

THE AUSTRALIAN



# Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 99 No. 18, 19 October 1996

PRINT POST APPROVED PP349181/00418

1997

1998

1999

2000

THE COUNTDOWN TO THE MILLENNIUM BEGINS...



Editor: Don Smith, Production Manager/Sub Editor: Nigel Pegram Issue 2 November Deadline 24 October, Issue 16 November Deadline 7 November, Issue 30 November Deadline 21 November. Address for All Correspondence PO Box 101, Essendon North 3041. Telephone (03) 9379 1219. Fax (03) 9379 0015. E-mail [acedit@ozemail.com.au](mailto:acedit@ozemail.com.au). Member publication of the Australasian Religious Press Association. The Australian Christian is published by the Board of Management of The Australian Christian, a Department of the National Conference of Churches of Christ in Australia. Keith Aird, Chairman (SA); Lindsay Mott, Treasurer (Vic); John Batchler (Tas); Kevin Bray (ACT); Tom Glynn (NSW); Bob Smith (Qld); Allen Smyth (WA). Printed by New Litho Pty Ltd, 63 Sunbury Crescent, Surrey Hills Vic 3127. Responsibility for electoral material is accepted by Don Smith, 2 Larkspur Ave, Doncaster 3108. This publication is indexed in the Australasian Religion Index. ISSN 0004-8852. Advertising Rates: Displayed: \$5.50 per column centimetre. Classifieds: \$14.00 for the first 25 words and 25c for each additional word.



# Editorial

## Changing Habits and New Ingredients

DON SMITH

**A**s one whose cooking repertoire focuses on making nice toast, I was interested to note a weekend magazine's list of ten new kitchen utensils we will be using by 2000. The article noted changing eating habits, new ingredients and technology. The writer gloomily commented that children are not learning how to cook, are not sure where milk and cheese come from, teenagers can't cook a potato and cooking schools are closing. Yet the ten new cooking utensils were judged basic for the future. \* I imagine this will be pretty standard fare



as we reach the new millennium. Negatives and positives will abound. It was like that 1000 years ago. The millennium will stimulate excitement and optimism for a new era. For Churches of Christ a comparable mood will arise from prior thinking, planning and vision. It cannot be conjured up for some magical date when we cross from one era to another. \* The pointers are surely optimistic. Morale is good, we have growth trends and much foundation work in place nationally. Now is the time for an expanding vision for our development and place in 21st Century Australian church and community life. We need ever-growing national cohesion and thinking. The forthcoming National Council Meeting in November is one place for this to occur. Each state and territory must also formulate its own vision and strategic plan. Local churches must decide to grow or rethink how their material resources may be better deployed for state development. Donald McGavran's dictum still stands, "Churches seldom grow without bold plans". \* The key to our contribution to Kingdom building is leadership development. Good leadership is integral to vision, mission and development of local churches and state and national agencies. Let's recruit the most able leaders we can find. The quality of our ideas and the exercise of our creative imagination will be fundamental to our contribution to Australian church life. The future is open to us. The Leadership 2000 visit to the US to stimulate and train younger leaders is a good example of a visionary initiative. Alongside all this we must have visionary theological training and bold plans for the future. Then we can greet the new millennium with hope and confidence. \*



# Contents

# Letters to the Editor

## Millennium

We comment on the rapidly approaching end of the second millennium, and have invited a number of people to comment on their vision of the church in the future and the issues facing it.

<i>Another 1000 Years</i>	9
<i>The Armageddon Industry</i>	10
<i>To Be—Or Not To Be</i>	11
<i>A Day in the Church of 2046</i>	12
<i>Facing the 21st Century</i>	13

## Russell Croxford

Philip Davey interviews a student who has taken an alternative approach to ministry training

15

## News

<i>Where is National Conference?</i>	5
<i>South Perth Christian College</i>	6
<i>Cause for Celebration</i>	7
<i>People of Prayer</i>	7
<i>Vic-Tas Executive Officer</i>	8

## Regulars

<i>Coffee Break</i>	16
<i>Media Matters</i>	17
<i>Snippets from History</i>	20
<i>Update</i>	4

**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.**

## Promise Keepers

To the Editor,  
Max Collyer ("AC" 21.9.96) expressed some concern about the growing ministry of Promise Keepers in Australia. As one who is committed to Churches of Christ and interested in Promise Keepers, I see no cause for alarm. While Promise Keepers in Australia has links with America, it is developing a more distinct "Aussie" style, with less hype or political activism than its US counterpart.

The claim of "conservatism" may come from the fact that Promise Keepers draws most (not all!) of its support from people with an evangelical or charismatic leaning, but then so do many Churches of Christ in Australia. What is meant by "conservative", anyway? The seven promises of a Promise Keeper are all about developing meaningful relationships and living with integrity.

If building deep friendships with other men, keeping morally pure, building strong marriages, spending time with children, praying for your local church, breaking down racial and denominational barriers, and exerting a Christian influence in the world are deemed to be conservative, so be it!

To me they are simply high ideals consistent with Biblical teaching, no matter what brand of theology or "image of Jesus" one may prefer.

—Dale White  
(Mount Clear, Vic)

## Promise Keepers

To the Editor,  
Has Max Collyer ("AC", 21.9.96) taken the time to find out what Promise Keepers is about before denigrating it as a "right-wing" American "multi-million dollar import" which is "infiltrating Australian churches"?

Promise Keepers is a strictly non-political movement. Through Promise Keepers, men are being called back to the foundations of commitment to God, to their spouses and families; to spiritual, moral, ethical and sexual purity; to the Church and its mission; to reaching beyond racial and denominational barriers; to being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Which of these do you find objectionable, Max?

Promise Keepers did start in the USA. Its coming to Australia was at the invitation of Australians. Promise Keepers has never endorsed a political candidate. The "Million Man March", which Max also maligns, is simply a call for American men to go to their capital to pray for their nation in the spirit of 1 Tim 2:1-2.

As a pastor, I am absolutely thrilled to endorse the work of Promise Keepers in Australia. I encourage the men from the congregation where I serve to attend Promise Keepers events because I know that they will come back excited, inspired and committed to Jesus Christ, their families, the church and reaching out to the lost and hurting.

—David Woodward  
(Maryborough, Qld)

## Promise Keepers

To the Editor,  
I was disappointed that Max Collyer didn't contact Promise Keepers direct to check his facts. Regrettably, in his own words, he is "very mistaken".

THE AUSTRALIAN		★ ★ ★	
<b>Christian</b>			
SUBSCRIPTION FORM PO BOX 101, NORTH ESSENDON 3041			
NAME _____			
ADDRESS _____			
POSTCODE _____			
AMOUNT ENCLOSED:\$ _____		CHURCH _____	
PAYMENT CAN BE MADE BY BANKCARD, VISA OR MASTERCARD			
PLEASE CHARGE MY— <input type="checkbox"/> BANKCARD <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD			
NUMBER <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>			
EXPIRY DATE _____		SIGNATURE _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW		<input type="checkbox"/> \$30 FULL YEAR	
<input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL		<input type="checkbox"/> \$59 TWO YEARS	
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$5 REST OF YEAR	
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$4 REST OF YEAR IF RECOMMENDED BY A SUBSCRIBER (NEW SUBS)	
DONATION:\$ _____		SUBSCRIBER _____	



# Letters to the Editor

Promise Keepers US. has never endorsed any political candidate let alone become involved politically. The "Million Man March" in Washington is a call for men to pray for their nation in the spirit of 1 Tim 2:1-3.

The ministry within Australia is totally Australian—not a "multi-million dollar import". It neither receives financial support from the US. nor does it send finance to the US.

The core value of Promise Keepers both in the US and Australia is to assist men to grow in godliness.

This godliness will be lived-out in the home, local church and community.

Surely this is what local churches are all about and I would expect they would welcome any assistance this ministry has to offer.

—Barry Cutchie  
(Emerald, Vic)

## Homosexuality

To the Editor,

I assure Mr Fletcher that I am not homophobic, am not easily led, am personally not afraid of "homosexuals" or timid about discussing the deviant practice; nor am I scared of my deepest feelings. However, I am gravely concerned about the disproportionate damage the homosexual lifestyle is currently doing to our society due to the associated dangerous health practices and the effects of pervasive moral and cultural perversions.

Since, despite his criticism of Dr Jago, he does not offer any objective material himself; the following should be of interest:

Dr Jago: "Only one percent of homosexual males die of old age." The average age of homosexuals dying of AIDS is 39 years. *The Myth of Safe Sex*, Moody Press. Dr Jago: "Homosexual lifestyle is not so much a lifestyle as a death style." *Australian HIV Surveillance Update*, National Centre in HIV Epidemiology & Clinical Research. Dr Jago: "There is increasing evidence that homosexuals can be helped ... to lead more normal lives." "Exodus" outreach program, Churches of Christ. Essentially, what Dr Jago wrote is right!

—David V. Waters  
(Essendon, Vic)

## Homosexuality

To the Editor,

Homosexuality and the more public gay/queer lifestyle are two separate issues ("AC" 5.10.96). To link the two as the same is wrong and dangerous. The latter is the only issue which involves choice and, sadly, it is the gay/queer lifestyle which the media gives its time to since the thousands of monogamous homosexual relationships in Australia do not make good press. A growing chorus of biblical scholars does not now support the spin put on the common biblical texts used to condemn homosexuality. Sure, condemnation of a lifestyle choice is there, but which scholars claim that this applies

also to those homosexuals who do not live up to the more public stereotypes? Any debate on this issue has to be based on facts not emotion. It has to be forward-looking and not steeped in fear. It has to begin with understanding.

It took the education system decades

and countless broken spirits to realise that being left handed was not something which should or could be righted. One day someone will look back on these times and realise that the same is true for homosexuality.

—Mark Fletcher  
(St Kilda, Vic)

## Update

Dear Reader,

As we complete this issue it is hard to believe that we have only four issues remaining for 1996. Our last two issues will focus on Christmas themes. These are already in preparation. This will bring us to our 100th year of publication in 1997, and much celebration and looking ahead. We welcome Sir Alan Walker as a contributor to this issue on the Millennium. Since my early days in ministry I have been stimulated by his passion for the Gospel, his energy for great tasks and his powerful intellect. In this contribution he shows he has lost none of these attributes. The article on Russell Croxford is the first of two focusses on theological students and alternative approaches to training. These were held over from our last issue.

We continue to plan for equipment replacement which is much needed. It has been en-

couraging to receive donations towards our \$6000 goal for this project. We would welcome your support.

In this issue we are pleased to include the Pamphlet Club insert "The Stolen Children", a report from The Federal Aborigines Board of Churches of Christ to the National Inquiry into Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. The costs for this insert have been met by the National Literature Department. It is hoped to include a further Pamphlet Club insert on Homosexuality later this year. This matter is receiving considerable media attention and is currently a major controversial issue confronting some Australian religious denominations.

*Sam Clench*

## Pondius' Puddle

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

Christian Singles Fellowship offers friendship through correspondence with other born-again Christian singles and single-again people. Write enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: CSF, PO Box 3049, North Nowra 2541

ALL RIGHT, GOD, SO WE'VE PLAYED A LITTLE HARBALL WITH YOUR PLANET. SO WE'VE DESTROYED A FEW MILLION ACRES OF FOREST, POLLUTED A FEW THOUSAND MILES OF RIVERS, EXTERMINATED HUNDREDS OF ANIMAL SPECIES. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!

EXCEPT THROW THE BALL OUT OF THE GAME.



# Where is National Conference?

## Shape and purpose of our new national structures

How do we make sure that those churches that are on the cutting edge of mission remain there? How do we make sure that those churches that are in mission can let others know what they are doing? If the work of the church is done at the local level, what place does a national body have in that? What work should be done at the national level that cannot be effectively done at the local, state or territory levels?

These were some of the questions asked by the members of the National Council as they tried to come to grips with the motion of the last National Conference that asked the Council to make the national expression of Churches of Christ in Australia more accountable and flexible.

In coming to grips with these questions, it was affirmed that the primary focus for the mission of the Church is through the local

congregation. The primary aim of the national expression of Churches of Christ in Australia is to serve the states and territories as they resource the local mission. Hence the primary focus for Churches of Christ in Australia will be those areas of ministry and mission that the state and territory Conferences determine to be the most effectively undertaken at the national level.

It is planned to put before delegates at a meeting in Adelaide on Friday 8 November a proposed Constitution that takes consideration of these and related issues.

There has been extensive consultation with the states and with the various national agencies and committees, and so the proposed changes would seem to have answered to this point the mandate given.

To this end, the central focus for the National Council as expressed

in the proposed constitution will be to listen to the states and territories and effectively interpret what they are saying in order to best facilitate their respective missions. By encouraging flexible and creative linkages between states, territories and national organisations, agencies, committees and networks it is believed new mission initiatives will be fostered at each level.

The vision proposed for Churches of Christ in Australia is:

"That Churches of Christ be a contemporary Christian community witnessing to the values and beliefs of the New Testament in a dynamic way which expresses Christ's mission and provides hope, justice and renewal."

Opportunities will be presented for the national agencies to meet together on an annual basis to share their ideas and to receive explicit collegial support. The same will apply to the various state agencies and committees every two years, as well as assisting in the formation and continuation of



active networks. A Convention will be held about every four years, to bring together the members of churches throughout the nation for a time of inspiration, teaching, worship, celebration and commitment to the vision.

It is my hope and prayer that the changes will ensure the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be heard in our communities, that our churches and associated groups will become "mission outposts" and we the members will become relevant and effective missionaries of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

—Robert Leane  
(National President)

### Want to Help Build a New Church?



Or would you rather get  
**Top Interest on your Money at Call**

**You Can do Both with Us!**

The South Australian Churches of Christ Building Extension Mutual Fund has some interesting figures for you,  
**especially if you are a pensioner.**

Write to Churches of Christ in SA Inc, 263 Melbourne Street, North Adelaide SA 5006. Phone (08) 239 0233. Fax (08) 239 0911.

**Churches of Christ in SA Community Care Inc**  
are seeking expressions of interest for a  
**New and Exciting Ministry Role**  
within Community Care in SA.

This new position will commence in 1997 "subject to funding".

The position will include chaplaincy to those awaiting organ transplants, ministry to the ministers and their families and the coordination of Chaplaincy Services in SA.

Full details regarding the role will be forwarded to you on receipt of your expression of interest.

Please forward your details to:  
Lynda Baird  
Executive Officer  
PO Box 306  
Torrensview SA 5031



# South Perth Christian College

## New training option in WA

The latest ministry venture at South Perth Church of Christ is the establishment of South Perth Christian College. This is a Ministry Centre of the Churches of Christ in NSW Theological College, established under a cooperative agreement with the Churches of Christ in WA Ministry Training Centre. It will be starting at South Perth Church of Christ in January 1997.

For a number of years the leaders at South Perth had a deep passion to see more people trained for ministry. The vision was to see ministry training readily available for people while they stayed in-

involved in their own church. In the past many key young West Australians travelled east for ministry training and a very reduced number returned to WA churches.

Following development of the training model at CCTC Carlingford, the College was approached about the possibility of establishing a Ministry Centre at South Perth. For this to occur, the approval of the WA Executive and State Conference was required. Much discussion followed, culminating in the proposal being endorsed at the Conference Council meeting in March this year.

Courses can now be done at degree level, diploma level or audit level (no assessment or exams and reduced fees).

There is a great deal of flexibility in the study options. These include a casual, part-time or full-time study, from one to twelve subjects per year.

Austudy is available for 9 subjects or more.

Subjects are taught in a variety of ways, ranging from modules (intensive four-day courses) to semester subjects being done weekly or monthly. This allows for flexibility and opens the door for people to stay involved in their own local church while undergoing training through a Churches

of Christ College, to the level they desire. Subjects offered will cover a variety of areas, including pastoral care, theology, public speaking, counselling, New and Old Testament, youth ministry, marriage and family.

Senior Pastor John Bond says, "We are convinced this can make a tremendous difference for the Kingdom of God in WA and beyond. We see it as part of the fulfilment of our mission at South Perth Church of Christ to 'bring people to Christ, equip and mobilise them for ministry to each other and the wider world'."

Details are available from the College Coordinator, David Stanford, at South Perth (09) 313 1600.

### Kew Baptist Student Hostel Resident Manager

The Kew Baptist Student Hostel provides accommodation for 52 tertiary students in a caring Christian environment. We wish to appoint someone to the above position, commencing January 1997.

This is a challenging position calling for a wide range of management, leadership and pastoral skills. The Hostel is a vital part of the pastoral ministry of Kew Baptist Church and it is expected that the person appointed will become active in the leadership of the congregation.

For more information and a position description, please contact John Sampson, telephone (03) 9818 7756.

### 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 with 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.



### Position Vacant Rockhampton, Qld Phone a/h (079) 28 9166

Rockhampton Church of Christ is presently seeking a Scripturally sound, non-Charismatic Pastor to commence ministry in early 1997.

For full details contact the Church Secretary, PO Box 155, Rockhampton Qld 4700.

### CFA Dinner and Annual Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual Meeting of the Christian Fellowship Association will be held as follows.

**Date:** Tuesday 3 December 1996  
**Time:** 12.00 noon  
**Venue:** Chapel Hall, Swanston Street Church of Christ, Melbourne  
**Speaker:** Carmel Ryan  
 Volunteer Programs Manager,  
 Community Care

**Lunch provided for CFA Agents.  
 Others attending, a charge of \$7.50 per head.**

**RSVP to Kerryl Rae on (03) 9567 1177 by  
 Tuesday 26 November 1996.**



## Cause for Celebration

### Church debt paid



*Max Hall addresses the crowd of over 100 who gathered to celebrate the paying off of all loans on the Lower Blue Mountains Church*

On the weekend of 10-11 August the Lower Blue Mountains Church of Christ, NSW, had cause for a great celebration. The final payment on their building was made that week.

On the Saturday evening a dinner was held for all members and friends. Each family brought a hot dish and a dessert to share. Ladies from the nearby Penrith Church kindly gave their services in the kitchen so that all the church ladies could be free to share in the fun.

Special guests included representatives from the Churches of Christ Property Trust, Mr and Mrs Keith Rodger, and the ICA New England Group, Mr and Mrs Garry Tanner, who had provided the loans.

Guest speaker at all three special services was Max Hall from Salt Ash, who has had a close association with the church.

The church building was begun in November 1989 and officially opened in 1990. The fortuitous sale of a house planned as a

manse gave a good start to the finances. The balance was loaned by the NSW Property Trust, at a low interest rate, and the ICA Group, at no interest.

Members have diligently worked in the six years to pay off the loans, with tight budgeting, cake stalls, and sacrificial giving.

The next step for the church is the calling of a full-time minister. Stephen Templeton from Byron Bay has accepted the call and will commence his ministry in January, 1997.

### L. C. F. Higgins

7 The Parade  
Norwood SA 5067  
Phone (08) 362 1665

- Accountancy Services
- Business Management
- Retirement Planning
- Taxation Returns



Chartered Accountant

## People of Prayer

### New frontiers at Townsville



*Greg and Ann Muller and family*

God has been saying two things consistently to the Townsville church: "Become a people of prayer" and "Prepare for change". Both are gradually coming true. Most days of the week there is a prayer meeting at the church. Some are general while others are specifically evangelistic. Prayer is the fuel for growth and the church has now grown to need two morning services and sent ministry teams to assist the churches at Mareeba and Charters Towers. Greg Muller, pastor, was responsible for the follow-up for the Franklin Graham Crusade in Townsville and his brother, Lyall Muller, a former OMB missionary to Vanuatu, is chairman of the upcoming Bill Newman Crusade

for Townsville. The church is the centre for the crusade's prayer ministry.

The prayer co-ordinator is another church member John Edmiston. John is also the church's "frontier on the Internet", where he edits an evangelical Christian magazine known as Eternity Magazine. The magazine does not appear on paper, but exists solely to edify Christians on the Net. If you are curious it can be found at [http:// www.jed.org.au/eternity](http://www.jed.org.au/eternity).

John Edmiston and Greg Muller have combined forces to start another frontier. This is a Wednesday night healing service. Six weeks of training and service began in July. The healing ministry of Jesus is being studied by about 20 people, with an endeavour to minister healing wisely in an atmosphere of love and support. There is a real excitement as D-day approaches when they will have to put their new-found knowledge and faith into practice. The service will start on a small scale. Despite all this activity the church retains a small family feel about it and is a relaxed and loving place to be. It seems that prayer creates stillness as well as action!

### STRACK REMOVALS

Removals—Storage—  
Packing—Pianos  
All Suburbs—Country—  
Interstate

**David Strack**  
(Proprietor)

Office and Store  
45 McIntosh Street  
Airport West 3042  
Telephone (03) 9370 3737  
(03) 9330 2211  
Fax (03) 9330 3039  
All (05-4) 27 0472

"Service since 1907"



# Vic-Tas Executive Officer

## Lynette Leach appointed as Conference Executive Officer

The Victorian-Tasmanian Conference Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Lynette Leach to the position of Conference Executive Officer, following her endorsement at its September meeting.

Lynette becomes the first person to hold the position, which was created as part of the recent Conference restructure. The Board has invited her to assume the new role immediately.

Lynette, who previously was a secondary teacher in the state education system, brings a wealth of experience in our Conference. This has been gained from a lifetime of involvement with Churches of Christ and her roles as a field staff member within the former Department of Mission, Education and Development.

In announcing her appointment, Conference Board Chairman Dean Phelan said the Board looked forward to the particular blend of skills and insights Lynette would bring to the position.

"Lynette is someone who is able to take on the vision for the future of our churches as developed by the Board, articulate it and translate it into action."

Dean thanked those who had responded to the public advertisement outlining the position, especially those who had participated in the interview process. In the end, however, Lynette was the unanimous choice of the selection committee which, in turn, was unanimously endorsed by the Board. An induction service for Lynette will be held early next year. A further report outlining the activities of the Conference Board in its first six months will appear in a future issue.

—Lindsay Dewberry

### A Time to Move

Many influences brought me to know, about two years ago, and confirmed since, that the time had come to say to the then Conference Executive that I would not be

a candidate for the newly-created position of Conference Executive Officer. Some of those influencing factors were deeply personal and spiritual.

They emerged from times of prayer, communion and reflection. Other factors were circumstantial and interpreted as indicators of an emerging will of God. In addition close friends helped clarify my strengths and weaknesses and confronted me with the difficult and painful realities "that now is the time to move".

Clear directions for a new vocational future have emerged. My ministry will be expressed as an organisational consultant, available to churches and community groups, assisting them to develop appropriate changes so that their effectiveness can be increased. Confirmations of the call to this ministry have come with a number of tasks already arranged.

Lynette Leach, as the new Conference Executive Officer with the Victorian Tasmanian Conference, is an outstanding leader.

She has theological and biblical depth, deep spiritual compassion and sensitivity, and a range of skills which make her highly suitable for this position.

I am convinced that it is a "time to move", both for myself and for our churches as we enter new futures in partnership with the Christ who expresses his mission through us.

—Ian Allsop

### Blackburn Community Church of Christ

invite you to be part of a

### Growing Together in Marriage Weekend

22-24 November 1996

Weekend led by John & Linda Rowe  
For details Phone (03) 9877 6077

### Ink'n'Image

Small Offset Printing  
Laser Typesetting  
Specialising in small jobs  
Newsletters Leaflets  
**Doug & Marg Goddard**  
3 Tennyson Street  
Mitcham 3132  
Phone and Fax:  
**(03) 9874 8101**



330-350 Frankston-Dandenong Road  
Seaford 3198

Phone (03) 9786 8679

Managed by  
Church of Christ  
Frankston

1 and 2 bedroom villas  
Motel type lodge suites  
Waiting list open

Toowoomba's Quietest caravan park—(076) 35 1747

### GARDEN CITY CARAVAN PARK

Eiser St, Toowoomba

- En suite cabins
- Overnight vans
- Powered & en suite powered sites
- Swimming pool & free BBQs



### Sunshine Church of Christ

near cnr Hampshire and Derby Roads

### 70th Anniversary

Sunday 10 November 1996

10.00 am Worship Service

Speaker: F.B. Alcorn

Luncheon to follow

2.00 pm Afternoon Program

RSVP Friday 1 November 1996 for catering purposes.  
Contact Susan Horwood (03) 9311 1557.



# Millennium

## Another 1000 Years

DON SMITH

**W**hat will you be doing on New Year's Eve, 31 December 1999? Although the new millennium technically begins on 1 January, 2001, the commencement of 2000 will loom large in our thoughts. Some will party, others will express complete or feigned indifference, while a few may brood or live with some anxiety about an apocalyptic-type event. \* Records are few about how people celebrated 1000 AD. In the early part of the Tenth Century there were gloomy predictions by pious numerologists concerning the approaching millen-

*The year 1000 had both its brutish and better aspects.*

nium. However as 1000 approached, the state of Christendom improved considerably. Colin McEvedy, a medievalist, notes that the Magyar, Moslem and Viking scourges lost their bite. The Vikings were overcome in England and piracy diminished. In the East the slow shrinkage of the Byzantine Empire was reversed. Around 1000 both Eastern and Western Churches enlarged, with Christianity coming to Russia in the late Tenth Century. Roman missionaries converted the Poles and Scandinavians and the troublesome Hungarians came into the Christian fold in 1000. \*

This was still the Dark Ages, when life was brutish and short lived. Life expectancy was 20-30 years, although some lived much longer. Villages were located in forest clearings. Travel was hazardous along narrow roads through dark forests. It was a long way between inns and forests were the home of wolves and bandits. John Ward, a Sydney medievalist, observes that food was

frequently short. In fact, between 970-1040, 48 famine years were counted. You could do nothing about disease. The era also saw the rise of new monasteries, which became centres of peace, learning and stability. The Cluniac monasteries, which grew in the late Tenth Century, played an important part in a growing prosperity which heralded the beginning of the second millennium. \*

The year 1000 had both its brutish and better aspects. The church historian Kenneth Latourette describes 959-1350AD as marking the Second Great Age of Advance for the Church. By the end of the Tenth Century, reform movements multiplied amid all the darker aspects of church life. There were growing concerns to raise the level of living of professed Christians and to evangelise non-Christians. Latourette notes, "The Western Europe of these four centuries bore on more phases of its culture the impress of Jesus than had Graeco-Roman Civilisation at the earlier high-water mark of Christian influence." He observes that now the imprint of Christianity was visible in every major aspect of the new culture which arose in Western Europe. \*

Prince Charles recently expressed the hope that we won't just party. Australians will have plenty to occupy their minds. The Olympic Games in September, 2000 will dominate. The celebration of Federation will follow on 1 January 2001. Then there is the possibility of a Republic and Aboriginal Reconciliation to occupy our thinking. Peter Ellyard, one time head of the Commission for the Future, sees the new millennium as an opportunity to assess whether our species will see out another 1000 years and reconsider the whole issue of sustainability. \*

From a Christian perspective, the Third Millennium represents a celebration of our heritage. With all its ups and downs the impact of Christianity on world history is monumental. Other religions may not want to celebrate the event, but it is impossible to ignore its significance. Local churches have a great potential to celebrate this "gigantic birthday" and use it for outreach. There must be potential in New Year's Eve parties, worship and such like. The origins of the millennium give opportunity for teaching and promotion. \*

The "Awakening 2000" organisation, which has promoted the "Global March For Jesus", will be launching an evangelistic program ending at Christmas 2000. The goal is for every Australian to hear the Gospel message. Plans include a nation-wide link, visible in every city and town through a unified media campaign, linking every capital city, particularly in Easter celebrations. "Awakening 2000" is seeking three years' financial backing from churches to fund better TV exposure. The plan is described as "economically viable, eminently practical, and culturally relevant ... and one that is able to harmonise with the church in such a way as to bring opportunity for effective mission without disrupting the ongoing life of the church." \*

Like the people in Europe at the end of the first millennium, we find ourselves in situations which are both discouraging and at other times hopeful. Latourette's comment is especially interesting that amid all the darkness of those times the church began its second great advance. It must have been tough then too! I believe that an optimistic attitude born of a steady faith, will mean that God can greatly use us as a movement in the next century. \*



# Millennium

## The Armageddon Industry

KEITH SUTER

**A**rmageddon is a growth industry, especially as we get to the year 2000. But Armageddon theology is not part of the mainstream of Christian thinking. \*

It claims to be able to predict the date of the Second Coming. This is done via interpretations of certain Biblical passages, especially Daniel and Revelation. There will be The Rapture, when true believers will be whisked off the earth. Those remaining will go through the Great Tribulation for seven years. This will be a period of great suffering for all remaining on the planet. \*

*We are in the publicity recruitment and social welfare departments, not the decision-making one.*

The most obvious limitation with Armageddon theologians is their eccentric reading of the Bible. They are fond of taking small texts and hanging great events upon them. \*

Armageddon theologians have to keep updating their forecasts as events change. A nuclear war is now very unlikely and so the Second Coming has been separated from the predicted onset of World War III. The great Tribulation is now more often linked to AIDS or the greenhouse effect. \*

First, the popularity of Armageddon theology can be explained by recourse to the two constituencies to which it appeals: the mass media and some Christian circles. \*

The media love doom and gloom. The end of the world would make an excellent front page story \*

Second, Armageddon stories conform to the prevailing doom and gloom. The theology has a cyclical nature so that it reappears at a time of great change, such as the scares about communism, nuclear war and environmental catastrophe. It is a theology which appeals to tired, self-absorbed, pessimistic, people who believe that because their "world" is ending, so is that of the rest of the planet. Their taste for theology is derived from their perception of secular trends. This explains its popularity among some US, UK and Australian Christians—they see declining church numbers, feel overwhelmed by all the secular changes taking place and are fearful of the future. \*

Additionally, there is a fear of the future, a suspicion of large international organisations, such as the United Nations, and a worry about giant computers, bank cards and bar codes. Whatever is going wrong in a person's life, the answer is somewhere else: the KGB, the UN, the banks, the European Community, etc. Adherents see themselves as vulnerable victims of vindictive organisations. \*

These adherents have short memories. They overlook the way in which the prophets of doom have been proved wrong in the past. The prophets are allowed to get away with recycling their material, with a fresh set of dates and speculations. \*

The Second Coming **will** occur—but it is not for us to devise eccentric celestial timetables to predict its date. We are in the publicity recruitment and social welfare departments, not in decision-making one. \*

The Second Coming may occur at any time. Even Jesus admitted that he did not know the date. (Matt 24:36) The Second Coming could occur before this



magazine is published. Or it may occur a century away. Or it may occur 1000 years in the future. \*

Incidentally, a by-product of the current interest in Armageddon theology is the belief that since Armageddon is inevitable, it is not necessary to worry about today's violence and injustice. \*

But engagement in social justice is one way of demonstrating Christian commitment. It prevents a person from becoming self-absorbed and introspective and, instead, it enables people to be involved in causes larger than themselves. It is a form of evangelism, because non-Christians see the zeal with which Christians serve others. \*

Armageddon theology is a fringe Christian activity. Christians, instead of sitting around passively waiting for The End, should be actively involved in evangelism and social justice. \*

Dr Keith Suter, Consultant on Strategic Planning at Wesley Mission Sydney, is a writer and broadcaster, the President of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney, and Executive Director of National Goals and Directions (an ecumenical think-tank working on Australia's future).



# Millennium

## To Be—Or Not To Be

LYNETTE LEACH

**T**hat is the question facing Churches of Christ of Christ as we head towards the new millennium. As a child I accompanied my parents to Annual Conference at Lygon Street church, Vic, where serious matters of the church were debated. "We were born to die!" This comment on our purpose as a Movement were heavy words for a child forming impressions of church life, based on what I witnessed in my parents, what was bequeathed to me from three generations of Churches of Christ heritage and what I experienced in the local

*"We were born to die!"  
... these were heavy  
words for a child  
forming impressions  
of church life*

church. I was influenced by strong teaching, grounding in Scripture, undergirded by prayer and a priority placed on evangelism. \*

These characteristics remain vitally important today, although the world is different. "To be or not to be" hinges on the matter of relevance. If the church is only one generation away from extinction, our identity as Churches of Christ has to be reshaped in and by each generation. \*

The three key issues facing us as we prepare for the future are leadership, spirituality and mission. If we are honest, we would admit our struggles over each one of them. Some of the tension is due to the fact that we polarise the issues and are afraid to engage in healthy dialogue and exploration. \*

Australians have never been comfortable with expressions of hierarchy.

These attitudes have carried over to leadership. Leadership is not about status, but function. It is about articulating vision and purpose. Aggressive displays or abuses of power in the church have resulted in cynicism towards this matter of leadership. The time has come for the church to be a credible witness to the world through models of effective leadership. \*

The business and corporate sector is taking leadership seriously. Consider the abundance of books and courses offered. We need to identify, encourage and train men and women of high and deep calibre, who are not afraid of excellence. Leaders who have strength of purpose and conviction, balanced by a compassionate heart. Servant leaders who give their time, skills and presence to the people they are called to lead. Leaders who model in their own lives the qualities that they want to see in the people and churches that they lead. Will we allow them to lead? \*

Spirituality is a key theme in contemporary society, as people search for meaning and purpose, something to give them hope. To help them in their search we need to have an authentic experience ourselves of inner renewal. Deep, spiritual vitality is essential if our churches are to be invigorated. Without a intimate and deep awareness of God's abiding presence we have nothing to offer but our own finite and limited human resources That is not enough for a world hungry for meaning and purpose We cannot afford to settle for a substitute or superficial spirituality. Christlikeness cannot be manufactured or taught in a program. It has to be lived, experienced and earthed. An authentic relationship with Christ will flow over into authentic relationships with others. \*



We need to move out of our comfort zones and take seriously the challenge to motivate and mobilise our whole membership to intentional mission and ministry. The old term which I grew up with, "the priesthood of all believers", is now expressed in more contemporary ways—mutual ministry, or every member has a ministry. This enables lay people to be involved in mission and ministry, alongside ordained and endorsed ministers, on the basis of making the Gospel real in every situation. Local churches need to decide how they will interact with their community. It will mean accepting some very different forms of mission which will impact diverse cultural settings. There are people serving with us now who have taken up the cross on the edges of our communities in Australia, and who are the real leaders in mission because they are out there doing it. \*

Our history began as a movement. Movements are not static. They are, by nature, on the move. Once static, they become institutions and monuments. We have been commissioned to go ... make disciples ... baptise ... teach. These are action imperatives for a movement and a journey as true disciples of Christ. \*



# Millennium

## A Day in the Church of 2046

GRAHAM AGNEW

**"H**ow old is your Minister?" asked the first-time visitor to the church, "It's hard to tell from way back here." \*

"You'll get a great view when the big screen video comes on in a moment, once the service gets under way," replied Darth, an Elder at the Southern Districts Christian Church. "He's in his early 40s, graduated from our college here at the church—a local, been in the fellowship since he was a teenager." \*

With the commencement of the service only moments away, the visitor had more questions. \*

*Churches in the 1990s which had not attracted new people below 40 years of age gradually folded!*

"It's a big Church—must be 1000 or more! Are they all as large as this?" \*

"Pretty much so. Mind you, we now only have ten churches in the Adelaide metro area and they're all quite large, based on the regional model. It's been a similar story right across the nation," Darth continued, "with the mergers and building rationalisation starting in earnest about 35 years ago. Virtually all the churches in the 1990s which had not attracted significant numbers of new people below 40 years of age gradually folded. Largely a matter of pure economics in the end." \*

The service began with a call to worship from a missionary couple located in Africa, beamed in via satellite. \*

"Are they yours?" whispered the visitor. \*

"Yes, they're among a number of missionaries assigned to our church by the

Central Office," replied Darth. "Missionary support is about the only thing that is handled by our State Office these days. Years ago we found that virtually all of the functions previously associated with our Conference Centre could be handled quite well by larger regional churches." \*

The service proceeded in a simple but engaging way. Many of the senior members were delighted by the inclusion of several traditional songs by Geoff Bullock. A number commented afterwards, "It's good to sing some of the old favourites from the 1990s; these new songs are so superficial and they seem to go on and on forever!" \*

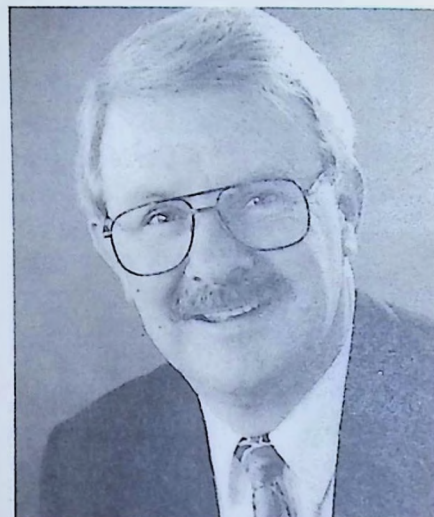
By the time the service ended and the sermon notes were rolling off the mini fax machines scattered throughout the seats, the visitor was suitably impressed. \*

I wouldn't mind getting more involved here, may even make a gift to those missionaries featured earlier—I liked what they had to say." \*

Unknown to the visitor Darth was the Chairperson of the Missions Committee. "Why don't you take the opportunity to make that gift right now! Simply punch your name and account number into the key pad in front of you and everything will be sweet!" \*

What will Churches of Christ look like 50 years from now? Quite literally, God only knows! My caricature is based on a number of issues which I see looming on the horizon as we move toward the next century: \*

- The increasing number of churches around Australia that are coming perilously close to the point of non-viability, with some closing each year. \*
- The large number of churches which, although still reasonably viable, are failing to attract significant numbers of



individuals and families under 40 years of age, effectively consigning them to a life expectancy of 20 years at most! \*

- The financial crises being experienced by many Conference Departments and Agencies which depend upon funding from local churches. \*
- Of the dozen or so Churches of Christ around Australia which attract 400 or more on a Sunday, virtually all are fairly self-sufficient when it comes to the provision of leadership, creative ideas, policies and resources for mission. It's purely part of the dynamic of the larger church. Increasingly the link between these churches and their respective State Offices is merely financial, with no consultative activity whatsoever. \*
- Denominationalism is now almost a complete non-issue for Australians, with people choosing a church purely on the basis of its suitability. \*

The good news however is the fact that it is Christ's Church! He is "the head of the body and the source of its life" (Col 2:18). I have outlined a particular model, but there will always be scope for diversity and lots of surprises! \*

Graham is Senior Minister at our Marlon, SA, Church.



# Millennium

## Facing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

ALAN WALKER

**T**he dawn of a new millennium is a rare event. To move into another thousand years provides the world and the church with a time of great opportunity. Under God it could be a time for new beginnings. \* Australia faces the future with many resources and some handicaps. It is placed in the ocean of the future. The Atlantic, its people and its wars, dominated the twentieth century, the future belongs to the Pacific. It is time to claim our Pacific heritage and potential. \* Archbishop Romero of El Salvador once said: "The test of a society is how

*If the Church is to match the new emerging Australia it must become an indigenous Church.*

it treats its poorest citizens." Australia fails to pass this test. Justice for our Aborigines is long overdue. One of the greatest crimes of history is the way Britain and Australia took every square metre of land, leaving the Aborigines with nothing. Australia must correct this appalling injustice by granting generous Land Rights. \*

Australia is cursed with unreformed Capitalism. Once we had an egalitarian dream, which disappeared in the eighties, where greed was good. Now we have copied England and America, with a vast gulf between the rich and the poor. We rejoice that the walls of Communism have collapsed, now the walls of Capitalism must be pulled down. Australia desperately needs to share more equitably its vast wealth with all its people. \*

Australia must become a Republic. It is completely anachronistic to have any ties with Britain. In all kinds of subtle ways, Australia is being held back by having a Head of State 16,000 km away. Australia's future lies in becoming a multi-cultural nation linked with the Pacific. \*

The world is in the early stages of the greatest crusade of history: to banish war from the earth. Sadly, as a nation we love war more than peace, having plunged into every war from the Boer War to the Gulf War. Any vision for Australia must see it as free from entanglements with America or Europe, working and praying for peace. \*

If the Church is to match the new emerging Australia it must become an indigenous Church. The major churches in Australia are still in bondage to Britain and America. We desperately need to find a truly Australian Church, matching Australian psychology and needs. \*

Worship is the central activity of the Christian Church. The reform of worship is needed in Australia. Formal worship makes little appeal to the average Australian. It must be casual, free, relaxed. Hours of worship should be flexible, God can be as present on a Wednesday or a Saturday night as on a Sunday morning. With Sunday largely taken over by sport and now commerce, the church must offer worship when people can attend. \*

Preaching is central to worship. It should offer a total Gospel. Jesus proclaimed a private and a public, a personal and a social message. The privatisation of religion is a betrayal of the Gospel. The message should be conservative in personal ethics and radically different in social ethics. \*

The doctrine of the Trinity is relevant.



The Spirit is neglected by mainline churches. The Spirit must not be taken over by the Pentecostal churches. He belongs to all Christians and should be explored, understood and experienced. The Gospel must always be empowered by the Holy Spirit. \*

Evangelism must be at the heart of the church in the coming century. Theological colleges are neglecting the teaching of a relevant evangelism. Churches are far too complacent, showing little concern to offer Christ to all people. Evangelism means getting out of the "God Box", sacred buildings, to where the people are. Jesus makes the difference in every life. With power he must be proclaimed. The word of Emil Brunner should guide every church: "The church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning". \*

Sir Alan Walker has given a lifetime of leadership to the Australian Church in the areas of evangelism and social justice. He was Superintendent of the Central Methodist Mission, Sydney, 1958-1978. He is a minister in the Uniting Church of Australia and now lives in retirement.





## Jesus & Apocalypse

by Barbara Thiering  
(Doubleday) \$39.95.

Dr Barbara Thiering of the University of Sydney has published another book which has made headlines. *Jesus and the Apocalypse: The Life of Jesus after the Crucifixion*.

This review is by Dr John W. Wilson (above right), former Senior Lecturer in Old Testament at Ridley College, Parkville, Vic, and now Bishop of the Southern Region, Diocese of Melbourne.

Although this book purports to be a work of scholarship and is written with an air of complete confidence, its central thesis lacks credibility as well as any historical basis that I can determine. As with her earlier book, *Jesus the Man*, I even found myself asking myself whether Barbara Thiering actually believes what she has written.

**DIAL FOR  
NEW HOPE**  
(03) 9877 9191

### Carefully coded messages

The Apocalypse or the Revelation to John has attracted many fanciful theories over the years as to the meaning of its contents. Barbara Thiering's interpretation is, however, original to herself. She believes that she has discovered a secret code with the help of the Dead [Sea] Scrolls and that this enables her to reinterpret the book in its entirety.

She claims that the leaders of the early church wrote for ordinary people images and stories to inspire them, but that their writings at the same time were carefully coded messages which reveal to insiders and to the mature a real history entirely different from the plain reading of the text. These writings are now collected in the New Testament.

According to Thiering, Jesus participated in this deception. He had not really died on the cross. He not only survived crucifixion but he lived well into his seventies, married a second time and was succeeded by Jesus II, III and IV. He even survived in AD 64 Nero's persecution in Rome, from where he made occasional visits to Ephesus.

At the time when she calculated Revelation Part D was completed in AD 114, Jesus III was married and Jesus IV born.

Her book includes a Lexicon, a list of special meanings for words found in the Apocalypse. For example, the word "all, every" (*pas*) "always means a member of the Herod family, as Herod, the head of the mission, was the nominal head of every position in the hierarchy". When Herod is already the subject, *pas* added to an associated term means it is the Herod crown prince, for example, "The Earth" means Herod and "all the earth" means the Herod crown prince in Rev 5:6.

### New translation

We are also supplied with a new translation along with her pesher or interpretation. Revelation chapter 1 is described as a letter of Jesus, written from Antioch in June AD 44 to Agrippa the Younger, who was expected in Cyprus in September.

Her translation of Rev 1:1 is as follows: "A revealing of Jesus Christ, which gave to him the God, to show to the slaves of him (God) the things which must come about shortly. And he (God) has given a sign, having sent from through the angel of him (God) to the slave of him (God), John." This is supposed to mean: "A public appearance of Jesus Christ, by special permission of Matthew Annas, to inform Agrippa of the new calendar with its primary feast of Pentecost. Matthew has granted a promotion, sending his chief celibate to appoint the Herodian Gentile missionary, John, as seer in the Ephesus congregation."

### Pathetic nonsense

Barbara Thiering trivialises the Book of Revelation, written in the midst of persecution and with the challenge to maintain the integrity of Christian witness in a world dominated and beguiled by Roman power.

It is pathetic to see the vision and worship of the Holy God and Creator of all things in Revelation chapter 4 made out to be a description of human hierarchies. And, of course, in Revelation 5 the worthiness of the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and honour and glory is robbed of any integrity or lasting significance by her fanciful interpretations. Seeing that Barbara Thiering believes Jesus was still alive at the time, the crucifixion can hardly have the prominence that Christians have always assumed it had in early Christianity.



### Secret Christianity

Many times in the book she implies that this secret Christianity can be integrated with the faith of the church as it developed in the light of history. The simple answer is that this secret Christianity never existed outside the pages of her books. But one must also ask how the church could see as its foundation events which Barbara Thiering says never happened or which have an opposite meaning to that which people gave their lives in witness to?

Take for example the witness of St Paul written about AD 54, "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day" (1 Cor 15:3-4). Are we to believe that St Paul was imprisoned, flogged, stoned, and in constant danger for a gospel he knew all the time was a sham, because Jesus was not only alive and well, but had also recently remarried in the city of Philippi?

In the notes there are references to ancient sources and to a number of modern authors. These authors may serve to illustrate the historical background but none of them hold to a rewriting of history remotely like Barbara Thiering's. Hers is an oddity in the world of biblical scholarship, and has no link with the wealth of modern studies of the Apocalypse.

From *Church Scene*, 16.2.96. Used with permission.



# Personal Profile

## Russell Croxford

PHILIP DAVEY

Six years ago Russell Croxford stepped out in faith and made a decision that would change his life forever. \*

When the call to ministry came, he was enjoying a flourishing career as a secondary school teacher. Today he is just one semester away from completing his Bachelor of Theology degree and is the newly-appointed Director of Youth and Family Ministries at Blackburn, Vic. \* Russell is one of many mature-aged people who have left successful, well-paid careers to enter the ministry, a decision that

*The traditional method of full-time training prior to ministry is changing.*

takes courage in today's volatile employment market. In Russell's case, you have to admire the strength of his conviction: \* "Although I did enjoy teaching, I felt a bit uneasy about where my life was going," he said. "I really wanted to tell young people that through Jesus Christ

there is meaning in life. However, as a teacher, I could only do this to a limited extent." \*

Inevitably, many doubts arose when a call came from the Frankston, Vic, church. \*

"There was a big question mark as to whether I should take it but I did. It was kind of like a big step in faith for Karen and me," Russell said. "Looking back, I'm sure it was God's spirit working in me." \*

Although Russell was surprised at the unexpected nature of his call to youth ministry, those who knew him were not. Having grown up at the Glen Waverley church, his leadership potential was recognised and nurtured. Serving as "Chief Explorer" for over a decade was invaluable, as was his time as an Elder at Berwick. \*

Terry Vickerman, Chairman of Frankston's Elders, was impressed with Russell's qualities. \*

"He had a maturity about him that you wouldn't strike in a student minister because of his background in the Brotherhood," he said. "We were happy to have him on full-time and study as well." \*

Indeed, theological training has become an important part of Russell's life, with the move to Frankston providing an unique

opportunity. According to Dr Greg Elsdon, Principal of the Churches of Christ Theological College, "Full-time ministry associated with part-time study, as in Russell's case, is becoming increasingly popular," he said. "The traditional method of full-time training prior to ministry is changing." \*

Although Dr Elsdon believes Russell's approach can put pressure on family life and the more formal side of theological education, he has been impressed by Russell's commitment: \*

"He is very bright and has an enormous capacity, a good mind, common sense and good people skills. He has a lot to offer." \*

Despite Russell's background, theological training has provided a much broader foundation for ministry. \*

"It gives depth to what I do as well as integrity and credibility, particularly if I'm teaching or preaching," he said. "Mind you, it's been a long haul and some subjects are more engaging than others. Certainly I've enjoyed the academic side, but the practical pastoral education subjects have more appeal." \*

Tailoring a course to meet the specific needs of a ministry is essential in Russell's experience, a viewpoint that CCTC lecturer Alan Niven shares. \*

"We've tried to work with him to make sure that the subjects he has done have fitted in with his career path," Alan said. "His sheer hard work and maybe our flexibility have enabled it to happen, so for that we are really grateful." \*

The way Russell has been able to integrate his faith and learning into practice has impressed Alan. \*

"For Russell, as I guess for all of our students, it comes to-



gether in a package called ministry—it is not only a great gift for the church, but something that we hope will endure for a long time," he said. \*

As I talked to Russell in his new office at Blackburn, a sense of pride filled my mind as I considered the achievements of this sagacious and sincere young man. There is regret, too, at Frankston's loss, for as Vickerman noted, Russell's contribution as youth minister was outstanding. \*

His six years at Frankston were fulfilling, but not without drama. "The last twelve months have been the most challenging of my life, with the demands of study, ministry and a young family of four," he said. \*

Russell's biggest supporter is wife Karen, whose calming influence helps to keep his hectic life together. \*

"We are a team—all our decisions are made together," said Russell. "Karen's very supportive—she is creative and has incredible gifts with people, kids and small groups." \*

When Russell Croxford stepped into the unknown six years ago he said to God, "Right, here we go. I'll do this and see what happens." \*

With a successful ministry behind him and a new and exciting challenge ahead at Blackburn, there can be no doubt that God has greatly blessed Russell's step of faith. \*

### Churches of Christ in SA Inc

### Opportunities in Rural Ministry

Some exciting and challenging opportunities exist in South Australia for ministers who are keen to serve in a rural setting. We are seeking to make appointments, both part-time and full-time, in a range of ministry settings. Please forward your expression of interest, along with any relevant supporting documentation to:

David Brooker, State Minister  
Churches of Christ in SA Inc  
263 Melbourne St  
North Adelaide SA 5006



## Classifieds

### ENGAGEMENTS

**FERRIS-DWYER** Heather and Rod, Ian and Dianne take pleasure in announcing the engagement of Rachael and Paul. (Rachael is the grand-daughter of Jessie and the late Donald Thomas.)

### DIAMOND WEDDING

**BARNDEN** Howard and Elva (Watson) were married at the Church of Christ, Moreland, on 10 October 1936, by the late Roy L. Arnold, and are grateful to God for happiness and guidance over the years. Present address—2/236 McKinlay St. Echuca 3564.

### HOLIDAYS

**APOLLO BAY-GREAT OCEAN ROAD** Ocean view. Forest seclusion. Wood fires. Comfortable house accommodates 2-10. (03) 9597 0158.

**BED & BREAKFAST "AARUNDALE REST" GOLD COAST** Six minutes drive to beach, close to Movie/Seaworld. 2QS (1 en suite) 1 twin room. Warm hospitality. Glenys and Bob Reaby. Phone (07) 5571 6161.

**FREMANTLE, WA** Bethel Guest House. Short walk to town, beaches, Esplanade. From \$20 pp twin includes light breakfast. Phone (09) 335 4656. Host Bob Fairman.

**HERVEY BAY, POINT VERNON** Whale watch or explore magical Fraser Island. Premier holiday position. New 3BR house, lock-up garage. All modern cons, has everything. Fully furnished, carpets, colour TV, washing machine, dryer, microwave. Short

stroll to Bay, boat ramps, shops and parks. Bookings phone (02) 790 3710. **HOUSEBOAT "White Heron"** 8-berth. Moored at Blanchetown, SA. Phone (08) 365 1153 or (085) 40 5250 or write 7 Gameau Rd, Paradise 5075.

**PORT ELLIOT & VICTOR HARBOR SA** are perfect holiday spots. 2 and 3 bedroom self-contained units in each location for hire. More Uniting Church owned units at Belair, in the Adelaide foothills. Phone UCA (08) 212 4066.

### THANKS

**WILSON, GORDON** 9.4.16-5.8.96 Laurel and family would like to thank everyone sincerely for their kind and loving expressions of sympathy, for their prayers, phone calls, cards, visits and all their support at the sad time of Gordon's passing. Our thanks to you all.

### WANTED

**"SANKEY HYMN BOOKS"** Morrie Tabi, Secretary, Conference of Churches of Christ Vanuatu, writes, "All our churches are still using the old *Sankey Hymn Books*. At the moment one person in ten in the congregation still has one or part of one. Do you think you could find where we can get some for our congregation? The churches desperately need them." Can you help? If you have any words or music *Sankey Hymn Books* send them to Jack Edwards, 6 Bamboo Court, Doveton 3177. (03) 9794 9419. (Jack will freight them to Morrie to distribute.)

## Hobart City Church of Christ

4-8 Goulburn Street (formerly Collins Street)

## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

Friday 28 February - Sunday 2 March 1997

Special Guest Speaker: Dr Gordon Moyes

*A full weekend of activities will be offered to help celebrate 125 years of faithful service in Hobart.*

All past ministers, members and associates are invited to contact the church office for more details and registration.

Address: 203 Liverpool St, Hobart 7000

Phone (03) 6234 1911. Fax (03) 6231 3174.

*Mark you diary NOW — start saving and book early!*

## Coffee Break Blue on Blue?

CAROL PRESTON

**W**e can't leave the topic of feelings without talking about the most common of all conditions: depression. Most of us at some time, to some degree, feel depressed. It can be a "down in the dumps" feeling, a deep, debilitating loss of motivation, or somewhere in between. I sincerely hope the attitude of "Christians shouldn't get depressed" has been eliminated from our understanding. It's the last thing you need to hear when you are in the grip of a minor or major depression. \* Some people are prone to depression biochemically; there are temporary or permanently



sion we feel is not only a natural response but a very necessary one. Loss may be concrete; a loved one, home, limb, job, money, pet, or something that is only important to you, like photos. Or loss may be more abstract; status, respect, freedom, opportunity, self-esteem, control, or simply loss of energy. And this last one, energy, is the one today I think we are least ready to acknowledge. We try to fit so much in, rushing from one place and challenge to another. We do not deal effectively with the losses that occur along the way, we live with emotions of anxiety or anger, and then feel more guilty or frustrated when we don't have the energy to keep going. So there's a spiral of weariness, apathy, negative self-image, hopelessness and deep depression. \*

If only we could accept that when we expend energy we need to be replenished. If only we would give ourselves permission to feel and to heal. Our bodies and minds are not endless rivers of energy. Nor are they made to store unfinished business while we go on adding pressure. These are unrealistic expectations we have of our ourselves and others. Depression is God's gift to us when we need to restrict activity for a time of restoration. We need Sabbath in our lives! \*

*I sincerely hope the attitude of "Christians shouldn't get depressed" has been eliminated from our understanding.*

imbalances in the body's chemistry that need to be addressed medically. There have been great advances in medical knowledge in this area that we need to take account of and avail ourselves of, just as we would if we had diabetes or some other medical condition. \* However, most of our depression is a response to loss. A legitimate response, and one we need to understand in ourselves and others. We seem to be able to accept that sadness is a legitimate part of grieving after a major loss, usually a death. But loss is much more diverse than that, and the sadness or depres-



# Media Matters Work

VINEY LONGTHORP

**W**ork ... its this one thing that nobody really wants to do and yet, paradoxically, we all worry if we don't do it. \* The question of work in all its aspects tends to dominate the national agenda, especially with regard to the level of employment. From a political aspect, Senator Vanstone admitted that the present government could lose the next election if employment figures do not improve. Again, when the Victorian State government recently announced legislation for an open slather with regard to trading

*It claimed that time is the luxury of the 90s.*

hours, there was widespread dismay about the impact on jobs and income. Thus Janet McCallman wrote: "The only winners are the profit-takers, and they are few." \* Then there was the announcement by Telstra of its operating profit of \$2305 million, but in the next breath came their announcement of the intention to shed 22,000 jobs by 1999. There

seems to many to be something grotesque about this. But of overriding concern was the recent announcement that the unemployment rate had reached 8.9%, with the prediction that it is unlikely to come down in the near future. Some youth workers claim that the real rate is more like 15%, while the proportion of young people aged 15-19 not in education and looking for work is 23-40%, depending on location. \* Much of this adds up to personal frustration, fear and a sense of insecurity. Perhaps it goes some way to explain the explosive behaviour of some in the demonstration before Parliament House in Canberra at the time of the federal budget. \* The churches also express their deep concern. A recent article in the *Melbourne Anglican* which focussed on the work of the Rev Ray Cleary of the Melbourne Citymission spelt out several situations about work. "(Youth unemployment) is of crisis proportion for the young themselves and the community. Work is essential for our sense of identity and purpose as well as producing the dollars for our basic necessities." Further: "Some will never be employed, others only obtain part-time work, whilst many will need to

move from job to job and quick-fix solutions of lower wages, greater productivity and free market wage fixing assist only the powerful and the strong." \* SBS TV has just finished a week of programs—"About Work". Readers who saw some of them will recognise how grimly many of the facts above translate into people's lives. But at least honest and far-reaching coverage as given in these broadcasts allow us to better understand the nature of the problem; where these have a positive emphasis a start may be made to finding some answers. \* Several programs looked at ways in which the nature of work changed over history. The treatment of workers has improved over time, as were seen in the in the German classic *Kameradschaft* and *Salt of the Earth*. An American documentary *Running Out of Time* found that time spent at work has increased by 15% since 1983, while leisure time is down 37%. It claimed that time is the luxury of the 90s. There was much more like this besides. \* It is almost with a sigh of "optimistic relief" that we commend a book which a Christian thinker Gordon Preece has just published *Changing Work Values: A Christian Response* (Acorn \$29.95). This is a chal-



lenging piece of theological reflection on the changing world of work. It is both spiritual and practical (the spiritual is always practical). He says we must "embrace a broader concept of vocation as one's calling to live by the values of God's kingdom and community in all our activities and doing justice to the integrity of creation." He offers a thorough discussion of how technology has affected employment and unemployment in Australia as well as overseas. He points towards new patterns of organising work in a post-industrial era. He then discusses the experience of work ventures which translate difficult issues into real life. This last is one of the most inspiring chapters which looks at work ventures between the church and community-based partnerships. \* This book is an encouraging tract for "the interesting times" in which we live. \*



**SWANSTON STREET  
CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
Melbourne  
(cnr Swanston &  
Little Lonsdale Streets)

Sunday

9.00 a.m. & 11.00 a.m.

Worship & Communion  
Services

7.00 p.m.

Gospel Celebration

Wednesday

1.15-1.45 p.m.

Lunchtime Service

For further enquiries, please ring (03) 9663 3884

## Visiting Canberra? Stay with a Church Family

A number of Canberra church families offer accommodation in their homes at basic bed and breakfast rates to help raise funds for "Home Mission" extensions in the ACT

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

Lyn Swift  
34 Ylman Street,  
Waramanga 2611  
Phone (062) 88 2050

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

Advance bookings appreciated



## CHANGES

**RIDGE, Keith and Wendy**—Wyndholme Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada. Postal address Apartment 4, 4 Tupper St, Dartmouth NS Canada, B2Y 2G4

## BAPTISMS

•Anna Kingshott, Hobart, Tas  
•Rebecca DeJager, Felicity Watson, Max Callejan, Marie-Claude Salus, Aleta Kulk, Simon Peck, Sam Cutler, James Cutler, Glen Ratten, Phillip Checkley, Philip Allan, Mark Anderson, Tim Ploog, Catherine Fennessy, Wendy Turner, Blackburn, Vic •Mike Pickering, MI Clear, Vic •Sonia Bragg, Stanwell tops, NSW •Kim Phillips, Hampstead Gardens, SA •Alisa Clugston, Kaniva, Vic •Helen Rogerson, Hartwell, Vic

## MARRIAGES

•Claudia Di Maggio and Peter Sobey, MI Clear, Vic •Kristy Harris and Nicky Byard, Caveside, Tas •Louise Ewers-Verge and Ben Ford Albany, WA

## DEATHS

•Ada Unsworth, Essendon North, Vic

## OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words  
**MICHAEL, Lavinia May** (nee Boston) (19.9.96) Born in 1904, May made her decision for Christ at North Perth church at 16. After nursing training, including midwifery and a course at the COB, she married Dr Lindsay Michael in December 1937. Within three weeks they sailed for India and immediately began learning Marathi, based in Daund. Early married life was difficult, with Lindsay being required to serve as an army doctor in WWII. Sons Robert (now in Canada), Philip and daughter Helen (who died at 8 months) were born. The Michaels con-

cluded dedicated hospitable missionary service in 1955. In latter years May was cared for at Joondanna and Warwick Homes.

—Roger Ryall

### UNSWORTH, Ada

(16.7.96) Born Edith Ada Unsworth, 1915. Ada always kept to herself and, after her parents died, lived alone in the Niddrie area. Ada worked at the State Government Printing Service for many years, in Spring St, Melbourne. Member of North Essendon Church of Christ since 1969, she was involved with Niddrie Elderly Citizens Club and had many friends there as well. Ada was an independent person, enjoyed laughing with her friends, outings and flowers. Ada celebrated her 80th birthday with the CWF last year. Friends from church and Elderly Citizens Club attended her funeral service at North Essendon.

## NSW

**STANWELL TOPS** (Ed Holt) New elders elected, Kim Mowbray & Bill Phillips, and one new deacon, Sharon Rees ... Sonia Bragg baptised 25 August & another lady has become a Christian ... "Search for Significance" video series from Careforce Recovery Ministries is proving productive in bringing change to people's lives ... Church celebrated 11th birthday on 15 September with enthusiasm about its future.

## WA

**CARNARVON** Church encouraged by visit of WA Conference team, Barry Ryall, Des Croot & Ray Schmitt ... Multicultural team held a "Night of Missions" attended by combined churches ... An ex-lifeboat "The Little

Galiflean" reposes in church grounds, much loved by Junior Church and Christian School children ... Message of CWCI speaker, Narelle Gattenby, was much appreciated, when ladies attended a dinner.


**ALBANY** (John Spencer) On 24 July a Fun Club commenced for Primary School age children ... On 18 August the church building was near full as people came to hear Marvin Phillips ... Guest speaker 1 September was Peter Sumner from CBMI ... Guest speaker on 15 September was Kel Willis from Keswick ... Ken & Beryl Robinson returned home on 22 September after 5 months overseas trip.

## TAS

**HOBART CITY** (C. Wardle, A. Tonkin) Evening "Does God Watch Television" services proving popular—topics "Melrose Place", "Burke's Backyard", "Home Improvement", "X Files" ... Father's Day service highlighted with baptism of Anna Kingshott ... Great time for number of young people attending Hobart Energizer Conference ... Glenn Jacobson awarded Pharmacy PhD ... Denise Moore rep to CCTC, Gavin Thompson rep to NCC.

**CAVESIDE** (John & Colleen Harrison) J. & C. Harrison accepted invitation to extend ministry for further two years ... Successful ladies meeting held 10 September, with ladies from Launceston & Ulverstone attending ... First wedding at Caveside church for 11 years on 14 September ... Continual wet weather has delayed completion of paths & landscaping of building extension ... Church accepted Tas Executive's invitation to host 1998 Tas Convention.

**NUBEENA** (G.C. Cumbers) A public meeting was held at the church on 24 September, Damion Bugg was the speaker who informed people of the coming trial of Martin Bryant ... Church Fair held was very successful & raised a little over \$2000 ... Eight from WEC Missionary Training College took service on 6 October.



## Operation Exodus

*How you can help:*

Bring my sons from afar and my daughters  
from the ends of the earth. Isaiah 43:6

**THERE ARE MANY SIGNS THAT A TERRIBLE PERSECUTION  
AGAINST THE JEWISH PEOPLE WILL SOON BEGIN.** Jeremiah 16:14-16

Ebenezer Emergency Fund is an International Christian Organisation which is committed to bringing back **GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE** to their ancient homeland of Israel in these last days. Isaiah 49:22

**WE DO NOT HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT —  
THE NEED IS URGENT**

**WILL YOU HELP US?**

1. BY BECOMING A PRAYER PARTNER.
2. BY BECOMING A VOLUNTEER, AS THE LORD CALLS YOU.
3. BY FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THIS MINISTRY PLEASE WRITE TO:

The Advisory Board  
Ebenezer Emergency Fund  
PO Box 81  
Brunswick Heads NSW 2483.

---

**I enclose my gift:** \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other ☐

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_



## VIC

**BLACKBURN COMMUNITY (D. Ratten, A. Spoelder, J. Rowe, R. Croxford, R. Waters, B. Bolduan)** Russell & Karen Croxford & family welcomed into ministry 28 July ... Recent successful seminars "Living Beyond Divorce" led by Anne Spoelder, "Empowered for Living as a Man" led by Alan Niven & John Rowe ... Church sponsoring work party to Nazareth to paint hospital January 1997 ... Farewell to Robert & Cathy McPherson, new assistant managers at Camp Waterman.

**MOUNT CLEAR (Dale White)** Baptism in the creek held for Murray Geddes, quite a change from warm baptismery at church ... 10 new members welcomed last month ... Church musicians participated in Promise Keepers Rally & special service at Horsham church ... Grand Final footy match held between youth groups & minister's "Not Oldies Yet" team ... International students group led recent evening service with great enthusiasm & ability.

**OAKLEIGH (D. Milne)** 22 September church received seven new members by transfer—David & Jean Hillier, Maisie Robinson, Ted & Glad Hudson, Kathleen Thomas, Olive Williams ... Gideon's representative spoke on 29 September ... All Office Bearers re-elected at AGM of CWF ... Prospects bright for 1997 ... Ivy Funston in Betheden, Ken Masterton back in service after attending World Convention ... Many visitors during September.

**LATROBE TERRACE (David Jones)** Fathers presented with small gift by Sunday School scholars ... Minister gave series of sermons featuring the "Prodigal Son" ... Debbie & Kim Brooks welcomed into fellowship ... 47 young people & leaders enjoyed formal dinner at Rosnashane ... Sue & Rohan Williams farewelled ... Minister on holidays, Allen Carr, Bert Stevens, Cliff Warmbrunn, Rob McNish, Des Davey, guest speakers ...

Ruth Carr re-elected CWF President. **HARTWELL** 12-year ministry concludes with church family & many visitors joining to farewell the Rogerson family as they commence ministry at Victor Harbor, expressions of appreciation & presentations were made ... CWF Concert held with proceeds to Community Care ... Visiting speakers included Noel Robert (Gideons), Glen Wegner ... Pastoral Care Team studied Alzheimer's Disease.

**KANIVA (Paul Bauer)** Many relatives & friends present for Alisa Clugston's baptism, including Alisa's almost 100-year-old grandmother ... Evening & day groups enjoyed Greg Elsdon's studies ... Peter Gill, Bible Society, addressed morning service & combined PSA. Jeff Weston spoke at pm service on OM work ... Double Golden Wedding anniversary for Joyce & Albert Williams & Glad & Bob Bradley.

**MONASH CITY (Ron Elbourne, Mar-**

**tin Gillespie, Craig Brown)** Ron Elbourne, with senior ministers, escorted young ministers to USA for Leadership 2000 ... Craig Brown preached in his absence ... New small groups coordinators—Peter & Anita Francis ... Elders received with regret resignation of Pastoral Minister, Martin Gillespie ... Leaders' camp for training and encouragement ... Young people led at Halls Gap camps during September.

## COCOA brings HOPE



*to young children  
just like these at  
Shrigonda Girls  
Home, INDIA.*

*Some of these  
girls are orphans  
with no one to  
care for them or  
to love them.*

*We believe God  
loves them, so we  
help to provide a  
loving home  
where they can  
experience God's  
love.*

**Will you become a partner in this vital work?  
Help spread HOPE though a gift to COCOA.**

**Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Postcode:** .....

**Amount:** \$ .....

**Please charge my:** ☐ Bankcard ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

**Expiry Date:** .....  
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

**Signature** .....

**Post to:** Churches of Christ Overseas Aid  
180a Gray St, ADELAIDE SA 5000.



# Snippets from History Boating Disaster

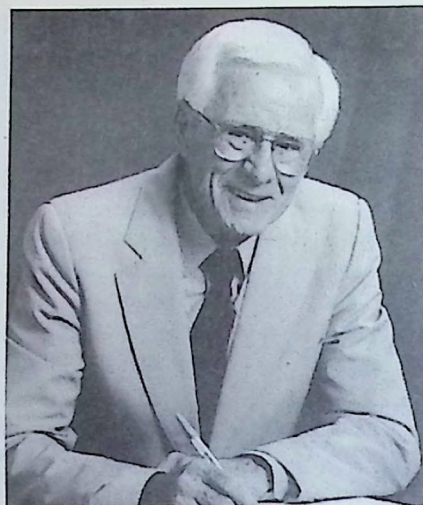
GORDON STIRLING

A successful District Conference had been held at the Bunbury, WA, chapel 22-23 October 1916 and twelve delegates were given the use of a yacht for an estuary trip on the Monday. As the seas became rough the group decided to return to the jetty. But in making the turn a sudden gust of wind caught the sail and turned the boat over. \*

Five of the twelve drowned. Among those drowned was H.J. (Harry) Banks, a strong swimmer who lost his life trying to support non-swimmers. He was State Evangelist and Organising Secretary of WA Churches of Christ and minister of the North Perth church. \*

Harry Banks was born in Maryborough, Vic, in 1874, the son of an American slave who escaped to Canada and then to England. The Victorian gold rush attracted him to Australia, where he settled in Maryborough, becoming an enthusiastic member of the local Church of Christ, in which church young Harry grew up. His father wanted him to be a preacher, but Harry chose to be a printer. Moving to Melbourne he linked up with the Lygon Street church where he was baptised at the age of 19. \*

In 1897 a £6 a week job attracted him to Coolgardie in the WA goldfields. He quickly found the local Church of Christ meeting in a hessian hut. He described his first service there. "There were 18 brothers present and three sisters. It was very primitive, no cloth on the table and an enamel cup and plate used for the breaking of bread. Planks



were nailed on blocks in the ground for seats. It was a splendid meeting." \*

A year later the WA Conference Committee invited Harry to leave his £6 job to become an evangelist on the goldfields for £3 a week. Based at Coolgardie and pushing his bike round the diggings, he established churches at Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Kanowna and Southern Cross. One Sunday his bicycle broke down and he ran the 30 km from Coolgardie to Boulder arriving in time to preach the sermon. \*

From the goldfields he was called to Subiaco, which in his 11-year ministry became the largest Church of Christ in the state. In 1913 he took up the Conference work, riding his motor bike all over the state. He had been serving for two and a half years when the drowning took place. \*

## The Last Word

No human being can reach you where it really matters.

—Anthony de Mello

Ten reasons why I never wash!

- 1 I was made to wash as a child.
- 2 People who wash are hypocrites—they reckon they're cleaner than other people.
- 3 There are so many different kinds of soap I could never decide which one was right.
- 4 I used to wash, but it got boring, so I stopped.
- 5 I used to wash on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
- 6 None of my friends wash.
- 7 I'm still young. When I'm older and have got a bit dirtier I might start washing.
- 8 I really don't have the time.
- 9 The bathroom's never warm enough.
- 10 People who make soap are only after your money.

—"The New Zealand Christian"

A man met a scruffy old tramp who was only wearing one shoe. "Hello there!" said the man. "Have you lost a shoe?" The tramp replied, "No, I found one."

Why is it that all the people who know how to run this country are busy either cutting hair or driving taxis?

## 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 .....

## Pontius' Puddle

