climbed from 700 in 1974 to about 6,000 in 1992. Violence comes from people, not the objects they use to obtain their ends.

—Reg Hardwick
(Richmond, Tas)

Update

Dear Readers,

The feature articles in this issue come from the Australian Board of Church Development and Education. The Board is part of our National structure. I would encourage your congregation to support the work financially and to use the range of printed resources. Enquires can be made by contacting the office at 77 Capel St, West Melbourne 3003. We are receiving many news items and will include them as space allows. Thank you for your interest. Wherever possible we try to have all states represented. Positive comments about the paper continue to come to hand from all states. All this is most encouraging.

As noted in the last issue, 1997 will be our 100th year of publication. We are planning all sorts of features and look to 1997 being a great year of expansion. Meanwhile we would encourage you to introduce the paper to people in your church by com-

pleting the request for a trial subscription. Details are found on page 8. Already we have had a good response to this offer. It will be successful if you help us. I would also like to remind you about our need for replacement of equipment. This is a \$6000 bill which is quite beyond us. We would welcome gifts or enquiries. Your church may wish to make a gift.

Our cover quotation comes from a new book by Dr Martin Robinson who will be visiting a number of our states shortly. Martin is a Churches of Christ minister, with experience in church planting. He was also the Secretary of our British Conference prior to his current role as a director of the Bible Society. His thoughts are a challenge to every church. The book is available from ABCDE.

Sam Smith



Pontius' Puddle

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Basement Bargain

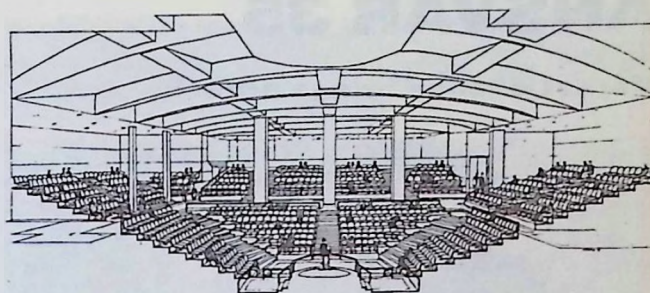
800-seat auditorium for city church

A new 800-seat auditorium is the vision of Melbourne's Swanston Street congregation. The shell of the basement of what was previously known as Jensen House adjoining the church site in Swanston Street has been given to the church by the developers in exchange for a 3 m wide airspace along the church's boundary.

When Jensen House was being sold in June 1995 the church went to the auction of the 12-storey ex-Commonwealth Government building built during the Second World War. The purchase was seen as a part of a strategic plan for the future of the work in Melbourne's central business district. The church already had 700 Sun-

day attenders and needed more space to cater for anticipated growth to 1000 communicants. This would require a doubling of the present facilities. A Mandarin congregation had also grown to 150, making it the largest in the city. The church had faced space limitations and seating for only 500 by expanding into inner city areas, working with churches such as Brunswick and South Yarra (now Stonnington) but there was always the commitment to the city and the auction seemed to be the answer.

At the auction the church had cash, promises and investment units of \$250,000, which was 10 per cent of the estimated reserve



Architect's view of Swanston Street's new auditorium

price. The auction started at \$1.8 million and soon there were only two bidders left, Chris Ng, on behalf of the church, and another, later discovered to be the Walker Corporation. The bidding went to \$3.24 million before the church withdrew.

The buyers felt they had a bargain and were easily able to outbid the church. Their plan was to completely renovate the building for accommodation of over 500 overseas students (the building is near the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) in some 270 furnished units. A further three storeys have been added and the units will open for the 1997 academic year.

The church felt discouraged by the loss, but recognised the opportunity to work with so many students with whom they believed they could closely identify. The church contacted the developers about the possibility of using the

basement for an auditorium. The developers proved obdurate to negotiations and common neighbourly courtesies were not observed. However in January 1996 the developers realised that their building permit did not include 115 windows over the church property. Considerable confusion followed and the 3 m airspace was subsequently negotiated. The church is responsible to fit out the basement for which it now holds the freehold title. Preliminary drawings are being prepared and what seemed impossible is now a reality.

The church, with its long-term dependence on God in so many projects, is giving thanks to him for this wonderful outcome. The vision now is that the auditorium will be filled twice on Sundays with outreach possibilities as never known before. The congregation is committing itself to prayer for the great task ahead.



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6.30pm Service — Turramurra Uniting Church, 10 Turramurra Avenue, Turramurra. Phone (02) 9144 1440.

TUE 17 SEPT 7.00pm Dinner — Rydges Hotel North Sydney — \$25 per person
54 McLaren Street North Sydney.
For reservations please phone Bev on (02) 9906 1252 ext 16.

COFFS HARBOUR

WED 18 SEPT 7.30pm Mission Night — St John's Anglican Church, McLean St. Coffs Harbour. Phone Stephen O'Donoghue (066) 514 700.

MELBOURNE

SAT 21 SEPT 7.00pm Dinner — Grand Buffet Hall, Union House — \$25 per person. University of Melbourne (off Tin Alley).
For reservations please phone Gerald Davis on (03) 9741 2786.

SUN 22 SEPT 9.30am — St Philip's Anglican Church, 460 Blackburn Road, Doncaster East. Phone (03) 9841 7427.
7.00pm — Syndal Baptist Church, 588 High Street Road, Glen Waverley. Phone (03) 9803 9144.

THU 26 SEPT 7.00am Breakfast — *Christians in Business* — \$15 per person. St Kilda Travelodge, Cnr St Kilda Rd. and Park St. South Melbourne.
For reservations please phone Richard Whaley on (03) 9879 7246.

ADELAIDE

SAT 28 SEPT 7.00pm Dinner — Barton Room — \$25 per person. Adelaide Regal Park Inn, 44 Barton Terrace East, North Adelaide.
For reservations please phone Owen Davis on (08) 332 5686.

SUN 29 SEPT 9.00am and 10.30am — Aberfoyle Uniting Church, 42 Sunnymead Drive, Aberfoyle Park. Phone (08) 370 6472.
6.30pm Service — Pedare Christian College, Surrey Farm Drive, Golden Grove. Phone (08) 289 5224.

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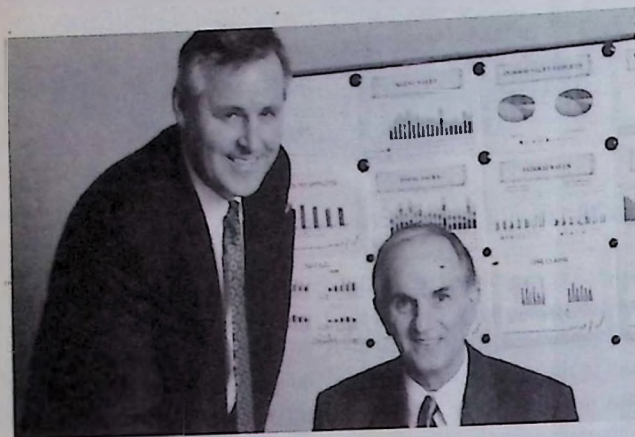
The above church is seeking the services of a pastor who can relate to working and middle class people. We are looking for a man with the ability to show care and understanding to young and old alike.

The Mt Druitt church is a Bible-based church operative in the Gifts of the Spirit and enjoys being in the presence of God. The church is looking for a man around 45 years of age, married and who has the total support of his wife.

If you are interested, please forward your CV to the Secretary, Selection Committee of the above church.

ANSVAR 35

Market change brings growth



ANSVAR's John Peberdy and Ian Williams

Five years after broadening its market approach, ANSVAR Australia Insurance Limited has strengthened its hold on special-

ist church insurance in its 35th anniversary year.

The Swedish-founded ANSVAR came to Australia in 1961 and is

represented in 10 countries, with worldwide assets of about \$700 m. In Australia it is one of the major church property and liability insurers, with widespread support from most religious denominations.

ANSVAR's important contribution to the promotion of temperance saw its first 30 years in Australia as a time of growth, but in 1991 it moved to insure a broader market while still remaining as a niche insurer.

"Growth in the past five years has averaged more than 20 per cent annually," says general manager Ian Williams, "and we have extraordinary strength as a church insurer in Australia, much of this as a result of the insurance knowledge of operations manager, John Peberdy."

ANSVAR's business in motor and

household insurance has also grown, and this was considered an area of major importance. However, a recent survey commissioned by ANSVAR found that the company was seen as an exclusive insurer for non-drinkers and regular churchgoers, a perception which is not true.

"You don't have to be a teetotaler or a regular churchgoer to be a policyholder," Mr Williams said. "Primarily we are here to service a niche market and support all policyholders who endorse the use of profits to, for example, educate teenagers towards a lifestyle without drugs and alcohol."

ANSVAR has supported Youth for Christ's "Aussies Alive" program, Drug ARM and the Motivational Media Australia program, which educates while capturing the imagination of Australian teenagers.

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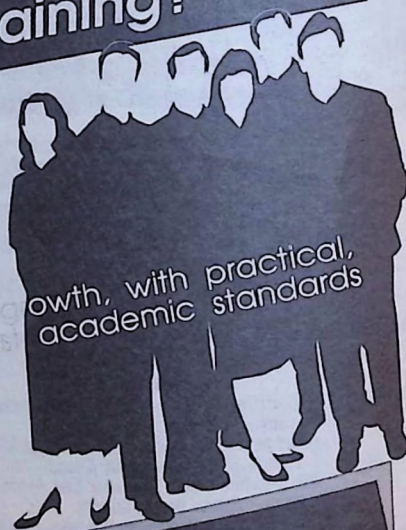
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No Time

Youth ministry in PNG

What is it? "What's wrong Shem? Why didn't you shave? You look different Shem!" said the missionaries who met Shem after the camp. I replied, "No time". Yes, too busy.

No time to clean the face. No time for breakfast. No time to brush your teeth. No time to talk with your friends for more than five minutes. No time to say long prayers before bed. No time to sit and talk with my son and wife before they went to bed.

I'm glad it's over. What is it? The Churches of Christ Youth Camp. I'm glad it is over so that I can clean my face and look like Shem as I was before the camp.

The camp went from 16 to 22 July 1996. Throughout that time I went to bed at midnight and woke each morning at 5 am. It's really hard

when you run big programs like this and don't have the leadership force necessary. This makes you feel as if you have to do everything, because if you don't do it, it may not be done.

Moses Bakura, the camp study leader, ran studies on the theme "Youth for Christ". The camp speaker, Yamli, presented the Word of God so clearly to the 1,400 young people. With this number of teenagers, we were running short on houses. Many of them used canvas and others slept under the floor of the houses (the houses here are built above the ground).

At the opening ceremony the young people marched around the soccer field in their groups and uniforms, carrying their banners. As sport is one of the main activities in the camp, groups competed in soccer, volleyball, basketball, long jump, high jump and running. Trophies and medals were awarded to the winners at the end of the camp. Sarah Hunt was awarded a gold medal for the girls' high jump.

Many expressed how happy they were to see such programs bring-



Young people standing in front of the temporary grandstand after marching, while waiting for Toni Waulik and Shem Tema to present speeches

ing together Churches of Christ young people who never knew each other before. It was a time of building relationships and now, as they get to know each other, they know who they will be praying for. These are the words they used: "Dispela i gutpela tru, long wanim i mekim yumi save long arapela."

Many young people travelling to the camp spent 2-3 days on their way and slept on the beach along the river bank. This shows their desire for such programs and their love for Christ.

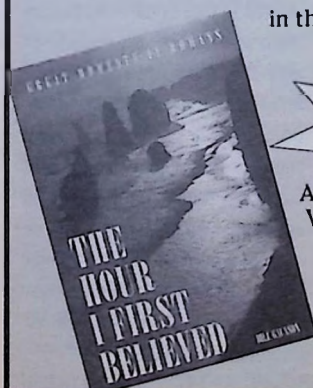
Please pray for our Youth Ministry Department, that it will be able to produce leaders committed to the welfare of our young people. The next combined program will be in 1998. Programs in 1997 will be held in different areas under local coordinators with some help from me. I hope to get some sleep before then!

—Shem Tema, Papua New Guinea (PS. Shem and Elizabeth Tema have returned to Vanuatu to await the birth of their baby, due in early November. They hope to return to PNG in December.)

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Conference President Dies

Members of Kadina and Balaklava, SA, Churches of Christ and Owen Community Church were saddened at the end of June by the unexpected death of Kaye Wray. Kaye was the first woman President of Northern Districts Conference in its more than 100 years. Brian Roberts, Secretary of the Northern Districts Conference, said of Kay that she was enthusiastic about being President and reminded us that spreading the Gospel was the most important thing. She had been active in journalism with the



local rural press and won the Dalgety award for excellence in rural journalism.

Epping Support

\$500 per week pledge for new ministry

Members of the Epping, NSW, church have pledged \$500 per week for a new support worker with a welfare background. The new appointee will be employed for 2.5 days a week and the duties will include counselling for families, training and supervising volunteers from the church for outreach support to lone parents and "shut ins", respite care to single-parent families and welfare assistance to families. This ministry will

network with other service providers and already forty people have volunteered to help out. Office extensions to accommodate the church's ministers, secretary and the new worker are being considered.

The new appointee will join Epping's ministry team—David Moyes, Tim Ferris (youth) and David Timms, a lecturer at CCTC Carlingford, who works with the church on a part-time basis.



David Moyes

Leadership 2000

Off to America

Twenty-five church leaders left Australia on 2 September for a nine-day visit to US West Coast churches. Included in the group are 13 nominated ministers from Churches of Christ congregations, two Uniting Church ministers who have requested participation at their expense, Jeff Weston, National Director of the Overseas Mission Board and nine senior ministers from our churches. Included will be visits to Saddleback Community Church, Los Angeles, and Skyline Wesleyan Methodist Church, San Diego.

Some will stay on to visit other churches and projects. This will be the third trip sponsored by Christian Projects.

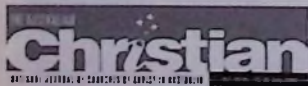


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Here and There New Archbishop For Southern Africa

Following the retirement of the well-known Desmond Tutu, a successor has been named. The Rt Revd Winston Njongonkulu Ndungane will succeed him in the Diocese of Cape Town and the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. The new archbishop noted that the instruments of a sustainable democracy are in place. He described the task of the church as an agent of transformation in building a new society. One of the greatest challenges is poverty.

WCC Short of Funds.

Income is no longer sufficient to pay for present activities in which the World Council of Churches is engaged warned the Rev Konrad Raiser, General Secretary in a letter to the 330 member churches. A large number of churches pay nothing. Staffing levels were reduced by 20% in 1991–92. A further 16% reduction will occur this year. Staffing will then be one third less than at the time of the last Assembly in Canberra.

CWF Assembly

The International CWF has announced that the Quadrennial Assembly will be held at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA, 24–28 June 1998. An attendance of 4,000 women is expected.

World Mission Conference

"Called To One Hope—The Gospel in Diverse Culture" is the theme of the forthcoming international conference of the World Council's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The meeting is of major strategic significance in world mission planning. It will be held 24 November – 3 December 1996 in Salvador, Brazil. Alan Hirsch will represent Australian Churches of Christ.

Marj Black

A Disciple quietly directing traffic at the intersection of the Stone-Campbell movement

Marj Black said she was going to keep a low profile at the World Convention of Churches of Christ in Calgary, Canada, this summer. Huh? Why would you do that when you're the president? Particularly when you are the *first woman* president of the 66-year-old world fellowship of three religious movements rooted in Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell?

That's precisely why she wanted to keep a low profile, she says—because she is the first woman president. Some of the more conservative elements in the Campbell-Stone movement are just beginning to accept women in leadership. And she doesn't want to make it difficult for them.

"I am not going to be as visible as some presidents," Black maintained. "Because you've got to crawl before you walk. You have to tread carefully." People who know the smiling 73-year-old dynamo from Guelph, Ontario, find it difficult to imagine a low-profile Marj Black.

But she will do it if she can. She is deeply committed to holding together the Disciples of Christ, independent Christian Churches and the noninstrumental Churches of Christ, a holding pattern that proves to be a major function of the World Convention. Normally, the Disciples of Christ find their kinship to the United Church of Christ, Presbyterians, Methodists and others who share in projects and leadership of the national, world and local councils of churches.

Independent Christian Churches and noninstrumental Churches of Christ—while rooted in the same Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ken-

tucky origins as the Disciples—ordinarily shun those ecumenical relationships.

That causes some Disciples to consider the blood ties a waste of time through the World Convention.

"I didn't, and don't, have any hangups about the differences that I hear about," says Black.

"Those differences were never a part of my life. I felt—because this was a place (the World Convention) where we could all meet—that I could get to know people. And hear the different sides of what goes on.

"My experience has been positive because I feel that we have a lot more things to hold us together than we have to draw us apart.

"Is there another vehicle that brings all these things together? I don't know of any other. Maybe I'm burying my head, but I see us working for all things that God wants us working for as Christians."

In her zeal for discovering and linking the Campbell-Stone Christians, Black has scouted out Campbellites and Stoneites all around the world.

She and her husband Don have crossed the remote mountains in Papua New Guinea—only hours, incidentally, before tribes murdered three people on a similar journey.

They've found Campbellites in Fiji and visited other Pacific islands. They've travelled the Caribbean and Europe. "I have friends around the world—not acquaintances, friends," says Black.

And they travel on freighters—finding more interesting ports of call, fewer tourists and less expense. "Cruise ships don't appeal

to me," says the World Convention president.

The World Convention says that there are groups of Christians tied to the Campbell-Stone movement in 158 countries around the world. Disciples of Christ in the United States have formal relations with only 12 of those, not counting some Disciples bodies

now subsumed in united churches.

Black is a native Canadian. You don't have to listen long to know that. When she says "about", it comes out sounding like something you ride in on the water.

She was born in a farming town of 300 people roughly equidistant from London (Ontario) and Toronto. She was ecumenical from birth, her father being Mennonite and her mother Anglican (Episcopalian, to US citizens). The church she attended included people from all sorts of denominations, including Roman Catholic.

She considers her youth one of a "firm Christian upbringing", with life full of everything meaningful, "everything important but money".

She married Donald, who became a foundry paymaster. When that job went sour, he went into the concrete business, specialising in underground services. Things weren't always easy; there were times when she couldn't write a cheque.

With a strong Christian background, Black found herself increasingly involved with the Women's Interchurch Council of Canada. She travelled to Bangkok in 1964 and 10 years later was tapped to be president of the World Christian Women's Fellow-



ship. That automatically made her a vice president of the World Convention. She served in that capacity for six years.

"Because I wanted to know more about World Convention, I made myself become involved, and then I became secretary. As secretary you learn more about an organisation than any other way. Because that's where all the work takes place," Black says.

Calgary was her fifth World Convention. "I'm a Disciple but when we go away I go to independent churches, I go to a *cappella* churches (churches of all three branches may be known as Churches of Christ overseas) because I want to learn," says Black. "I'm not putting my own church in the background at all, but I want to learn. For instance, in the South Pacific, the independents have more work than we do. You never know where you are going to get off a ship. We always try to look up some church work wherever we go. Sometimes you are not accepted as readily, but then again they aren't really offensive about it either."

Not being offensive about it is kind of the way Marj Black wants to project herself into the arena of reconciliation of the three great factions of a movement whose original intention was to eliminate factions.

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—Robert L. Friedly



Twenty Days in Atlanta

Rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep

An Olympic village is like a miniature world—197 nations living in a confined space with rumours that there is life outside the village. Expectancy and anticipation pervades the village in the early days along with hot, humid weather.

The build-up of excitement to the Olympic Games is unique. The drama and action at the various venues is an explosion of energy, ability and concentration that has been gathering momentum for years. It is a village of emotion as dreams and hopes are fulfilled or smashed. For the small community of Christian chaplains in the village it meant living the words "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15).

At our base in the village:

- We wept with an athlete from Cape Verde who injured himself in Atlanta and was thus unable to represent his country at their first appearance in the Olympic Games
- We wept with a young hurdler from Portugal who slipped in the village and injured her knee, and therefore couldn't take her place at the starting line.
- We wept with a long jumper from Trinidad who felt a great weight of responsibility to his nation, his coach, his sponsors and his supporters. His form was down and his focus was distorted. Eventually, as a result of an official decision, he was unable to compete. Nevertheless, we rejoiced in his faith in God and his fresh commitment to Christ who brought him peace in the middle of a turbulent time.
- We wept for Shane Kelly as his foot slipped off the pedal and ended his Olympic dream. We

felt too, the pain of many, many disappointments that other athletes experienced during the games.

- We wept for the dead and injured in the bombing, and for the city of Atlanta as it experienced the horror of terrorism. The mood change in the village was palpable as many of the athletes heard the blast from their residences. A city, whose hospitality was so generous, wholehearted and joyful, felt violated and cheated by senseless terror.
- We wept with members of the Liberian and Nigerian teams as they contemplated life after the games.
- We wept for the many Romanians and others who pleaded to receive a copy of the Jesus video in their own languages, but were unable to because of the demand. Happily, videos were posted after the Games.
- We rejoiced with the Koreans who expressed their faith so openly and joyfully. Each morning at 5.30 am up to 50 members of the Korean team would arrive at our chapel to pray for an hour.
- We rejoiced with the Nigerians who joined in times of worship and Bible study, and who carried home silver and bronze in their pockets. And ... we couldn't help but rejoice with them when their soccer team won gold!
- We rejoiced with Australian successes and their outstanding performances during the games. The gold-medal victory of Kieran Perkins was a real highlight. Yet, we felt for Australians who narrowly missed medals after giving their all.
- We rejoiced in the faith, commitment and humility of the Malawi

team, all of whom were Christians. We rejoiced with them as we shared Bible study, prayer and fellowship.

- We rejoiced with a Cuban athlete who came to our centre and, using the phone, made contact with his parents (now living in Atlanta) for the first time in 17 years. After a four-hour call, he subsequently met his parents in a local restaurant. This wonderful occasion was facilitated by a member of the chaplaincy team.
- We rejoiced when Josh Davis (USA gold medallist in swimming) came and testified of his faith in Christ at our worship service. We rejoiced too at his generosity as he handed around his gold medal.
- We rejoiced with tears when the Comoros team received a gift box of sporting gear from the US track and field team. Comoros was competing in the Olympic Games for the first time, and because of poverty, didn't have access to the clothing and footwear of other athletes. Through Madeleine Manning-Mims, a former gold medallist, and now chaplain to the US track and field team, a huge box of clothing and footwear was generously given by US athletes. In a small ceremony at our centre, the entire Comoros team received their gifts with huge smiles, and even huge grati-



tude. When Madeleine, an accomplished gospel singer, sang "I love you with the love of the Lord", tears flowed. Then spontaneously, a song of gratitude burst from the heart of a young Comoron.

- We rejoiced with thanksgiving that at the "greatest show on earth" God used an ordinary but living Christian community to touch lives and to bring the good news of the Kingdom to representatives from 197 nations.
- And we rejoiced as we considered the great challenges and possibilities that Sydney 2000 presents to Christians.

—Peter Nelson

Peter Nelson is minister of the Ainslie, ACT, church and was a chaplain with the Australian Olympic team.

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Local Outreach

Strategy and Urgency

ALAN HIRSCH

These are extraordinarily complex times, ones that will not only test our validity as a movement (if that is what we are!), but also the very feasibility of Christianity as a viable religious entity in the West. The statistics are against us. For Christianity in this land, the bubble has surely burst. And it seems that no matter how many times and how many different ways we try to reassure ourselves that things will be all right, the

We have been living in something like an ecclesiastical fool's paradise, comforting ourselves with trite and empty cliches about some coming revival, but we have largely failed to convert concern into action.

time has surely come for us to reckon with reality. We have been living in something like an ecclesiastical fool's paradise, comforting ourselves with trite and empty cliches about some coming revival, but we have largely failed to convert concern into action. We have done precious little to put our money and resources where our mouths have been. *

This rather polemic introduction to this focus on the Australian Board of Church Development and Education is not intended to disparage some good efforts, but simply to put on record that

what we are currently doing is simply not enough. Such a dilemma demands that we have a strategic approach to the church's key task and a notional vision to coordinate it. *

Why all this talk of a coordinated strategy? It sounds "military". What's all this got to do with Churches of Christ in Australia? We have just completed what has been described as Australia's most successful Olympic effort. We won medals way out of proportion to our relatively small population size. No small feat. But while all Australians can feel appropriately buoyed up by the experience, it is sobering to realise that such an event, with all its excitement and thrill, did not take place willy nilly. Somewhere in the past, people felt it was important enough to put time, resources and effort to develop our sporting capacities at world level. Desire for success then was translated into political and financial will. The Australian Institute of Sport is an example of an outcome of such active will engaging the task head-on. Mere wishful thinking was never going to be enough, something more active and engaging was required. Somewhere, somehow, some people managed to be strategic and coordinated and today we are reaping the sporting benefits. *

Clearly, in our movement, some people have to be set aside to be strategists in terms of the mission task confronting us in these destiny-loaded times. Some people need to actively seek the mind of God and somehow try to conform our responses to the future that he desires for this land. "Strategy" is our attempt to anticipate the future so that we can engage the present strategically. Seen in this light, such activity constitutes a statement of faith as to what we believe the future should be like and



how we should go about reaching that future. *

This is where the Australian Board of Church Development and Education fits in. At issue is the need to have national perspectives and national networks that prioritise essential aspects of training and equipping the church at grassroots level. Therefore support for the Australian Board of Church Development and Education is a vote for leadership development at a strategic level. It is a vote for a cohesive mission strategy that aims at engaging the future now. The role of the board in the national context is to provide a framework for the networking and stimulus of leaders and practitioners in mission and education. *

If we do not grow as a movement, and nationally, then there will be no effective movement left at all to worry about! Wishful thinking is not enough—it never has been—to change history. Our dreams must be translated into active doing. *

Alan Hirsch is the Executive Director of the Australian Board of Church Development and Education.

Local Outreach

The Spirituality Enigma

ALAN HERMANN

We would have to be blind and deaf not to be aware of the mushrooming growth of interest in spirituality across all strata of Western society. A quick glance at the shelves of any secular bookshop confirms this—and that is without even considering the numerous “New Age” shops hawking crystals, pyramids, aroma therapy or the like. There is a growing revolt against the spiritual aridity and barrenness of modern culture as people search for some form of spiritual anchor in life. Tragically many are following paths that are openly and profoundly anti-Christian.

The evidence of spirituality is obedience not ecstasy

People still seek answers to the ultimate questions of life, but they are looking elsewhere than Christianity. In a search for a profound depth of meaning to life that is emotionally and spiritually satisfying they prefer one that will make few if any demands in return. “I am the way, the truth and the life” and “take up your cross” or “no-one comes to the Father but by me” are seen as impossibly narrow and intolerant even, sadly, by many who claim allegiance to Christ. It is heartbreaking to see churches offering seminars in Buddhist or Aboriginal spirituality. * Within Christianity spirituality is also becoming an increasingly popular topic in conversations, seminars and books. This is, I believe, something to celebrate, but with some caution. My hesitation comes from the vague, nebulous and often confusing manner in which spirituality is so often described. There

seems to be a major confusion between spirituality and spiritual experience. As I wrote in *Come Alive*, “We long to be involved in some great spiritual and mystical experience. The truth, however, remains that the most effective path to spiritual maturity is to walk and talk with the Lord in the normal activities of our day to-day lives.” Spiritual experiences if and when they occur are wonderful but usually short-lived and often with little long-term growth in spirituality. They are an occasional by-product of spiritual growth, not the goal. Sadly some Christians and churches seem to be hurrying down this spiritual dead end. To quote Gordon MacDonald in *The Life God Blesses*, “In a world where the intensity of an experience is of great value, we are easily duped into thinking that a personal, momentary religious incident that leaves us ecstatic or astonished is far more genuine and satisfying than the hard work of developing spirituality.” * Part of the problem is that we have not developed a satisfactory evangelical approach to practical spirituality. We borrow practices from the Catholic, Pentecostal and Puritan traditions (all of which have much that is to be admired) but often without thinking through the context. (Alistair McGrath explores this issue excellently in *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*). There is a danger that we will concentrate on the forms and processes and lose the essence of the spiritual life in all its joy and life enriching depth. * What then is spirituality? I see it as the practical outworking in our daily life of the reality of our relationship with the indwelling Christ. It is essentially practical rather than mystical (Romans 12:1,2). It is to allow our relationship with Jesus as both Lord and Sav-



iour to flow through all aspects of our life. The evidence of spirituality is obedience not ecstasy (1 John 3:19–24). It is a journey of companionship with Christ that takes time, a lot of time, and discipline. Rather than a selfish demand for experience there is a growing desire to give of ourselves in service to God and others. With him we cry out in pain whenever we see others hurt or degraded, whether by themselves or others (2 Corinthians 8:9). We invest our life in people because in everyone we see the image of God. Our relationship with God deepens as we share time together and we find our growing dependence on him means growing independence of all else. The need for recognition, power, ownership and other forms of security are lessened as we progressively abandon ourselves to God and his service. We learn to live our lives for an audience of one. We are becoming the empty-handed victors who have found reality and are therefore able to offer hope. *

Ultimately spirituality can never be a wholly internal or individual experience. It is only real when God becomes real enough in us to touch those around us in every aspect of their lives. The messenger becomes the message. * Alan Hermann is Christian Ministries Officer in Queensland Conference.

Local Outreach

Education—Needing Reform?

LYNETTE LEACH

The Search Institute has released its major national study of more than 11,000 adults and youth in six US Protestant denominations in 1990. The theme of the study was effective Christian education. While the results are specific to the context in which the investigation took place, there are some broader issues that serve to highlight similar concerns in Australian churches. *

A primary task of the church is to nurture faith as a vital gift that influences the way a person chooses to live their life. There are two dimensions to this:

How does the church ensure that its members are growing in faith?

the vertical dimension of a relationship with God and a horizontal dimension of love and service to others. Jesus summarised it: loving God with your heart, soul, strength and mind, and loving your neighbour as yourself. *

Of concern was the large number of members who did not have what was described as an integrated faith, that is having strong vertical and strong horizontal dimensions to their faith. Both are necessary. *

The question that needs to be addressed by Christian educators is how does the church ensure that its members are growing in faith, able to account for what they believe, integrating faith and life, serving humanity and working for change and transformation in their community context? *

Everything that a church does is a vehicle for teaching. The local church needs to work on all aspects of formal

teaching programs and informal activities. Running a Sunday school or children's ministry program is not enough. Ongoing teaching can be provided through small groups, seminars, preaching and resources to read. *

Education is not only about the content of what is taught. The process and methods used are important. Traditional methods of learning were very teacher dependent. There has been a shift to interactive and inquiry-based learning, where the learner is an active participant in the process. Churches have the opportunity to develop creative approaches whereby people become far more actively involved in learning about faith. *

Relationships are another factor. Teachers who have positive, warm, caring relationships with those whom they teach are influential. *

A key aspect is the degree to which teachers model what they are communicating. This bears out the fact that the medium is the message. *

Teachers cannot teach what they do not know, they cannot communicate effectively what they are not experiencing themselves, else the words are empty, hollow, lifeless—not able to bear fruit. All engaged in Christian education—Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, small group leaders, ministers—have to pay attention to their own spiritual growth if they want to be effective. This includes commitment to personal spiritual disciplines as well as communal and corporate engaging with others in working out what Christian commitment means in contemporary society. *

The context for effective Christian education need not be located in church buildings. Encouraging families to talk about their faith experiences, helping



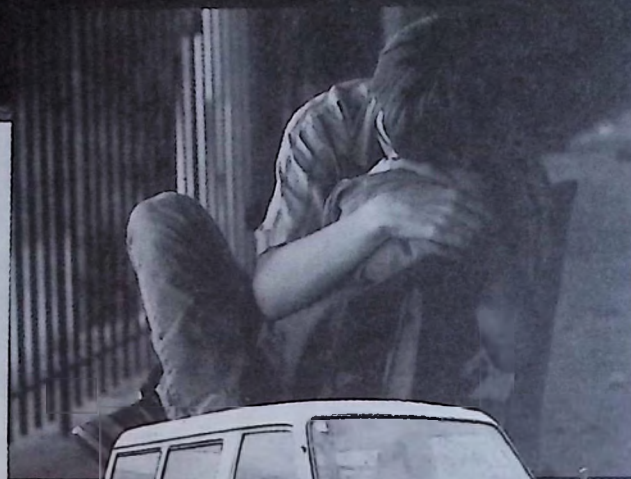
children by answering their questions honestly and providing ways for families to be involved in helping or service projects are ways of doing this. *

Focusing on life stages and transition times is another possibility. Deepening of faith can occur as a result of grappling with important questions related to the meaning and purpose of life, which are raised when dealing with major life changes, for example the birth of children, divorce, illness, unemployment, retirement, death. *

Churches should take seriously their commitment to teaching based on the example of Jesus. Mark's account of the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6) is in the section of his gospel where he records that Jesus taught in the synagogue, sent the twelve out not only to heal but to preach, and then, as the first act of compassionate ministry to the crowd, taught them. We would engage in more effective Christian education if we linked our teaching more strongly with other aspects of ministry and mission. This would see a greater outworking of the commission to go ... make disciples ... baptising them ... teaching them. *

Lynette Leach is involved in educational services within the Victorian-Tasmanian Conference.

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Local Outreach

Youth Vision

DARRYL SEIP

Studies show that 80 per cent of Christians make their decision to follow Christ before the age of 25. Their attitude to the Gospel for the rest of their lives depends on if and what they hear when they are teenagers. *

What does this say about the emphasis we should be placing on youth ministry in our churches? What does it say

80 per cent of Christians make their decision to follow Christ before the age of 25. Their attitude to the Gospel for the rest of their lives depends on if and what they hear when they are teenagers.

about the future of our churches if youth ministry is placed in the too-hard basket or left to someone else? *

Youth Vision Australia exists to give vision and direction, support and encouragement for youth ministry for Churches of Christ in Australia. *

There is no head office, no paid staff, no permanent source of funding. Its role is to provide an opportunity for networking and encouragement among youth leaders. It urges that youth ministry remains a strong

focus at state church level. * Recently Youth Vision organised the National Churches of Christ Youth Worker Gathering in Sydney and over 80 per cent of our youth ministers came. * Fong, current chairman of

YVA, stated experienced derie, encouraging prayerful support those committed youth work in years of involvement. Every state and the ACT were represented among the 58 participants. *

and local level. *

Youth Vision organised the National Churches of Christ

Youth Worker Gathering in Sydney and over 80 per cent of our youth ministers came. *

Fong, current chairman of that he had not such camaraderie and support from his 20

YVA has prepared an extensive resource index. *

This can be used as a reference tool to assist leaders to find the best in mission opportunities and leadership training. *

Youth Vision in each state and territory proceeds along its own road, depending on resources and needs. *

Activities are varied but all are designed to help encourage youth and youth leaders to make a significant impact on their community and their church. *

Things like:

- Statewide youth games where hundreds of young people combine for a weekend of fun and competition.

Some groups have up to 50 per cent of non-Christians in their teams. *

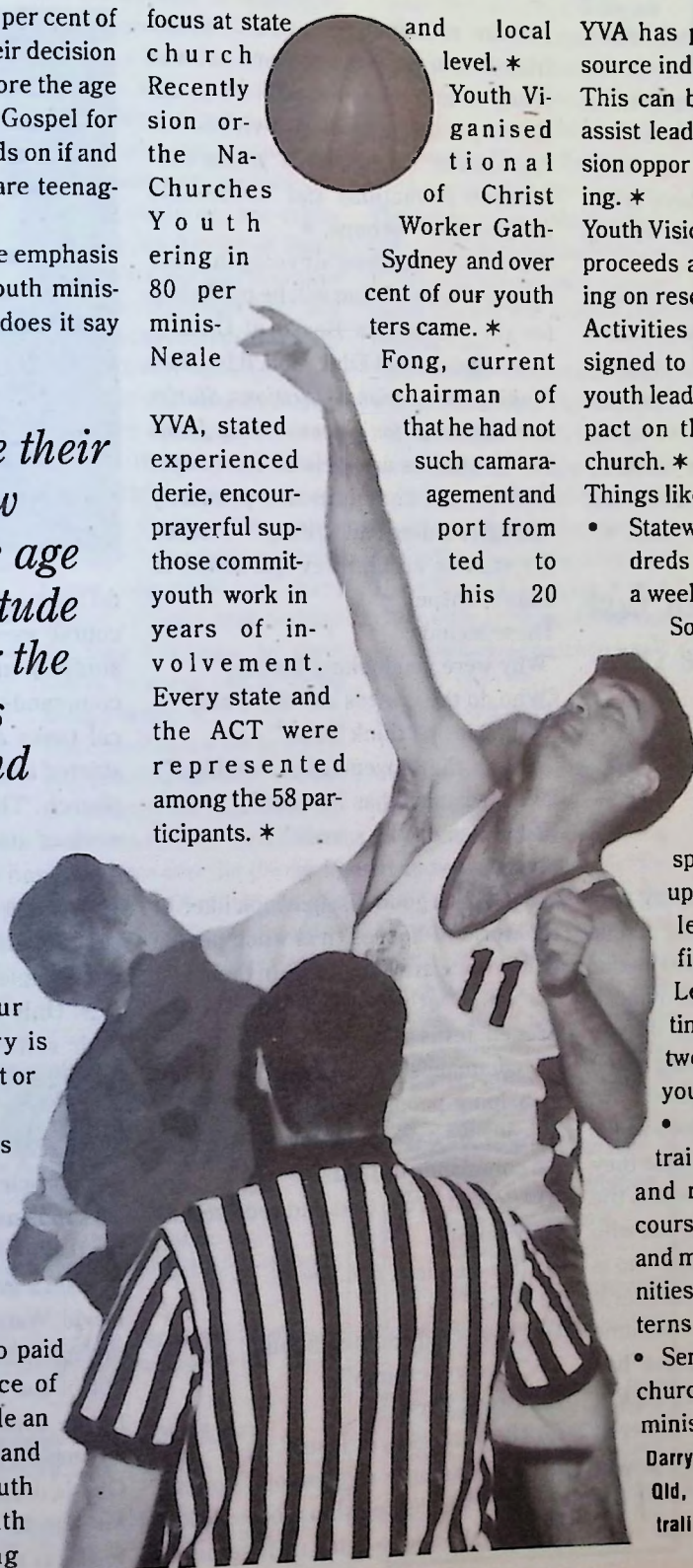
- Spiritual retreats and discipleship and leadership camps. *

• Training times where speakers can encourage, build up, challenge, and equip youth leaders who are in the field, week in, week out. Leaders talk about these times being the difference between them staying or leaving youth work. *

- Participating in formal training, advising our colleges and recommending topics and courses to be covered. Lecturing and mentoring. Providing opportunities for students to serve as interns in churches. *

- Serving as consultants. Advising churches on how to have a youth ministry. *

Darryl Seip is Director of Youth Vision, Qld, and a member of Youth Vision Australia.



Local Outreach

How is our Discipleship?

ASHLEY BARKER

UNOH is a coalition of missionaries among the poor in five Melbourne communities.

Since our ministries live and die on how we make disciples, we have no choice but to face questions like where is our discipleship going, and how do we help people grow.

Christians must model a lifestyle that is an alternative to those who are close enough to see it. A test of our integrity (and nerve) is how distinctly Christian we can continue to be when we spend large amounts of time as a minority among a group who are not interested, or even openly hostile to our faith. *

Discipleship is not just socialising people into our group. It is helping people become more like Jesus.

Discipleship is not just socialising people into our group. It is helping people become more like Jesus. Jesus is our yard-stick, not our church. An outback farmer was once asked, "How do you keep your cattle from straying when you have no fences?" He replied "We don't need fences, we have deep wells. Our cattle know in what direction they need to go to stay alive." If Jesus is the "well of life", the question is not who is "over the fence" and "in" and who is "outside the fence" and "out". Rather it is how can we help people become more like Jesus? This question has forced us to develop our own "inquiry studies". Much discipleship material assumes a person has prayed a prayer and is therefore considered "over the fence" (follow up material). Our stud-

ies aim at helping our non-Christian friends to have space to work out who Jesus is and what he calls us to do. When participants show evidence of "movement" they go on to "phase two" (church formation) and "leadership development" groups. *

We have finished developing the "phase 1" course that will be published for the Australian Board of Church Development and Education. It is called *Making Connections: Questions, Stories and Exercises for Encountering Jesus*. These studies are helpful for people who do not communicate primarily through reading and writing. We based the studies around key questions in Luke's Gospel. *

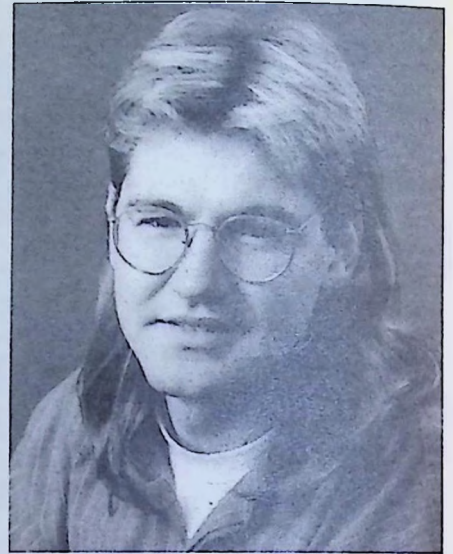
These include:

- "Why were you looking for me?"
- "Who do the crowds say that I am?"
- "Who does he think he is?"
- "What is the Movement of God like?"
- "Why, what evil has he done?"
- "Who then can be saved?"
- "Where is your trust?" *

What does a good disciple look like? In the world of "fences" it is when people fit into our Christian group. In the world of "wells" other measurements are needed. Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commands", and so we have aimed at helping people to obey Jesus. Specifically we have focussed on seven basic commands of Jesus:

- A) "Repent, trust God and receive the Holy Spirit
- B) "Be baptised and live it"
- C) "Pray"
- D) "Love God and neighbour
- E) "Give generously"
- F) "Break Bread"
- G) "Be witnesses of Jesus" *

A good example of someone coming through this discipleship process is Roy Tickner. When we catch up together to



do our "phase 2: Tough Journey" course we evaluate what he has been studying and doing around the seven commands. We then plan more practical tasks and study. To date he has started a food cooperative and a house church. This cycle provides a framework of discipleship that can be reproduced and owned by most people. *

The problem with discipleship is that we humans cannot manufacture genuine disciples of Jesus! It requires miracles! Only Jesus can turn people from their self-centredness. We must rely upon the Holy Spirit and not simply on technique, method or material. We must seek the Spirit's wisdom in how the miracle of conversion can happen. Methods may provide the environment for discipleship, but the journey is all by God's grace through faith. *

David Watson wrote, "Christ's call to discipleship is not primarily for the benefit of the disciple". Discipleship cannot be confined to being an individualist pursuit, but calls us to embrace what God is doing in the world. *

Ashley Barker is the Director of the Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope Mission in Springvale, VIC.

Hong Kong Feels the Pressure of 1997

GLYNTHA FINGER

As changeover edges closer, amid demonstrations marking the Seventh Anniversary of the Beijing Massacre, anxiety continues to deepen as Hong Kong comes to terms with its return to the motherland. In the face of a number of Mainland China comments and activities which some journalists are naming "de-democratisation", Hong Kong is shuddering with last minute doubts. *

In one week, as the gates closed midnight on March 31, 130,000+ Hong Kong residents had applied for British passports. This rush took place in the week after Beijing set into action the plan to dissolve Hong Kong's three levels of elected government and replace it with a provisional post-1997 body. This means that, including those already holding or applying for the BNO passport, less than half of the territory's residents would travel on Chinese issued passports after 1 July 1997. *

Problems surround Governor Chris Patten and his relationship with the Hong Kong Tycoons and "Big Business" after his comments during a recent

visit to the USA. He said they are not standing in support of Hong Kong but have sold out to China in a bid to cover all their bases as we move into Hong Kong, China. It is being asked at all levels whether these tycoons, many of them holding a foreign passport, are really working on behalf of Hong Kong or are working to protect their own rights post 1997. It is felt that if life changes radically post 1997, they will desert Hong Kong and take up their foreign passport option. There are many in Hong Kong who feel betrayed by the tycoons' actions and are starting to wonder whether "silence is golden". Some commentators have passed remarks that perhaps the time has come for more voices to speak out on Hong Kong's behalf. *

The churches are not free from this growing anxiety, conflict and controversy, either. The last weeks have seen heightened discussions over the 400 strong Selection Committee and whether the churches should be involved. Religious groups along with Labour, social services and other sectors have

been given 100 seats on the new Committee which will be involved in the selection of the Chief Executive Officer and the provisional legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong as it will be post 1997) this October. The issue is not only dividing the Christian community; there is also widespread public opposition against the interim law-making body. *

The conflict revolves around whether to support by sending representatives or to boycott it altogether. Those opposing involvement do so believing the process to be undemocratic and against the will of the people of Hong Kong. Others see it as a chance for involvement in the decision-making process; a part of their civic duty to enable a peaceful and stable transition. The community remains split over the issue. The Hong Kong Christian Council have voted to sit on the Selection committee. They will vote for the Chief Executive Officer but not for the Provisional Legislature which they see as contravening the principles of the Basic Law. This decision would appear to pose another problem as the Preparatory Committee has made it



clear that the choosing of the Executive Officer and the Legislature are its main tasks. *

The Church of Hong Kong is praying for guidance ... it would seem caring if their prayers were supported by the prayers of the wider Church

What the future will bring for Hong Kong is uncertain. Some are saying that "One China—Two systems" is heading toward "One China—One system". The Church of Hong Kong is praying for guidance—at such a crucial time in their history, it would seem caring if their prayers were supported by the prayers of the wider Church. *

Glynthea Finger is an Australian Christian Churches of Christ minister and staff member of the Christian Conference of Asia, who is based in Hong Kong.

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Classifieds

BIRTHS

EDWARDS (nee Baker) Joy-Anne and Daryl praise God for the arrival of their son Matthew James on Tuesday 6 August at the Knox private hospital.

SLATTER-GEYER Craig and Dee of Boort are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their son, Blake Norman. Born 15 August. Grandson of Beryl and Graeme Slatter and Ken and Robyn Geyer.

GOLDEN WEDDING

ALCORN Pearl and Bruce Alcorn celebrated the 50th anniversary of their marriage on 31 August 1996. Lynette and Athol (Leach), Dorothy and Russell (Allison) and their families warmly congratulate them.

WANTED

"Within the Veil", series 1, volume 3, September-December 1981, one copy. Contact (03) 9379 1219.

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Hospital Chaplaincy When Words Are Inadequate

GLEN WEGNER

When watching the TV coverage of the memorial services following the Port Arthur tragedy, I was impressed by the use of liturgy and ritual, as candles were lit and doves released. * I recall being taught that, as Churches of Christ, we placed little significance on the use of ritual in worship. In our evangelical tradition, we have relied on the use of the spoken word as the main means of communication in worship. *

However, there are times when words are inadequate. At difficult moments of life, symbol and

Sometimes our emotions run so deep, that words of support are empty or just not heard.

liturgy become a more effective means of communication. When someone dies liturgy can be pastorally helpful. *

Anointing of the dying or deceased with oil, the burning of a candle along with appropriate prayers, form a liturgy which becomes an important pastoral support. *

Sometimes our emotions run so deep, that words of support are empty or just not heard. It's at such a time that liturgy or ritual can effectively connect with what's being felt deep within. When people are experiencing shock, loss or grief, dialogue may be of limited value, but a brief liturgical service may be more relevant than spoken words. Good liturgy should



speak for itself. It should not need an explanation. *

Liturgy helps some people to move on when locked in to a crisis. A crisis can sometimes freeze us in such a way that we cannot move. This can happen when a family member dies in hospital, and the survivors find it hard to say a final farewell and leave the hospital. The sense of finality is paralysing for some. Therefore a chaplain's use of prayer, Scripture and liturgy can help bring a sense of completion and release. Liturgy helps people to refocus their feelings and move into the recovery process of emotional healing. *

I was once asked by a doctor to see a distressed lady. She quickly told me what she wanted. I responded to her request with a brief liturgy which included the anointing of her forehead with oil; after which she peacefully settled herself. * Liturgy can be misused or over-used. I suspect some may hide behind liturgy because they don't know what to do, or have nothing pastorally to offer. However I have found that with selective and careful use of liturgy, people are assisted through a crisis, when otherwise they may find it hard to move. *

Three Cautionary Tales

VINEY LONGTHORP

Both Shakespeare and Mozart are widely regarded as the two greatest geniuses in dramatic art in western culture. Their respective works are characterised by a combination of awesome profundity and poetic felicity. How fortunate we are then, to have been given generous helpings of some of their masterpieces this year. Shakespeare's *Richard III* has been made into a brilliant film, which is still doing the rounds, as they say. Then earlier this year the Australian Opera staged Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, while the Victoria State Opera has just concluded performances of *Don Giovanni*. *

As Dean Inge once observed, "The man who rides a tiger can never dismount."

These three works have one theme in common: they present various scenarios showing "the evil that men do" and in particular those measures of pride that come before a fall—that hubris that is surely followed by nemesis. Both these creative artists opt for a moral universe. *

The film *Richard III* in which Sir Ian McKellen portrays the "cruel monster, deformed in body, mind and soul", is a marvellous adaptation of the play, in which the emphasis is on action rather than introspection. It is set in the England of the 1530s. Richard is here cast in the mould of the fascists of the time who were infecting parts of Europe. It constantly disturbs to

see Richard's lust for power in which he destroys all opposition—and all this amidst scenes of the "mother of parliaments" and the Westminster system. One keeps wondering: Could it happen here? *

The purists among us need not be unduly disturbed by seeming anachronisms. The Battle of Bosworth Field is set in the vicinity of the urban dereliction around Battersea, Richard's cries of, "A horse, my kingdom for a horse," are nearly answered by steeds that were still in use in those days to position items of artillery. The film does not address the question whether Richard did commit all the murders commonly attributed to him. Shakespeare was not the first or the last dramatist to allow the minutiae of history stand in the way of a good story. Even so, Richard's sins catch up with him in an horrendous manner, as Dean Inge once observed, "The man who rides a tiger can never dismount." Good people combine, justice prevails. *

Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is also about a cad who is brought low. The Don is at once a womaniser, a murderer, cruel, sensual, and impious. But he has immense reserves of energy and courage—hence his fascination. * His crimes are such that the opera decrees God alone can judge him. Thus at the end, and accompanied by some of the most powerful music ever written, the sinner is consigned to the depths of the "nether regions." But the Don's nemesis took place in his daily living. In the great Catalogue aria in which the servant tells of his master's "conquests"—"In Italy 640, in Spain 1003 ..." the Mozart scholar R.B. Moberly points out that Mozart's orches-



Ian McKellen as Richard III

tra is saying something else. The tittering strings suggest, "Tell us another," while the horns seem to yawn, "Nonsense." The Don is captive in his own illusions. His punishment is that he is not engaging with the real world. *

Paradoxically, it is in *The Marriage of Figaro*, a comic opera, that the consequences of wrongdoing overreaching itself is the most terrible, though it takes a little bit of history to complete the story. *

Thus Count Almaviva, a typical eighteenth-century nobleman has cast his lecherous eye on one of his subjects, Susanna, soon to be married to the inimitable Figaro, the count's manservant. As lord of the manor, Almaviva wants to exercise the traditional but hated "right of the first night". But the common people thwart him and his im-

mediate nemesis is to be made look a complete fool; and given the sort of person that he was, his wife forgiving him may have further reduced his overweening sense of self-importance. * But the count's peccadillos offended a wider idealism and resulted, in the long run, in greater suffering. For the sins of the fathers visited the sons—and then some more. For in neighbouring France (Figaro is set in Spain) when the cry went up, "Liberty, equality, fraternity," many members of the *ancien régime* were swept to their fate by the anger of the exploited classes. *

These three masterpieces of screen and stage are guaranteed to entertain. But they also give a clear warning that to run against the grain of God's history (Nels Ferre) is to invite the wrath of man and God. *

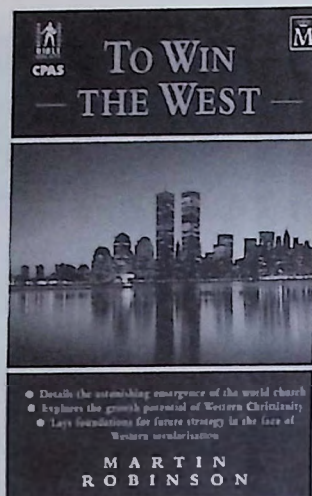


Books

To Win the West

by Martin Robinson
(Monarch) \$16.95 Available from ABCDE, 77
Capel Street, West
Melbourne Vic 3003.

Martin Robinson's latest book is of special interest in the light of his work with our churches in



1995 and his forthcoming visit later this year. Martin is Director of Mission and Theology with the Bible Society in the UK and a Churches of Christ minister. He was previously involved in church planting and is the author of a number of books. *To Win the West* is an analysis of the Western world in the twentieth century and the great secular and religious forces that have influenced society and the church. This is a book for ministers, leaders and members who want to better un-

derstand the missionary situation of our day.

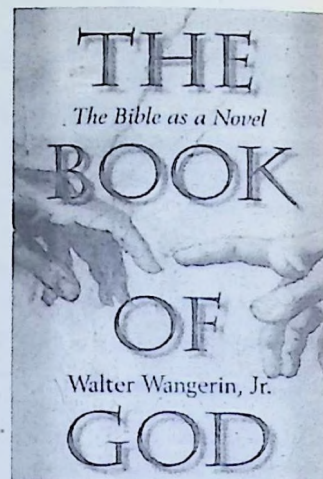
The analysis of the religious scene from the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, through the rise of fundamentalism in the 1920s to the growth of the charismatic movement, and the decline of the mainline church all have their place. In part, this is a book about winners and losers and why. But it is far more than this. Martin raises important questions about understanding and relating to our culture and the strategic issues before the church. The book carries a message of hope. It is inspirational, instructive and intelligent.

—DHS

The Book of God

by Walt Wangerin Jr
(Zondervan) \$29.95

This is a delightful retelling of the biblical saga. It is not another translation. It is not the Bible. It doesn't pretend to be. It is the old stories strung together in a dramatic sweep as a novel. Wangerin gets right inside people. Feelings,



emotions and images jump out at you. His insights give the reader new understanding and awareness of the humanity and the struggle of all those people whose names we know from Sunday school.

I was amused to read that a Sydney Anglican wrote the book off as a pointless failure. It's not. It's not perfect, but it is a warm, faithful rendering of familiar stories that is a good read. Ministers will find some good sermon material too.

—Paul Cameron.

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Applications Close 31 October 1996.

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Rev. Dr. Graeme Gibbons or Rev. David C. Stark—Co Directors
Department of Pastoral Care, Austin & Repatriation Medical Centre,
Studley Road Heidelberg Vic 3084. Tel: (03) 9496 5289 or (03) 9496 2895.

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Perth Bible College,

Private Bag 3, Karrinyup WA 6018.

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Closing date for applications 30 September 1996.

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
BRYANT, Thomas George

(13.8.96) Born at Bet Bet 13.7.10 and loved husband of Mavis for 60 years, Tom joined the church at Bet Bet in 1924. His first official position was that of lamplighter. He served Bet Bet, Williamstown and Tootgarook churches in various positions and was a member of the Christian Men's Fellowship Central Committee for over 20 years. At the age of 67 he donated one of his kidneys to his son Noel, making him one of the oldest donors on record. Tom commenced and helped continue the Bet Bet Reunions, was associated with the Red Hill Show and a life member of the district's Horticultural Society.

GATES, Iris (nee Smelcher)

(5.7.96) Born at Carlton, in May 1920, Iris lived her early life in South

Kensington, Vic, where she met Al Gates. Married during the war they eventually settled in West Footscray in the early 1950s. Joining the Maidstone, Vic, church, Iris gave of herself for the benefit of the neighbourhood, especially the children. Iris was a hard worker, compassionate and an excellent listener, always generous and willing to lend a hand. She was not one to complain and suffered in silence while still helping others. Iris brought people to church. Her life was an example of what it means to be a good neighbour to others.

—AM

WILSON, Gordon

(5.8.96) Born in Strathalbyn in 1916, son of preacher A.H. Wilson and brother to Professor Allan Douglas (deceased) and Clarice Walladge, Gordon commenced farming at Milang at 17. During WWII he served with the 121st Transport Unit, marrying Laurel Harper in 1944. They had three sons, Reg, John and Peter. Baptised at Milang, he served as Sunday school superintendent, organist, secretary and elder. He was a talented singer in the local choirs and the South Coast Choral Society and a former player and member of the Milang Football Club. A gentleman who loved his Lord, family, church, land and sport, he is greatly missed.

—Grant Simpson

L. C. F. Higgins

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| | Special Speaker: Gordon Stirling |
| Noon | Lunch—Everyone is welcome |
| 1.30 pm | Celebration Service |

Special items by our choir, groups and musicians
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past, present and future.

CHANGES

CARNEGIE, Vic—Secretary. Ms Kim Ng, c/o Carnegie Church of Christ, 40 Toolambool Road, Carnegie Vic 3163.

CAIRNS, Qld. Now meet 9.30 am at Cairns and District Junior Eisteddfod Hall, 67 Greenslopes Street, Edge Hill (opposite Centenary Lakes). Phone (070) 58 1824/53 3929/55 2586.

BORDERTOWN, SA—Minister. John Main, 5 Tatiara Terrace, Bordertown, SA 5268 (087) 52 1003 (church), (087) 52 0355 (residence).

BAPTISMS

•Mark Lippi, Warwick, WA •Feven Tukue, Rebecca Goode, Nails-worth, SA •Beverly Scotthorn,

Pine Rivers, Qld •Rachel Johnston, Danielle Osborne, Kathryn Piper, Aaron Heier, Launceston, Tas •Ann Pett, Kim Brooks, La Trobe Tce, Geelong, Vic •Merindah Rivers, Lyons, ACT

MARRIAGES

•Debbie Todd and Mark Stevens, Dandenong, Vic

DEATHS

•Frances E. Usher, Alan G.V. Thomas, Lila Williams, Oakleigh, Vic •Horrie Norling, Taree, NSW •Norma McSweeney, Heights, WA •Fred Hartvigsen, Robyn Heath, Pine Rivers, Qld •Susan Bullen, Bayswater, Vic •Betty (Liz) Henderson, Ainslie, ACT

VIC

ORMOND (Mark Dodd, Mavis Uldrich) Lois Gibson of SIMAID was guest speaker 7 July ... Sunday night services discontinued & two morning services commenced 9 am and 10.30 am ... Election of officebearers & annual meeting held ... Folk hospitalised for surgery on road to recovery ... Leprosy Mission speaker invited to CWF ... Freezer functioning for meals for needy, also grocery box ... 40 attend Drop In centre ... Another parcel of spectacles sent to Fred Hollows Foundation.

NORTH ESSENDON (Mike Esbensen) Church saddened by sudden death of Ada Unsworth ... Large attendance for 70th Anniversary 21 July, interstate & overseas greetings received, lunch in hall, then pleasant afternoon, musical items from church band, Reuben Fox, Schaefer family and old Sunday school choruses sung, Alf White spoke & trivia quiz won by Wendy Graham. Slides & photo display ... Youth group toured Rialto building.

PYRAMID HILL—BOORT (Don Wesley) Concentrating on prayer life of church, families in area are responding ... Church farmers donated land for crop planting for outreach ministry ... Pyramid Hill churches combining for young people through club for Years Prep to 6 ... Boort ably hosted Northern Central District Conference in August with Snr Sgt Danny Forster from NSW Police ... On Father's Day children of all fathers invited to morning services & fathers given special recognition with a certificate of honour ... Minister's business cards have had magnetic strip glued to back for fixing to refrigerator.

MONTROSE (Harvey Clark) Craft nights held bimonthly for ladies great success, approx. 30 attend. For many this is first contact with church ... New tennis team begin competition in October ... African village meal held & raised \$465 for Fiona Button with SIM, Galmi Hospital, Niger ... 5 members travelled to World Convention ... Of-

fice staff kept busy on Wednesdays ... Harvey's sermons printed for distribution to others who use building.

OAKLEIGH (D. Milne) Church saddened by 3 deaths in 4 weeks ... Topsy Milne seriously ill, also Vi McCredden, Ruby Haskin back after illness ... CWF Chadstone effort raised \$2123, ladies awarded gold medals by grateful church ... Friendship craft group well attended ... Prayer fellowship studying "Love That Lasts" ... Chinese Wesleyan Church, which meets in chapel, conducted baptism ... Freda Fraser, back from holidays, presided on 18 Aug.

NORTHCOTE (F.B. Alcorn) During August the minister & his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, also Roy & Eileen Larkin ... Church annual meeting held ... National Church Life Survey attended to ... Representative of Northcote Community Health was speaker at CWF meeting.

PRESTON (Roger Bone, Mike Janssen, Kaye Twining) Monthly "Dreamers for God" focus on lives of heroes such as Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Ghandi, proving popular ... CWF service a highlight, especially all-lady cast for Prodigal Son (daughter?) drama ... AGM will consider significant changes in church direction ... Kids' Club full, Treasure Island extravaganza soon ... Planning under way for combined Christmas Eve midnight service with West Preston church.

BAYSWATER (P. Clayton) Special speakers for Mission Focus were Cecil Grant FAB, Peter Breen CBMI, Jeff Weston OMB, Dennis dePyle WHBL, Tina Ya-Lun-Cal, Chinese meal followed. Mission offering \$2,650 ... Peter Clayton accepted invitation to minister further two years from January 1997 ... Henry & Jess Lee-Archer celebrated 60th Anniversary ... Ben Zambra welcomed into fellowship ... Bruce Hordern former member preached recently ... Bosker family participated in recent services.

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Replies to: Mr Ian Walter,
Bellarine Peninsula Church of Christ,
PO Box 314,
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Church News

DANDENONG (Malcolm Taylor, Bruce Moore) 100 people attended CWF birthday, speaker from Royal Flying Doctor ... Twelve attended youth training day at CCTC ... Evening contemporary services continue to be well attended, 100 people attended in May to hear God's Squad. ... Marriage Enrichment weekend planned for 13-15 September, Alan & Chris Niven will be study leaders. Nine couples attending.

LA TROBE TCE, GEELONG (David Jones) Ernest Lloyd from Ireland led in a celebration of Jewish Passover ... David King spoke about "Wheels Around The World" ... David McGregor presented with award from Australian Elevators Association ... Juliet Tripodi passed 6th Grade Piano exam ... CWF held mannequin Parade for "Concern" ... Youth group organised trivia night ... Concert held at Grace McKellar House, featuring dolls ... Combined church service with Dr Greg Elsdon as speaker.



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WA

DIANELLA (Tony Armstrong) Tony & Lynette Armstrong attended World Convention ... Over 100 attended anniversary dinner, proceeds to Theological College towards security doors ... Mission project to aid Madang completed ... Building modifications add valuable space ... Gwen Thomas home from overseas trip ... Church looks forward to course with Merryl Blair, Old Testament lecturer at CCTC Mulgrave ... Church continues in prayer for unwell members & bereaved families ... Secretary Keith Roberts & Gwen visiting family in Queensland.

WARWICK (G.B. Carslake, K.R. Bowes, R.J. Ratcliffe) 23rd anniversary celebrated in June ... 85 involved in youth games & finished third ... Roger Oswald addressed church on sports ministry ... Following Martin Blogg's address on Christian theatre, Warwick Theatre Project commenced for youth in Grades 7 & 8 ... Paul Smith, recent winner of Churchill Fellowship for his work with Tourette's syndrome, interviewed at pm service ... After 22-year ministry, Graham Carslake has indicated his interest in initiating a new work at Ellenbrook, NE of Warwick ... Church is in prayer for a new senior minister.

HEIGHTS (G. Doyle) Gerry's ministry will conclude from AGM (15 September), he is already part-time chaplain to staff of Edith Cowan University ... David Pyne & Roger Ryall first elders of local church ... We are involved in National Church Life Survey ... Congrats to Sue & Ross Wingrove (Silver Wedding) ... Graham Underhill will become WA Conference President in October

NSW

TAREE (Matt Smith) 133rd anniversary held on 23 June with David Moyes as speaker. Good attendances at both dinner & Sunday meetings ... AGM held 18 August. All previous board members re-elected, A.A. Billingham returned as elder ... Church saddened by death of long-standing member & deacon emeritus Horrie Norling. Ladies provided morning tea after the service.

METRO NORTH CHRISTIAN CENTRE (Franklyn Elliott) Healing & Wholeness Seminar held 28 June - 1 July with John Blacker of Australian Renewal Ministries ... "Reaching for the World" special faith promise giving day held on 28 July with David Birchall, Australian Director of CLC International ... As part of morning service on 11 August a church family barbecue held at Wiseman's Ferry with over 150 sharing.

TWEED HEADS (Bruce Warwick) Trash 'n' Treasure, organised by CWF, raised \$3600+, mainly for missions & missionaries .. Graham Goodhew visiting speaker from NT mission ... "Drop-In" numbers up, several coming to worship services ... Over 20 "new faces" at activities in recent months ... AGM well attended, good spirit of cooperation ... Prayer afternoon followed by BBQ of great blessing ... Bruce's messages inspiring & challenging.

QLD

PINE RIVERS (Neale Proellocks, Alan Hermann, Mick Cross) Special weekend with Jim Bennett & his team well received & of great benefit ... Sunday evening youth services proving popular & well attended ... Ministers & elders held weekend retreat ... Alan Hermann conducting seminars on church membership, & understanding & teaching 3-6 year olds ... Members preparing for seminar with Graham Hyman dealing with "Understanding your Teenager".

SA

PROSPECT (Ruth May) Recent Dreaming & Possibilities Day resulted in morning service starting at 10 am, which allows time to share coffee & tea in the chapel after the service & also time to talk ... Harvest thanksgiving resulted in a record response from the congregation of goods for State Community Care Centre ... 14 July held a hymn fest followed by a high tea. Brian Phelps led the afternoon & musicians from Magill church. Great time of singing & spiritual refreshment.

NAILSWORTH (Andrew Evans) Annual meeting reported increased attendances, new members & baptisms ... Warrick Dillon & Wayne Maddox new deacons ... Thanks to Ron Saunders & Pauline Spangenberg for dedicated years as elder & deaconess ... Winter worship at 5 popular, with monthly tea ... Youth service featured OMB, Craig Francis speaking ... Support given minister's family during son Mark's major surgery.

VICTOR HARBOR Church saddened by death of Frank May on 5 August. Funeral held at Victor Harbor church ... Harold Long has been helping with our services as we wait for our new minister in October ... Many of our folk have gone north to escape winter ... We started combined 10 am service in July

TAS

LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison, J. Ratcliffe) Alan Hirsch & Steve Addison speakers on 30 July at two meetings on resource & development opportunities ... Dr Jayakumar Christian, World Vision speaker on 4 August ... Community Recognition & Celebration Service on 11 August celebrated the work of the Tas Police, Ambulance & State Emergency Services in our community ... Elaine & Shushi Kitamura missionaries from Japan welcomed to morning service 18 August.

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Exploring the Day The Spring ...

JANET THOMPSON

"Our next piece of music is entitled 'The Spring'," said the announcer. "Not the 1st of September kind of spring—the other sort ... the one that will fill a bucket!" *

There are more than two, I thought. There's the kind of spring you find in a watch (the old-fashioned, ticking, wind-up sort of watch), the larger varieties in chairs, cars and machinery, and the spring that people have in their step when they're fit, young, happy or any combination of the three! I couldn't think of any more, but I continued thinking about springs, and I realised that all the different types were connected by an idea. *

Picture the leaves and flower buds pushing their way into the sunshine (or at least the open air!), the water working up through the soil or finding a crack in a rock, an armchair or a mattress maintaining a steady upward pressure, the feeling in your feet when you skip (I remember how it feels!) or walk with a bounce, and you will see what I mean. There is a sense of happening, of continuing activity—a fresh, alive kind of feeling. There is also a sense of strength—a force that will not be prevented from keeping things in balance, from returning to the way things are meant to be. It is a picture of power—restrained, but active. *

I am a winter person, but at this time of year when daffodils and blossom take over every corner and the earth rubs its eyes and shakes off the chills of winter, I marvel at



the ability of nature to "bounce back". Spring is the time when balance is restored, and a certain lightness of heart makes its way into our thinking. *

The certainty that is beneath everything comes welling up—it will not be held back—and our faith in the underlying source of joy is vindicated. *

Springs of all sorts are a source of joy—a firm reminder from our Maker that his strength and purpose is waiting to be felt ... and celebrated. *

I had enjoyed the music, so I looked it up in the program guide. Its proper title was *La Source*! It was certainly a day for discoveries! *



30 Years Ago Controversy continued in the Letters to the Editor. The main debates centred on Vietnam, national service and Christian unity. One of the regular feature writers, Dr Des Crowley, wrote to say that he disagreed with the editor's views on the World Court's decision on South West Africa.

60 Years Ago A.R. Main, the editor, noted the depressing news in the papers. He mentioned the Italian-Abyssinian conflict, the Spanish Civil War and the peace of Europe hanging by a hair. Alongside these grim events, Mr Main mentioned the rescue of lost skiers and the bravery of the rescuers. He hoped for better times.

90 Years Ago The editor, A.B. Maston, commented that 800 people in South Australia would see an issue of the paper on a casual basis. He hoped many would become subscribers. One of our advertisers offered a cure for post-nasal growths and catarrh by electrical vibration.

The Last Word

The Messiah's still around, when did you see him last?

—Anthony de Mello

Which is the strongest day in the week?

Sundays—all the rest are weekdays.

What gets harder to catch the faster you run?

Your breath.

How does Jack frost go to work?

By icicle.

Why did the cat join the Red Cross?

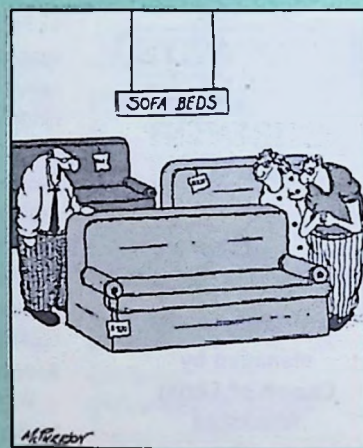
It wanted to be a first aid kit.

What did one ear say to the other?

Between you and me we need a haircut.

Why did the baker stop making doughnuts?

He got tired of the hole business.



"And this is our most popular sofa bed, which we call our 'On the Road Again' model. After two consecutive days of use as a bed, it begins to emit a hideous odour that inevitably persuades tiresome guests to hit the road."

From *Close to Home Revisited*
by John McPerson, (Zondervan, 1995)