

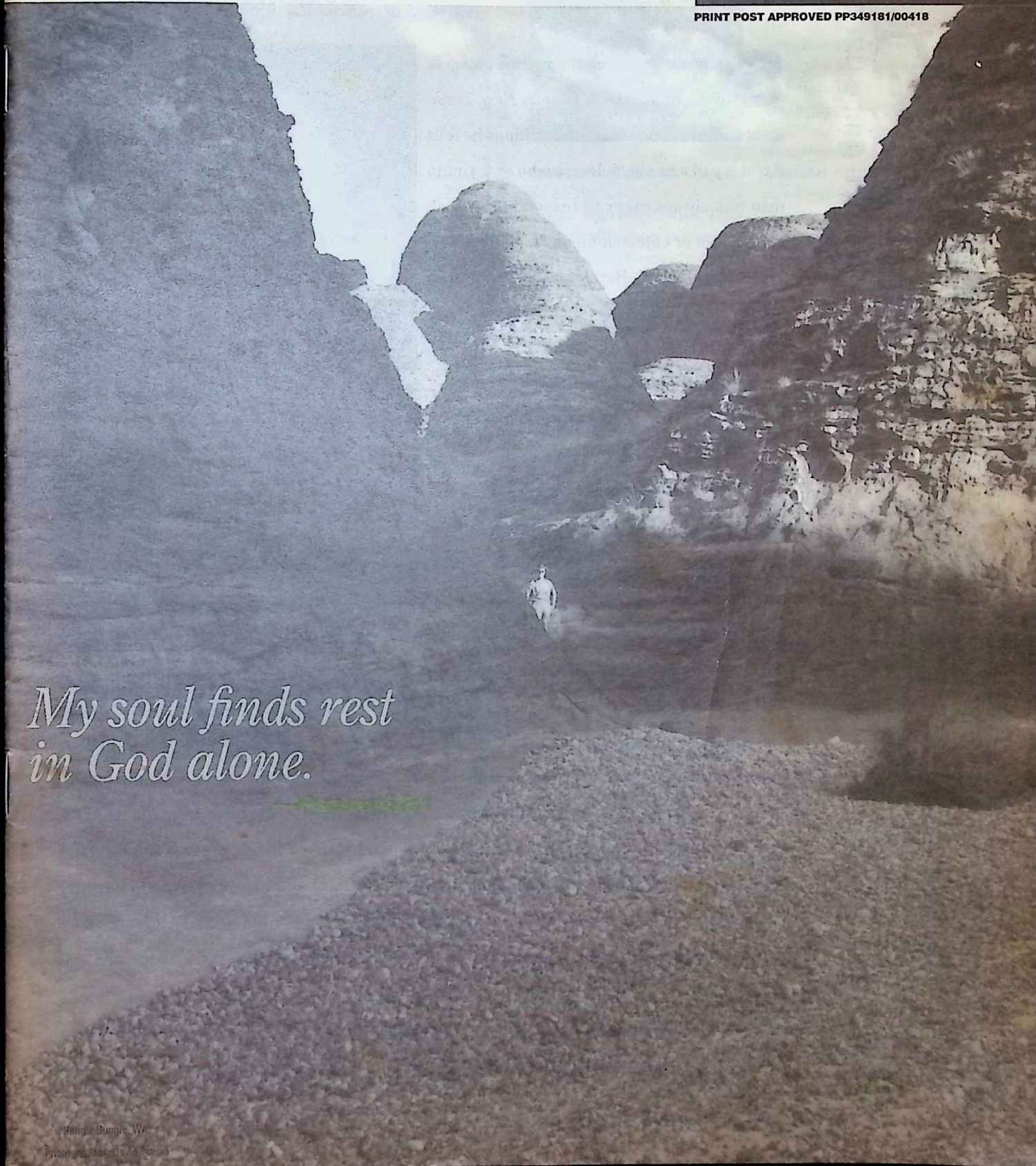
THE AUSTRALIAN

Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

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*My soul finds rest
in God alone.*

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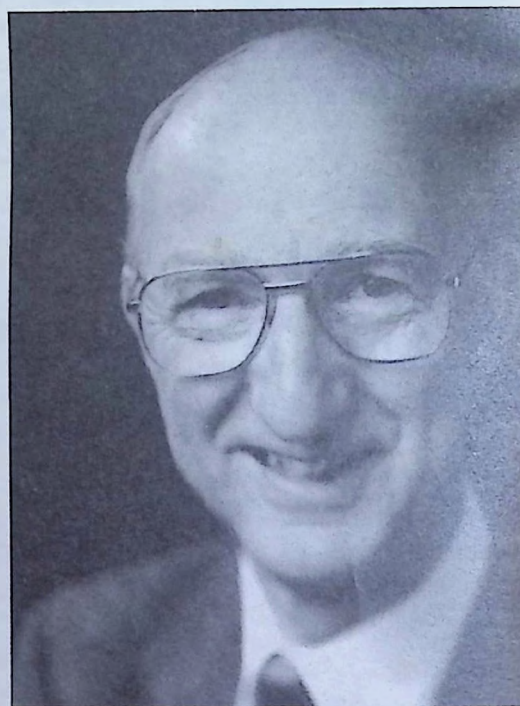


Editorial

Have A Break

DON SMITH

Somewhere among the myriad pages of William Barclay's famous New Testament commentaries and other writings he tells the story of a medical doctor who as a young man was always eager to respond to the call at a theatre or entertainment, "Is there a doctor in the house?". Barclay observes that in the doctor's middle years such a call grew tiresome and was only responded to from a dull sense of duty. * Barclay's story has stayed with me. The story spoke to me about sustaining oneself with an inner joy and a sense of purpose. Maybe Barclay's doctor had just worked too hard and did not have a break.



Such constant contact with people who expect one's total interest and attention must be very demanding. * The contributors to our feature reflect upon aspects of having a break. Many of us may not always heed the wisdom as we should. The realities of life are this, if we are to sustain our life with a pulsing sense of inner joy and a positive outlook, there is a need to stop. Our contributors talk about what can be useful at the various stages of our life cycle. I look back on some great family activities with our children. I can identify with Jonathan Clarke's comments and even carried a book *The Physiography of Victoria* with me on my travels. The choice of holiday locations was in part influenced by the ideas from that book. * Prior to retirement I purchased several books which I planned to use in some self-directed spiritual retreats. The idea appealed immensely. These days other matters seem to intrude! There is never enough time. * At the very core of our existence there must be for all of us the realisation of the need to have a break, to reflect, even for a short time, about what we are on about. * I hope you enjoy the contributions from our writers. They speak to our personal and corporate life as Christians. It is also good to find at least one person with whom we can share about our own journey, work and hopes. Take a break! *

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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.

Images of Jesus

To the Editor

I was impressed with John Arthur's willingness to provide a brief analysis of some of the more common "images" of Jesus that have currency among many Christians. The tendency to reduce Jesus to a caricature is clearly expressed in the three examples he identifies: "spiritual" Jesus, "new right" Jesus and "Santa Claus" Jesus. John also introduced a fourth caricature of Jesus—the "liberation" Jesus. While we cannot avoid the challenge of seeking to understand Jesus from new perspectives and in new situations we probably can avoid some of the more obvious mistakes invited by this challenge—like seeing other people's error, but failing to see that we are making the exact same error.

Don't we all want the clean edge of truth to cut away our self-deceit and leave us more like our Lord? It would be better to understand the need expressed in another's caricature, then understand the need expressed in my own caricature. By this time I'm probably so humbled I will have become more like the "original" Jesus!

—Mike Barker
(Lyons. ACT)

Christians Ignored

To the Editor,

Why has the Christian viewpoint and churches generally around Australia become largely ignored or vilified as being unrepresenta-

tive of the mainstream of Australian life? Even government leaders publicly vilify the statements of church leaders.

Have we become so involved in our churches, meetings, boys/girls clubs, youth groups, that we no longer know any non-Christians? It may come as a surprise that there are more people at church on any given Sunday in Australia, than there are paid up members of political parties.

The time has come for Christians to get involved in their communities, stand for Council, or Parliament, so that the voice of Christians can be heard and respected in our land. What did Christ say about being salt? It's time for church members and pastors, to encourage and back up Christians who will take on ministry to the wider community.

Last year at "Light of the World Christian Church", Indianapolis, the pastor publicly praised two members; the Police Chief for the way he had handled racial violence that week, and a lady who had organised the biggest festival for the black people of America was thanked for her Christian influence and help for fellow citizens. Let's go and do likewise.

—Rob Wilson
(Narre Warren, Vic)

Promise Keepers

To the Editor

It would be interesting to know what promises the "Promise Keepers" offer the church (Editorial "AC" 17.8.96). Unless I am very mistaken these are the same people recently mentioned in the US press as being "right-wing church groups" supporting Bob Dole the Republican candidate for the US Presidency and the "million man march" on Washington which is to support conservatism. I am surprised that they are infiltrating Australian churches par-

Letters to the Editor

ticularly Churches of Christ. Quite rightly the editor puts question marks against this multi-million dollar import. [Readers may like to refer to my Editorial again to get the full range of my comments. —Ed]

It was coincidental that this statement appears in the same issue as the excellent letter from John Arthur in which he warns against some images of Jesus which are abroad. These are, he writes, the "spiritual" Jesus who saves "souls", the "new right" Jesus who champions the wealthy and the "Santa Claus" Jesus. He then sets out the character of the real Jesus. Particularly at this time when a conservative government produces a budget which precludes the poor and powerless from participating in the comforts and security enjoyed by the wealthier and more powerful, we do not need an imported diversion from the real task of the church.

My Jesus came to save the people, to liberate the poor from their powerlessness and give them a sense of worth and equality. "Come unto me all you that labour and are overburdened", his promise is rest and liberation. The

church is his body, his voice, his hands. What other promises do we need?

—Max Collyer
(Boronia, Vic)

Treatment of Aboriginal Children

To the Editor,

The record of Churches of Christ as to their relationship with the Aboriginal people is second to none, and the achievements by those who have benefited by their association with our missions is outstanding!

As a Fellowship we certainly have no need to suffer from a cultural or social cringe; nor feel the need to artificially generate a politically correct confession for being involved as carers for children who were forcibly separated from their families. The rules were set by Government decree; but it was love which generated the caring mission services unselfishly given and maintained on our behalf.

Nevertheless, wherever there is hurt following conflict there is a need for reconciliation; but remember, true reconciliation calls for mutual acceptance of the past and a purposeful commitment to the future by all parties.

Is it not pathetic that the Children's Welfare Services of Australia have only recently realised that the forced separation of "non-indigenous" children from their parents, again for altruistic but misguided motives, is also a crime

against each family affected? Now established guidelines concentrate on helping the family to

stay together and overcome their problems.

—Vin Waters
(Essendon, Vic)

Update

Dear readers,

This week we have received a one thousand dollar gift towards our appeal for six thousand dollars to replace equipment items directly related to the production of the paper. We hope this will be the first of a number of gifts which will help us reach our goal.

We are currently concluding the planning of issues for the remainder of this year. The year will be brought to a climax with two issues focused on Christmas. Before this we have a number of important themes to share, which we believe will be both informative and inspirational. Planning for 1997 is also under way. As previously noted, this will be our 100th year of publication. It will make for a stimulating year ahead.

New subscriptions continue to arrive, along with requests for trial subscriptions. Please use the trial offer form now located on the back page. You can introduce others to the paper in this way. We also have quantities of back issues available for distribution in your congregation.

Contact us for a selection. Further requests for bulk copies arrived this morning.

Your encouraging messages are always appreciated. In a letter received earlier this week a subscriber expressed appreciation for Viney Longthorp's "Media Matters" page. From comments received, I judge that Viney has his own "cult" following. His regular contributions take a lot of preparation. We acknowledge his enthusiasm for the task and thank him for the contribution so freely made on an honorary basis. Imagine having to watch all those films! Some readers may have noted that Thomas the Tank Engine's adventures, well known through books and videos, will be made into feature films. The material is recommended for children of all ages. Readers may be sure that our media reviewer will carefully preview these films, perhaps in company with the editor and other staff.

Sam Smith

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BY GOD



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THE CREDITS.

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Capital-Kossie Kaper

Canberra sightseeing and Snowy Mountains trek



Canberra churches and the Victoria-Tasmanian Adventure Committee are cooperating in a 1997 holiday adventure in Canberra 5-11 January 1997.

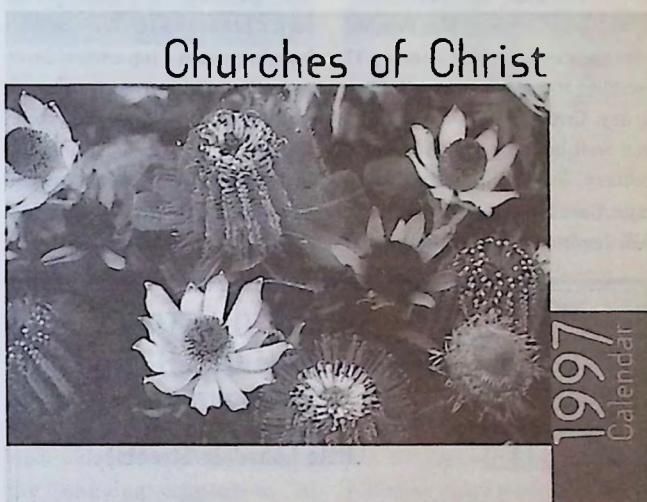
Visits to Canberra's major scenic attractions with Canberra church members hosting the program will make an eventful week. This will be followed by a second option from 11-19 January which is a trek through the Snowy Mountains. The trek will commence at Round Mountain in Kosciuszko

National Park, where new participants may join the group. The area has a varied history with the early explorers and settlers coping with the new environment and the hardships of isolation. You will walk in their footsteps and climb some of the great peaks.

Anyone 14 years and over with reasonable fitness is welcome to participate. Contact Graeme Woodhart (03) 97866926 or the Melbourne Centre (03) 9326 8900 for further details.

10,000 Calendars Packed in Three Hours

Federal Literature Department annual calendar now in churches



On 7 September from the office of *The Australian Christian*, an eleven member volunteer team from the Federal Literature Department (and the "AC") packed 10,000 1997 Calendars for distribution among Australian Churches of Christ. On the following Monday morning the packets and parcels more than filled the storage area of the Essendon North Post Office agency. This attractive calendar will sell at \$6.50. It continues to grow in popularity and also produces considerable revenue to support the

wider program of the Literature Department. The colour photographs selected by designers, photographers and Department members were submitted by G. Clarke, M.J. Pentland, Lex Doornbos, E.A. Terry and D.R. Wakefield. A number of other entries were also received.

The Department appreciates the interest of photographers and invites entries for 1998 early in 1997 at a date to be announced. A small supply of calendars is still available and may be ordered from PO Box, 101, Essendon North 3041.

We are excited at Dandenong Church of Christ!

Why?

After three long years we now have a minister!

**The Induction Service of
Brian White**

Sunday 6 October 1996,
10.00 am

Dr Greg Elsdon guest speaker

After worship we will share in a light luncheon. You are invited to come and be a part of our celebrations.

RSVP Sunday 29 September,
Phone Shirley (03) 9795 4906 or
Barry (03) 9791 6301,
131-159 David St, Dandenong Vic 3175.



Koorinal

A centre for the enrichment of marriage, family and personal life at Williamstown, SA, developed by Kevin and Gwyn Harvey in 1980,

Will be offered for sale in 1997.

It has provided a residential healing environment for groups, families, couples and individuals. Accommodation for up to 20 people in three separate self-contained living areas.

If interested, ring Kevin on (08) 8524 6196

Pro Hart Prints for Auction

CCTC Spring Festival of Arts and Craft

Three signed Pro Hart prints will be among the goods auctioned at the CCTC, Mulgrave, Spring Festival 11-12 October. The Festival commences on Friday evening 11 October and continues on the Saturday. Craft displays include woven wall hangings, mohair rugs, pottery, lead-lighting and paintings. Seven local primary schools will display their art. Children will

be catered for with face painting, clowns, trains, hands-on crafts among others. The auction, which includes the Pro Hart prints, wall hangings from a top embroiderer and other goods from South Australia, will be held at 1.00 pm on the Saturday. The Wellington College Band and Irish Dancers will perform on Friday evening and Saturday morning.



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Interested in Visiting India?

The Daund church will celebrate its 75th anniversary in February 1997.

We are looking to organise a visit to share in the celebrations.

The group will depart early February 1997 for a three-week visit.

You will travel to Daund, Bombay, Baramati, Shrigonda and Delhi as well as Singapore.

Are you interested?

If you would like to participate in this cultural experience, please contact us before 14 October 1996.

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Staff Changes at Marion

Ministry and office personnel changes

Almost 700 people at Marion, SA, church in Adelaide said farewell to Brian Ricketts, on 26 May. Brian served for 7½ years as Minister for Pastoral Care and in that time made an important contribution to the development of what is one of the most comprehensive Pastoral Care Systems in any local Australian church.

The church looks forward to the ministry of Ian Docker who commenced on 7 July as Minister for Pastoral Care and Home Groups. Ian has had a very successful ministry at the Campbelltown church in NSW, working alongside Tony Sands. He brings to the role outstanding communication gifts and a strong desire to take Marion's



Ian Docker

Pastoral Care strategy to the next step in its development. Ian is married to Malama. They have three children, Natasha, Nicholas and Sarah.

And in yet another staff change at Marion, Paul DeWildt the current Minister for Youth and Families, will conclude his three-year term at the end of this year, having made a significant contribution to the ongoing expansion of Marion's extensive work among



Yvonne Lanyon

young people and families. At the time of writing, Paul is negotiating with an interstate church. On the administration side, Yvonne Lanyon has recently been appointed as the church's Administrative Secretary, with responsibilities for running the church office and the oversight of some 10 volunteer office workers. Yvonne comes to this position with a wealth of experience, having served as an Administrative School Services Officer at the Grange Junior and Primary Schools for nine years.

The Australian Hymn Book Report No 2



The proposed contents of the revised *Australian Hymn Book* are listed in this Report.

A copy of the Report has been mailed to each congregation.

Extra copies may be purchased for \$3.95 from your local Christian bookstore or you may contact HarperCollins Religious on tel: (03) 9847 9800 or fax: (03) 9847 9801.

Comments on the Report are now invited.

Balwyn

74th Church Anniversary
Sunday 13 October 1996

Worship and Communion
Service—10.00 am

Speaker:
Rev Geoffrey Barker,
Uniting Church minister
(Geoff's parents,
Laurie and Ruth Barker,
were in ministry at
Balwyn 1962–1969.)

Light refreshments to follow.

Here and There

\$11.7 Million Gift

Dr Gordon Moyes has just announced receipt of what is believed to be the largest gift ever given to a church or charity in Australia. An Aged Care Trust will be established with the money. The trustees will allocate up to half the interest each year to programs conducted by church or community groups that show innovation and practical care for aged persons. Dr Moyes said the anonymous donor was not a member of Wesley Mission, was almost entirely unknown to the public and had no connection with any other church. The person had come to the Mission through the Sunday night radio program. This gift follows a \$3.5 m legacy from another radio listener.

Help Make the News!



"By including 'The Australian Christian' in your will, you can help make the news for years to come. A bequest will help ensure that your newspaper continues to provide news and information to our future readers."

—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

A bequest to The Australian Christian can be made through your solicitor or contact us for the appropriate wording.

Recreation

The Value of Retreating

KEVIN HARVEY

My first reaction to the request to write this was one of reluctance. I haven't been involved in church programming for years. I haven't conducted a retreat for years, but I have lived in one for 16 years! Many questions come to mind? Why retreat? Who retreats? What for? How often? When? Would I build a retreat like this again? How often is it used? Do churches use it and how? What about community groups? * During the mid 60s small groups became a powerful influence upon my life in my work in the Home Mission De-

Sometimes there is need to find a safe place away ... to work at relationships.

partment in Victoria-Tasmania. In the early 70s I belonged to a congregation that had up to 30 retreats a year. Small groups of seniors, families, married couples, engaged couples; interest groups, leadership groups, singles groups, etc, would go away for weekends. At Christmas time up to 30 young people would retreat and live in tents at the church—building community; studying and performing community service. I never thought of "mission statements" in those days but an idea was distilling that my calling was "to create safe environments where people of all ages could learn and grow at their own pace and in their own way and to do this in a caring community". As part of my preparation to write this article I read (for the first time) every word in the last edition of *The Australian Chris-*

tian to see what churches were doing today in small group ministries. I was encouraged in what I saw. During the last 16 years I have observed others running groups and I have listened to comments of participants. *

Groups of people with cancer, people with brain injuries and their carers; groups of elders, ministers, married couples, singles, senior citizens, groups of young offenders; therapy groups and suchlike are taking time out to renew, to support, to find meaning, to find "soul" in the context of a loving, caring community of people sometimes known to each other and sometimes not. Some 25-40 groups have lived-in each year. They have come from churches, schools, community organisations, small business and government departments. The feedback suggests there is great advantage in making the commitment to move into a safe open environment away from everyday pressures, where leaders facilitate participants doing their own "inner work" and affirming others who walk the same journey. *

Couples have used this place extensively over the years to deepen, enrich and nurture the "soul that exits in two bodies". Most weekends over the past 10 years I have worked and walked intimately with couples on this deeply personal journey. How often couples have said "we have never talked at this depth in our marriage", "we have never intentionally set aside a weekend to explore and rediscover the meaning of our wedding vows". Sometimes there is need to find a safe place away from kids, gardens, chores and telephones (mobiles are banned!) to work at relationships. *

Individuals from all walks of life have used the place regularly to plumb the



depths of their depression and understand its meaning, or to face their "shadow" and find that there are treasures in it, or to ponder the meaning of failure or to take the first steps out of the abyss of some deeply personal crisis often not revealed in the doctor's waiting room. A few weeks ago I received a letter from a battered wife who came here 15 years ago. I remember her just sitting by the fire for the first two days. Then she walked. She went on to say that she and her new husband were now planning to convert their shearing quarters where people in need could retreat. Yesterday a young man accompanied by his depression went on a long walk around the lake and said "I saw a tree for the first time in months"! His face was enough to suggest something significant had happened. *

I hope there will always be places or "retreats" where people can go quietly and privately where the water of everyday life can be transformed into wine. But there is no wine without first the water! The taste of both has enriched my soul and I thank all the people over the last 16 years who have shared first the water and then together we have sipped the wine! *

Gwyn and Kevin will be concluding their ministry at Kooringal sometime in 1997.

Recreation

Recreation in Senior Years

PAM CLAPSHAW

It is often said that retirement is just one long holiday, unfortunately that is not true. Retirement can so easily become just as boring, if not more boring, than a 9-5 job. For this reason it is important for seniors to plan intentional times of recreation and holiday. Doing something different is the key. In fact it's not just the doing but also the planning that is important. Planning and preparing for a holiday gives something to look forward to, something to save for—a goal, something to enjoy at the time and something to share with others after the

Retirement can so easily become just as boring, if not more boring, than a 9-5 job.

event. There is almost as much fun in the planning and enjoyment in the anticipation as there is in the actual going. Doing something different and being in a different place not only refreshes the body but also revitalises the mind. There is an endless range of holiday options for seniors. There is something for every budget. It is a myth that only richer seniors can afford a decent holiday. Just a little research will uncover bargains and maybe open up possibilities not dreamed about before. A few of the many possibilities for seniors are listed below—and remember these are just a few—there are many more out there waiting to be discovered. *

- Check the daily newspapers and especially seniors or pensioners publications for motels in holiday areas offering discount mid-week pack-

ages in non school holiday periods. In some states it may be more economical to travel by train on a seniors pass than driving. Often the motel will arrange transport from the station and even daily tours. A group from a church or a number of churches could book out the whole motel and have a great time together. Many caravan parks now offer comfortable cabins for overnight or longer accommodation and these provide a cheaper alternative to the traditional motel. More and more Christian organisations and churches are now recognising the growing senior market and running camps specifically for this age group. Camps these days don't necessarily mean bunk beds and cold showers down the corridor. Many camp sites now have rooms with "proper" beds, carpeted floors and en suite bathrooms. A few days away at such a camp provides a change of routine, a chance to meet new people and a time of spiritual refreshment. *

- For those who can afford an overseas trip the possibilities are endless. There are now many Christian groups or travel agents arranging small group tours. These offer flexibility, personalised itineraries and travel at a more leisurely pace. Consider also the benefits both personally and to others of being involved in an overseas work party. Many seniors have experience and talents such as building or office skills that would be extremely valuable on an overseas mission field. This would be a great way to combine an overseas trip with Christian service. *
- Why not form a travel group? It's a lot cheaper for 4-5 people to travel together in one car and to share ac-



commodation than it is for just 1 or 2 people to go. This type of travel allows singles to be included at a reasonable cost rather than having to pay a single supplement. Some seniors travelling alone will prefer a single room. Staying at University Colleges during vacation periods is a way to provide this type of accommodation at a reasonable cost. A travel club additionally provides opportunity to invite non-Christian friends along and opens up many outreach possibilities. *

- House exchanges or billeting are great ways to see another location on a budget. Seniors in one church could easily make such arrangements with seniors in another church in the same state or even further afield. *

Retirement can so easily become routine and reactive. Instead it should be an active time, a time of service to others, a time for continued involvement in the life and ministry of the local church, a time for ongoing learning and a time for planned periods of rest and recreation, including holidays away. During these times mind, body and spirit are refreshed and refocussed for the useful years ahead. *

Pam Clapshaw is Director of Ministry, Seniors, for our New South Wales Conference.

Recreation

Family Fossil Fun

JONATHAN CLARKE

Science is exploring and understanding God's creation. As we discover the history and workings of the universe we are thinking God's thoughts after him, discovering how he created the world and governs it. From an understanding illuminated by faith springs a deeper sense of awe and worship of the maker of heaven and earth. *

I am a geologist, a scientist who studies the history of the earth and the processes which have continually shaped it. My particular interest is sedimentary rocks and the environments in

Doing it with family and friends is a great way to learn and appreciate God's work in creation together.

which they have formed, but working in mineral exploration has given a familiarity with most areas of geology. My profession is also my hobby, and my geological hammer and relevant geological maps accompany us on most holidays. *

Understanding geology revolutionises the way in which a person looks at the world around them. All sciences have made one or more great contributions to our view of the world. Geology has taught us about deep time, the immense abyss of history that lies behind the most familiar landscapes. Anyone can begin to read this history by applying some simple principles. Once a person begins to think geologically, nothing is quite the same again—I usually give closer attention to the geology of the spectacular scenery of a western movie than I do to the plot! *

Geology is infectious, and my wife appears to have caught the bug as well. One of the first serious conversations I had with Anna (about the fourth time I met her) was on how I reconciled geology and the Bible. Obviously she liked what I said or we would never have got married! However, I don't think she has quite forgiven me for hunting for the rare and beautiful purple mineral stichtite at Serpentine Hill on the west coast of Tasmania while on our honeymoon. Since then she has accompanied me on many field trips, especially while working at Wilkawillina Gorge in the Flinders Ranges for my PhD. The Flinders Ranges must be one of the best places in Australia to see geology in the raw. They are a pile of sedimentary rocks over 10 kilometres thick, folded and eroded so that layer after layer can be seen in all their beauty. The rocks contain abundant features such as sand ripples and mud cracks which allow their depositing environment to be worked out. I studied the youngest rocks of the Flinders Ranges which contain fossil reefs formed by sponges and algae from the Cambrian period (540–490 million years old). Anna picked up the first rock of my project, a beautiful specimen composed almost entirely of the sponge-like archaeocyaths from a near-reef environment which, slabbed and polished, now graces our lounge. *

Our daughters have not escaped either. Jenny, our eldest, on our first visit to what is now our church (she was then three), noticed the ornamental rocks in the garden and said "Look Daddy, basalt"! She was right, of course! Her younger sister Ros, showed a keen eye by finding a trilobite from the Silurian period (450–400 million years old) in the Kinglake Ranges north of Melbourne.



They have also collected fossil shells, corals, and bryozoans (moss animals) from the much younger Miocene (15–25 million years old) limestone along the Victorian coast south of Torquay. Here anyone can find fossils, as the cliffs are composed almost entirely of them. Both girls are looking forward to snorkelling on coral reefs (they already have some inkling that these are rocks in the making) and exploring limestone pinnacles during our planned holiday in Thailand. I reassure readers that the Clarke children are fully normal in other respects and spend a good proportion of time organising dolls, drawing, riding bikes, building with Lego, and playing with our cat Sam! *

Whether we are scientists or non-scientists, trying to understand the landscape, even the bits glimpsed fleetingly from a plane or car, rewards us with the pleasure of discovery, a sense of wonder and humility before God's handiwork. No matter how much we think we know, there is always more to learn. Exploring the deep time gives us a sense of how awesome God is and how great therefore is his grace to us. Doing it with family and friends is a great way to learn and appreciate God's work in creation together. *

The Clarke family worship at the Montmorency, Vic, Gospel Chapel. Jonathan is currently supervisor of a geological research laboratory and is also author of a *Zadok Paper*, "Plumbing Time's Abyss a Christian Response to Geology".

Recreation

Worshipping & Witnessing in "The Great Outdoors"

LES STEWART

The concept that one can only worship within the walls of a building has long past. Jesus often sought a "quiet place", whether it be a garden, a mountain top or a wilderness, to receive refreshment from his Heavenly Father. *

In more recent times the vision of being able to witness and worship while out in the bush has been recaptured. Thirty years ago as I walked with John Way of the Vic-Tas Department of Christian Education along a Grampians

When a party of Christians go out into "the Great Outdoors" with the spirit of adventure it creates an excellent opportunity to share the faith in a relaxed and natural manner.

walking track, he said to me, "There is great value in Christians getting out in the bush and living out their lives in such a way that non-Christians will experience first-hand knowledge of the faith in Christ which works." *

Little did I realise that a few years later the Explorer Executive would appoint me the organiser of the first Tassie Trek which was conducted through Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park in 1969 with 63 persons, mainly teenage lads and leaders. *

Soon we began to discover the value of adventure activities. Our vision ex-

panded to take in canoeing, rock climbing, rafting, orienteering, cycling and cross-country skiing. *

When a party of Christians go out into "the Great Outdoors" with the spirit of adventure it creates an excellent opportunity to share the faith in a relaxed and natural manner. *

It does not matter what state in Australia you live in, whether in Western Australia with the Stirling Ranges, South Australia with the Flinders Ranges, New South Wales with the Snowy and Blue Mountains, Queensland with Carnarvon Gorge and many glorious rain forests, Victoria with the High Country and the Grampians, the ACT with its Ranges, the Northern Territory with Kakadu or Litchfield, or Tasmania with Cradle Mountain, the Western Arthurs and so much more. They are there to enjoy and to experience God's handiwork. "Dear God, you did great!" exclaimed Clive as he puffed his way to the top of Mt Ossa and looked out upon a magnificent panorama, while Barry sat and drank in God's handiwork, meditating for a good half hour. *

There are many pluses, for young, middle-aged and seniors: *

1. The opportunity to get away and recharge the batteries. *
2. The physical effort, be it mild or strenuous, will enhance your fitness and improve your well-being. *
3. To sit and drink in the grandeur of God's handiwork, on a mountain top, beside a calm lake or a roaring waterfall, is something to be treasured. I value immensely the times I have worshipped in places like Echo Point, beside Lake St Clair with the towering peak of Mt Ida in the background, or



on Mt Bogong with the most glorious sunset one could ever imagine, plus the exquisite Square Lake in the Western Arthurs and the deep orange glow of St Mary's Peak in the Flinders Ranges. Imagine sitting on the snow under a blue sky sharing a time of communion. These are times which many will cherish as a close encounter with God. *

4. It could be the opportunity of a lifetime to share your faith, giving encouragement to others, and vice-versa. *

5. The unique possibility of forming what could be a life-time friendship or partnership. I have seen this happen countless times, especially with young people. *

6. The experience of "toughing it out" in an adventure will better enable you to handle the tough situations you may have to face in life. *

Hundreds have been blessed. Adventuring the outdoors may not be the "be-all and end-all" of the Christian life, but it can be a very useful and challenging tool. *

Les Stewart is a member of the Thornbury, Vic, church with long experience in bushwalking and a member of the Vic-Tas Adventure committee.

Recreation

Youth Camps

ROSS SAVILL

Paul Borthwick in his book *Organising Your Youth Ministry* observes that, in a world that tends to separate us, the retreat/camp experience can build a sense of Christian community. We can use with our young people the words of Jesus to his twelve, "Come away by yourselves and rest for awhile". In the midst of that rest (which in teenage terms may mean fun, games and athletics) the Holy Spirit will work and we can see lives changed. * Borthwick says he believes this because a youth retreat changed his life, and because a youth retreat changed Linda's life and Dave's life and Ray's life and Doug's life. *

*We are not just there
as program directors,
but as memory
makers.*

There is much that could be said about the benefits of youth camps, but in this article allow me to highlight just two. First, in the words of Borthwick, "The retreat/camp experience is a rich opportunity to build a sense of Christian community in our youth group". That's important. *

I am not ashamed to admit that I was a devotee of the television program "Cheers" and the final episode was an emotional experience for me. For those of you who missed this important character-building experience, "Cheers" was a sitcom set in a bar in Boston with the episodes centring around those who worked in the bar, and a small group of regulars. The theme song was excellent:

"Making your way in the world
today,

Takes everything you've got.
Taking a break from all your wor-
ries sure would help a lot.
Wouldn't you like to get away?
Sometimes you want to go where
everybody knows your name
And they're always glad you
came." *

And that's just the first verse. After 11 years working as a youth leader in a local church, I believe that song is right where lots of young people are at. They want to be where they know people, and are known. In other words, young people are looking for a sense of community. *

Camps can assist in developing a sense of community with youth away from their normal environments, sometimes out of their comfort zone, with time to get to know others and become known. It is true that as young people really encounter each other they have the opportunity to encounter God. Building a sense of community is important—a good camping program can be an important part of that process. *

The second benefit of youth camps concerns the area of **helping to create memories**. I remember years ago attending a National Youth Workers Seminar and listening to Mike Yaconelli. He commented that one of the important roles of youth workers was to help create good memories for young people. He gave some excellent illustrations of what he meant. A number of these illustrations were camp experiences. Duffy Robbins, in his chapter in the book *Nurturing Young Disciples* by John Buckeridge and others, comments that there are too many meetings and not enough memories. People like Philemon, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla never had a youth group and that so far as archae-



ologists can discern there were no water balloon fights or youth rallies in the first century church! Experience teaches that what really shapes values and perceptions are the vivid memories we carry with us throughout our life. Robbins continues by saying that lives are shaped, not by meetings, but by memories. One of the ways that we can steady young people is to make our groups a place of vivid memories. We are not just there as program directors, but as memory makers. *

During the past 15 years of my involvement in youth ministry I have been fortunate to be part of numerous youth camps. This has resulted in a rich store of camp memories. Great memories of times when I have been challenged, encouraged and loved. Memories of times when I became so aware of God at work, and memories of many Rays, Lindas and Paul Borthwicks. There is no question in my mind that camping programs with young people are extremely important and significant in the church. *

Ross Savill is a social worker employed by the Church of Christ, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld. A feature of his work is contact with 50 Aboriginal young people as part of the youth groups. Ray is married to Jenny. They have three children, Daniel, Katie and Jackson. *

Personal Profile

Brett Allen—AFL Umpire

CLIFF WARMBRUNN

It was a frosty late autumn evening in Melbourne. The MCG was bathed in artificial light. A crowd of 70,000 excited fans had gathered to witness another epic battle between arch-rival AFL teams Geelong and Collingwood. The siren sounded to indicate the start of the game. The umpire held the ball aloft. He bounced it and the game began. The umpire was Brett Allen. It was his 75th League game as central umpire. In the next 100 minutes Brett would run 12 km and be constantly harassed by both crowd and players alike. *

Training

It is a long and demanding road from the time the decision to become an umpire is made until the first bounce under lights at the MCG. Brett commenced as a junior umpire in the Geelong and District League. The discipline demanded by the umpires' coach at first seemed somewhat excessive. His parents, Ross and Margaret, had both achieved considerable success in local sporting events and are active members of the local Church of Christ. They exerted a strong Christian influence on Brett. He matured under such influence and at 22 became a Christian. The umpires' training is both physical and mental. Many kilometres on the jogging trail had to be matched by a strength of mind—football matches are not a time for umpiring indecision. Respect of the players is only gained by the fairness and firmness of decisions. *

Testing

The football field is not a place for the faint-hearted. Umpiring decisions are often hotly disputed and protested by the professionally hardened players. The best and worst of human

nature is exposed. How do you deal with the torrent of abuse, the questioning of authority, the racism, the self-aggrandisement, the intensity of the play? Brett puts it this way: "By understanding that the game is an emotional one. Players don't always mean what they say and I have to understand that they are not really attacking me personally so I can pass it off." *

How does your Christian faith influence your instant decision-making, Brett? *

"God lets me relax. I don't have to worry. At the end of the day my relationship with God is the most important thing. I have sometimes said a little prayer and asked the Lord to help me relax—and he has!" *

Tribunal and Television

While the fans are leaving the ground to get home as soon as possible to watch the replay on TV, the umpires are spending two hours looking at each incident of the game on their TV monitor to decide if any report of players is warranted. Brett's decisions are scrutinised by his fellow umpires and he has to justify any seeming mistakes. His performance is being constantly evaluated. Is this a metaphor of life for us? While intently involved in our daily living, constant review and correction, together with encouragement, lead to personal growth and maturity. On one occasion Brett reported one of the local favourites—Gary Ablett. It seemed nearly the whole 180,000 of Geelong's population knew Brett had made the wrong decision and most of them told him so! Christian courage and commitment do not allow for vacillation or consensus at such times. "Gary was great," Brett said. "He accepted being reported, and got off at the Mon-



day night tribunal hearing, so everyone was happy." *

Travelling

AFL matches are played in most capital cities. It is not unusual for Brett to be in Perth one weekend and Brisbane the next. It is not appropriate to fraternise with competing teams, so is Brett's travelling time an opportunity for reflection? *

"Yes, it is. My spiritual life is a journey. Sitting in the planes and motels is a great time to read Christian literature. On several occasions I've been able to talk to other umpires about my faith." *

What is the most enjoyable aspect of umpiring for you, Brett? I imagine it is not the travelling now that you have a delightful wife and a baby daughter *

"You're quite right. Previously I didn't mind travelling but now I catch the earliest plane home. What I enjoy most is umpiring in a really close game with a high standard of football and a large crowd and I sort of mould into the scene. I also greatly enjoy meeting the people—players, coaches and supporters.

Many people have a great understanding and perception of the game. Being a father has deepened my understanding of love in our home life and in my Christian life. Now I understand more the relation between God and his Son Jesus. I ask myself how could I give up my daughter, so I understand more of the sacrificial aspect of God giving up his Son for me." *

Trusting

The siren has sounded and the crowd dispersed, the replay reviewed and there are no reports. Brett thanks God for the abilities he has been given, for the discipline and training that allow these gifts to be used to their maximum potential and then trusts him to continue to lead to even greater challenges and victories. At the end of the day the umpire is content. * Brett umpired the Brisbane-Carlton semi-final on 14 September in Brisbane.

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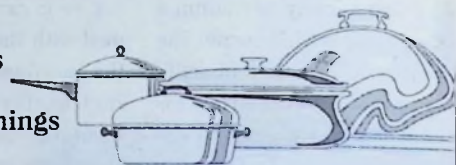
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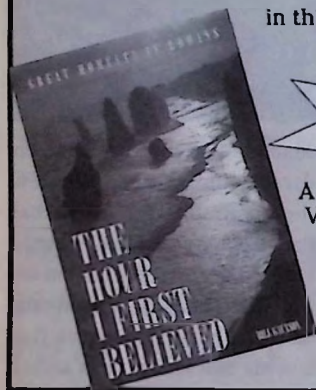


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Media Matters

The Mysterious Universe

VINEY LONGTHORP

Our title is courtesy of that eminent British astronomer, Sir James Jeans. In that book he expounded on many of the structures of the known universe, and in spite of the enormous increase in scientific knowledge, he found it all full of mystery. *

We humans love to add our particular brand of mystery to the stars also. We have made the universe the scenario for many artistic and literary offerings. Enter Science Fiction. This genre has a sure grip on the imagination of many. For instance in 1938 that brilliant enfant terrible of the media, Orson Welles, scared the living day-lights out of the good citizens of New York with a dramatised radio broadcast of H.G. Wells's novel *The War of the Worlds*. It took the authorities some time to restore calm. *

Now, some sixty years later, we are offered the movie *Independence Day*, also based on the Wells novel. The stir it has caused is due to the record-breaking box office takings as well as the stunning special effects— full of fury, savagery,

and destruction. One feels that H G would have winced at its crassness. *

But now a further mystery emanating from above has addressed us. The media went agog with excitement when a group of scientists claimed to have found traces of life in a lump of rock alleged to have come from the planet Mars. Admittedly, the form of life was primitive, similar to those fossilised micro single-celled organisms to be found in the stromatolites in the north-west of Western Australia. With commendable humility and patience scientists are working on their hypotheses. However, the tabloids were not so reticent: screaming headlines asked, "Are We Alone?", "Life on Mars". No doubt UFO societies will feel new confidence. *

No response was so interesting as that of the President of the USA. Very excited, Bill Clinton rhapsodised over the news. He instructed his deputy to convene at once a "space summit". Thus Les Carlyon of the *Melbourne Age* asked if this was not to be an American "down payment" on extra-terrestrial real estate, another Louisiana Purchase perchance. Others, in a more cynical mood, suggested it to be an optimism-raising exercise in an election year. *

It was interesting to observe how media comment tended to combine the movie and the rock in the same context. Thus when Phillip Adams considered the significance of the President's remarks he had the film in mind too. "Having booted the Soviet Union off the stage, Americans are increasingly forced to hate themselves. Independence Day arrives to tell them that the US remain the biggest and the best, the boldest and the brave." *



More positively perhaps, we may say that as the world's lone superpower, and with their deep sense of "manifest destiny" and heroism, they need an enemy to define them, as have all great powers. Britain's St George is on the unemployed register since no dragons are interested in her territories. But the Americans are still building myths and visions to establish their identity; threats from life in outer space would do wonders for this process. *

With remarkable prescience, Robert Hughes in his ABC TV series *American Visions* claimed that when the frontier was closed when the West was won, the only way forward was the "vertical frontier" of the skyscraper. With limits there being reached, maybe stars will be the new "West". *

Too fanciful? America's own Theodore Roszark suggested that for many of his compatriots there is a fine line between the fantasy of SF and real life; this probably goes for the rest of us too. *

There were other responses about the significance of life in space. Paul Davies wrote, "Christians feel uneasy about alien life. If Jesus was God Incarnate and Saviour of mankind

what about proverbial little green men? Can they be saved too?" But many church leaders did not feel uneasy. Archbishop

Christians feel uneasy about alien life ...

What about proverbial little green men?

Can they be saved too?

Keith Rayner said: "Personally I see no problem (to faith). I know nothing in the Christian belief in God as creator as rules out the possibility of other living creatures. Why should we suppose that the whole of God's purpose is confined to the human race?" *

But it was a scientist, no less, who lent this whole matter a more spiritual note. In his program on the human brain, broadcast on SBS TV, David Suzuki suggested that, "What is most relevant is our exploration of inner space." Now where have we heard the like of that before? *



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DEATHS

ALVES Alice 4.9.96 At Pambula, NSW. Mother-in-law of Lesley and Jeannine and grandmother of Timothy, Andrew, Thomas, Elizabeth and Christopher.

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Coffee Break "Don't Worry", But You Do!

CAROL PRESTON

Are feelings of anxiety and worry more of a struggle for you than anger? What kind of circumstances arouse those butterflies, the tense muscles, the irritable stomach, that deep dread? *

They come with things like approaching exams, public speaking, heights, teenagers; anything where we are out of control, can't be sure how it will turn out; all those unknowns and uncertainties. It feels really bad, but all anxiety is not bad. * At it's deepest it is fear, and all those bodily reactions are our



Some of our work for today may be planning for tomorrow, but it need not be worrying about tomorrow.

alarm system to prepare us for flight or fight when we are in danger. But when we feel threatened over a period of time, or are anticipating something bad which might happen, that fear response settles in, and instead of helping us cope in the present, it permeates our daily living and keeps us awake at night. And all those persistent thoughts go around in our minds: "What if ...", "I don't know how", "I can't understand". We are debilitated by anxiety about the future. * This is a tough one because the fact is there will always be unknowns, there will always be

things we can't control. How can we feel at peace if this is so? Matthew 6:25-34 has some great principles. First, consider what you can be sure of; that God is taking care of things, providing for his creation. When you find yourself sinking into fear of the unknown, focus on the comfort of what you do know. Second, think about what is really important. If we have our minds on the highest priorities we often don't have time to worry about many things that may never happen anyway. Third, focus on today. If there are enough good things to keep us occupied in each day, the uncertainties of tomorrow will not ruin our day. Some of our work for today may be planning for tomorrow, but it need not be worrying about tomorrow. * If uncertainty is the substance of anxiety, then we will reduce that by making more of the unknown known. Sometimes we must risk our way out of anxiety. We can step into the unknown and move into the finding out stage. We can move out of our comfort zones, and find that we can actually do more than we thought. What was once unknown will be familiar ground. When you feel like you are on the edge, why not make it the growing edge! *

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BAPTISMS

•Adam Holden, Murray Geddes, Megan Armstrong, Mt Clear, Vic

DEATHS

•Beryl Marjorie Colless, Yarrawonga, Vic •Fred Grivell, George Philp, Fullarton, SA •Donald Bruce McIntosh, Upper Yarra, Vic •Syd Burden, Nubeena, Tas

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
COLLESS, Beryl Marjorie

(20.8.96) Marjorie died at 67 years of age. She came to Yarrawonga, Vic, and joined the church during the ministry of Frank Langford. She served the Lord in the church for 45 years, helping particularly with the work in the Sunday School and Bible study groups. She also assisted in the CWF. Marj was well known in the community and in inter-church relationships. A mother of seven children and wife of Bill, she will be greatly missed by all.

—GJ

NORLING, Horrie

(6.8.96) Horrie was born 1 August 1909 and said he enjoyed every decade of the century. He married Ada Jane Goss in 1930. As a young tradesman he helped build the 36 class steam locomotives. After World War II Horrie, with his brother Carl, developed a successful poultry farm. Horrie was a doer and a giver in the church and community. His life had its sadness with the deaths of his first wife in 1980, Lillian his second wife in 1989 and his son Clive in 1995. He had a stroke four years ago, but this never curtailed his spirit. His funeral was conducted from the Taree, NSW, church.

PEGG, Anne (nee Hortle)

(18.7.96) Born at Canoundra, NSW, in 1920 and growing up in Irymple, Vic, in the midst of the Depression, Anne did housework and picked and packed grapes. World War II saw Anne in the Army at Bairnsdale, Vic, where she met Norm Pegg. Married in 1946 at Mildura, Vic, church they came to Melbourne, eventually settling in Braybrook in 1953. They joined the Maidstone church and gave much of

their time for the benefit of the community. Anne loved gardening, cooking, had a keen mind for justice and was a hard worker. She was an excellent listener, always generous and willing to lend a hand.

—AM

WILLIAMS, Lila

(19.8.96) An uplifting and joyous thanksgiving service conducted by John Gilmore, with a capacity congregation, recalled the gifts and accomplishments of this many-talented woman. A particular focus reflected on Lila's life from the point of view of her ministry among women and her family's memory of a wife, mother and grandmother.

Lila fulfilled her role as the wife of a leading church figure with grace and

dignity without allowing her own identity to be submerged.

As Secretary and President of Victorian-Tasmanian Women's Conference she impressed with her far-sightedness, her ability to meet challenges and her interest in and encouragement to women in all walks of life. As Secretary of the newly-formed Inter-Church Council she obtained permission to have an Indonesian Christian lady, Tina Franz, visit Victoria, thus pioneering the later introduction of the Winifred Kiek Scholarship.

The Williams children remember a loving, fun-loving, courageous and understanding mother who never spared herself.

—Freda Morris

Northcote Church of Christ 93rd Church Anniversary 20 October 1996

10.30 Celebratory Worship

Speaker: Lynette Leach

Lunch (Contact Joyce Huggan (03) 9489 8746
Pat Gluyas (03) 9470 4846)

2.30 Inspiration Regional Rally

Echoes, Reflections

Calgary World Convention

Hear from Delegates

Afternoon Tea

All Welcome

The National Council of Churches in Australia
invites applications for the position of

Executive Secretary Aboriginal & Islander Commission

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) is an ecumenical body comprising thirteen Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Anglican churches. The Aboriginal & Islander Commission (AIC) is a Commission of the NCCA, and is the national, indigenous ecumenical peak body for the Christian churches.

The person appointed will have a deep commitment to the church, ecumenical experience, management and communications skills and an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The post is Sydney based.

Applicants should note that Aboriginality is an essential criterion for the position, and is a genuine occupational qualification as authorised under Section 14(d) of the Anti-Discrimination Act, 1977, for positions advertised under this strategy.

Applications close 25 September. Further information from the NCCA's General Secretary: Private Bag 199, QVB PO, Sydney, 1230; tel: (02) 9299 2215, fax: (02) 9262 4514.

Minister for Families & Youth Required

We are seeking a full-time Minister for Families and Youth to join our Ministry/Eldership team at Boronia Church of Christ.

The ministry position concentrates on:

- Ministry to families and youth
- Outreach and discipleship
- Empowering leaders of groups
- Linking children's/youth ministry program and church/worship programs.

The church has modern buildings and facilities, and has weekly contacts of more than 300 people, through its various clubs and programs.

For further information contact: Bev Jeffrey, PO Box 405, Boronia Vic 3155. Phone (03) 9762 5209.

SA

STRATHALBYN (Grant & Julie Simpson) Jeremy & Helen Rogers & 3 boys received into fellowship ... Business Meeting, Fellowship, Luncheon ... ROCK Group made slices for elderly & entertained by singing ... Circuit Tea service ... Joined in Southern District Conference at Milang, project, Village for Orphans in Zimbabwe.

FULLARTON (Ken Wray) Morning attendance averages 14, youngest in mid-fifties, church closed on 1 September after 71 years ministry. Neville Bradley guest speaker at final service. Some members will attend local churches, others worship at Glenrose on Wednesdays. Board disbursing funds, property to be sold ... Recent deaths of Fred Grivell & George Philp ... Minister retired.

TAS

NUBEENA (G. C. Cumbers) Church had Gideons' representative & Denise Moore from Hobart share ... Ladies took evening service on Father's Day, Anne Cumbers was the speaker ... Phillip Bloomfield gone to Singapore with YWAM team ... Five welcomed into membership ... Church working towards fair to be held on 5 October ... Church saddened by death of Syd Burden.

WA

CARNARVON Gavin Law Davis, studying at Adelaide College of Ministries, accepted call to minister from February 1997 ... Tocknell's interim minis-

try greatly appreciated ... Young people from South Perth church on tour to Hall's Creek stopped over in Carnarvon & proved a great help at Olive Laird Hostel ... After breaking a window to enter intruder fell asleep in vestry & was discovered by Ken Birch.

VIC

MT CLEAR (Date White) 65 people of all ages enjoyed Church Family camp

at Cooriemungle. David Burville led Bible studies ... New hall now in use for Sunday School & other activities. Stage One of construction completed ... Midweek meeting held to discuss dangers of legalising marijuana, speaker Robyn Kyte ... Six members shared preaching while minister on leave ... Lyn Edwards providing pastoral counselling at church each Tuesday.

FRANKSTON Bradleys farewelled

last weekend in July ... Nine children competed in Kidsmin Sports ... August speakers: Tracey Ware, Cindy Waters, Ian Cartmel, Jack Edwards ... Colin & Jill Avery lose expected baby ... Weekly Drop In program shares photographs ... Jean Harper, Eric Forward, Lucy Milner, Ben Ussher, Dawn Rand, Caitlin Cahill, Penny Grove, Ian Boag, Jack Sales Ollie Coughlin, Dorothy Randall have all been ill.

COCOA brings HOPE



COCOA provides finance to develop food crops like this at Londua Training School in Vanuatu.

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Healing Seminar

Chelsea Uniting Church
Saturday 19 October
10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Special Guest
Rev Dr Tom Brown of UK
25 years in
healing ministry

Arranged by the Order of St Luke
Enquiries (03) 9763 2738

snippets from History

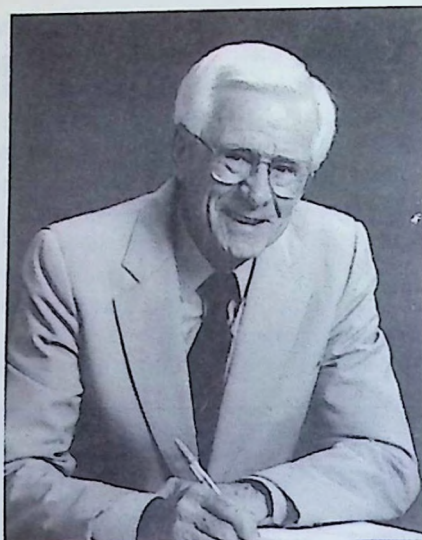
Walter Scott's Birthday

GORDON STIRLING

Back in the forties an elderly man known as "The Captain" used to conduct what were known as school gate missions in SA country towns. He would gather the children and entreat them to "let Jesus into their hearts". On the first day, a few would stay behind. He would talk kindly to them and give them pencils with texts on them. Their mates would ask them where they got the pencils. So the next afternoon there would be a lot of "converts". *

The Captain was not the first to use school gates to get a message across. Walter Scott, one of our pioneer preachers, would turn up at school gates on the Western Reserve of Ohio (USA). He would then teach them the famous "five finger exercise". For each finger there was something to remember. For the first finger "faith", for the next "repentance", and so on through "baptism", "remission of sins" and "the gift of the Holy Spirit". *

He would send them home to show their parents what they had learned, and to tell them that a man would be talking about these things at the local hall that night. * It worked. There was no radio, TV or cinema, and people would turn up to anything in the local hall. In his first year, there were 1,000 baptisms. This annual average was maintained for 30 years. * This year is the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Walter Scott. He was related to the famous Scottish author and poet of the same name. After education with the Edin-



burgh University he migrated to New York, aged 26. Wanting to go west, he walked to Pittsburgh. There he was baptised, met Alexander Campbell and was soon part of the "Reformation" as our movement was then called. *

Scott's evangelistic passion was matched by his compassion. He was involved with several political movements whose aims were to free the slaves and to better the lot of exploited workers. He supported factory women in their fight for a ten hour working day and for safety in the workplace. * Walter Scott died in 1861, as the Civil War was breaking out. Among the last things he wrote in his diary was, "Oh, my country, my country! How I love thee! How I deplore these present misfortunes!" *

Introduce Your Friends to an Australian Christian



We would be happy to send them three issues on a trial basis. Simply fill in their details below (with their permission) and send this form to, The Australian Christian, PO Box 101, North Essendon Vic 3041.

Name

Address

Postcode

The Last Word

Love keeps no record of wrongs (1 Cor 13) and God is love.

—Anthony de Mello

*What happened to the baby chick who misbehaved?
It was eggspelled.*

The driving instructor got a laugh when he told the students, "If you want to learn I won't stand in your way"

And the wary skier at the top of a very steep slope said, "At least it's all downhill from here"

A sign on a department store dressing room mirror: "Objects in mirror may appear bigger than they actually are"

Jeanne Calment is the oldest living human whose age can be verified. On her 120th birthday, she was asked to describe her vision for the future. "Very brief," she replied.

A woman was asked the benefits of living to the age of 102. After a pause, she answered, "No peer pressure!"

John Petterman, rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Madison, Wisconsin, told of an elderly woman who died. Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."



ATTEMPTS TO MAKE THE CHURCH NEWSLETTER MORE EXCITING TO READ WERE GETTING OUT OF HAND.