

National Journal
of Churches of
Christ in Australia

Vol. 99 No. 2

17 February 1996

Print Post Approved
PP349181/00418

THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

Parliament, Politics and People



—pages 9-13

Photo: AUSAIC

Vol. 99

17 February 1996

No. 2

Editor: Don Smith

Production Manager/Sub Editor:
Nigel Pegram

Issue

2 March

16 March

6 April

Deadline

22 February

7 March

28 March

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(including subscription payments)

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Member publication
of the Australasian
Religious Press
Association

National Logo of
Churches of Christ
in Australia



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.

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Printing by New Litho Pty Ltd

63 Sunbury Crescent

Surrey Hills Vic 3127

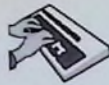
Responsibility for electoral material is
accepted by Don Smith,
2 Larkspur Ave, Doncaster Vic 3108

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

Shooting Kangaroos

Don Smith

In our local greengrocer's shop I overheard a neighbour's discussion with the proprietor. The discussion centred on shooting kangaroos. A little later I met my neighbour outside and commented that I was intrigued by his conversation. My neighbour didn't seem to me to be into shooting kangaroos. He acknowledged the problem and replied that the only thing he would shoot would be politicians. As I was carrying a heavy box of produce, having declined the offer of help from a young shop assistant, it wasn't practicable to talk further. Later in the morning I learned that an election had been called. Our neighbour and I share some common Christian perspectives and I was left reflecting about New Testament teaching on our being subject to governing authorities.

Governments and politicians are not well regarded. Volatile responses, such as in the July 1995 Queensland election and the loss of the Mundingburra seat this month after being in Labor's hands since the 1920s, must leave party leaders wondering.

How we reach and hold people is also a question for churches. While there are obvious differences, there are also some parallels. At the heart of the election process are basically well-intentioned men and women who offer themselves for service to Australia. Hugh Mackay, the Sydney-based social researcher, notes how voters are cynical and inclined to ask searching questions about the system.

In all areas of life we face tides of change, with new theories, ideas and practices confronting us. Economics, the environment, social and personal issues all confront us with the possibility of change and adjustment in our life.

As a teenage employee of the Commonwealth Bank, I embraced the Chifley Government's plan to nationalise the private banks. I absorbed the culture about a people's bank which sprang from political ideas about social capital and the common good. My support was strengthened by the fact that in new country branches staff of other banks were not being at all friendly to Commonwealth staff. I imagine they were saying things equivalent to our current "get lost". Well, the ideas about banking were decisively rejected in the 1949 election and Labor wandered in the wilderness for 23 years.

Now in this decade, these old ideas have been exchanged for new ones and I have the opportunity to become a shareholder with comparatively few people as against

all the people. In all this change maybe I should talk to my financial adviser!

Three years ago, the proposal for a Goods and Services Tax by the Coalition Parties and the threatened change involved, created significant problems for the Opposition.

Changing ideas are everywhere and confront churches too. In politics all our parties face the challenge to renew and reconceive their mission task. The situation has a familiar ring about it.

Politicians from all parties face continual pressures from within and without. Life isn't easy in politics or the church. Recently, Justice Michael Kirby noted the words of the late Dr H.V. Evatt, that politics is the art of leading the community and not twisting in the wind to transient public opinion. This is the leadership issue again in new situations. Good leadership may also create its own tensions, especially where change is involved.

The hard facts are that our direct sharing in government through participatory democracy is unsuitable for governing large numbers. So we are left with an election and the opportunity to elect men and women to serve us in Parliament. Shooting them isn't on. Let's recognise that our Australian political system is more honourable and cleaner than many. Apart from some state problems, our political system has been largely free from corruption. At a local level, why not have your church keep contact with your elected Member or Senator? It is better to affirm and build than have negative and cynical attitudes towards someone we don't know. We all function better with encouragement, support, conversation and prayer. It is also important to accept that we live in a secular pluralistic society, one of whose hallmarks is that the general tolerance of religious freedom requires of Christians equal tolerance of other views. This does not mean that we compromise the uniqueness of the Gospel, but that we proclaim it with a maturity required of all citizens in a liberal, pluralist democracy.

The late Herbert Butterfield, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge enunciated a principle: "Hold fast to Christ and for the rest be uncommitted". The principle stands us well in these times. Butterfield was no escapist from society, but he did recognise that if one wants a permanent rock in life and seeks deeply enough for it, then it is difficult for historical events to shake it. ♦

Contents

9-13 Parliament, Politics and People

Federal election feature. We look at Christians and politics, and Christians in politics

Alexander Campbell and Politics	9
Christian Candidates Questioned	10-12
Restoring the Balance	13

16 1997—The China Syndrome

What the future holds, our "foreign correspondent" reports

17 Disturbing the Church Roll

Do we need to renew our church memberships?

17 Persistence in Prayer

Do we ask often and sincerely?

Regulars

Coffee Break	14
Editorial	2
News	4-7
Media Matters	15
People	8
Snippets from History	20



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Letters to the Editor



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.

Muted Voice

To the Editor,

I would like to express my extreme disappointment at the way the Federal Literature Department treated Kim Thoday's article on leadership ("AC" 2 December). This Biblical, challenging article is timely for our churches. As such, it deserved to be published in its own right. So I ask the Department why it felt so threatened that it printed the article alongside another, which did not deal with the issues raised? Surely a follow-up pamphlet, responding to Kim's article, could have been published; eg, "Where Are All the Leaders Who Are Committed to Lead in Strong, Open and Accountable Ways?" or, "An Argument for Centralised, Exclusive Leadership Styles?"

This open procedure is vital because many people's voices are never heard in our churches and structures when they differ from those in positions of power. Even when some people are "allowed" to speak, they are cleverly obscured, so that their impact is muted. This last point is clearly evident in Pamphlet 392. —Mike Esbensen (North Essendon, Vic)

Muted Voice—Response

To the Editor,

Kim Thoday's pamphlet was seen as a contribution to our corporate thinking. We do need to examine directions and ask questions about our theological reasoning and expectations. We need devil's advocates to question and probe. For this reason, our diverse department membership was happy to print Kim's article. However, the unanimous decision was to provide an alternative viewpoint to assist individuals and churches in working through their position.

This article was not written to drown the first voice. As noted by M. Esbensen, it does not answer the issues raised by Kim. It was not intended to. It looks at the subject from a different perspective and different circumstances, as other multiple pamphlets have done. Another pamphlet in a later issue was considered, but with the considerable gap created by the holidays, it was thought best to keep the discussion within the 1995 agenda. The Federal Literature Department serves the whole church, with a responsibility to be inclusive in the coverage of issues.

—Shirley Ludgater
(Editor, Pamphlet Club)

Spirit of the Universe

To the Editor,

Two years' study of astronomy at university level stretches the mind to reconsider a number of issues, including the nature of God and Biblical interpretation.

Maybe that's why every member of the Bible study group looked stunned when I suggested the inadequacy of the comforting image of God as Father. Sure, we need such images to in part comprehend our God, but it is still only an image and less than the full "picture" of God.

God is a Spirit and I sometimes wonder why we never, in the public prayers of the Church, hear God addressed as "O Great Spirit of the Universe". Instead, the lesser, and at times, rather repetitious term "Father" is used or overused.

Am I wrong in believing that when the Indian chief or Aboriginal elder lifts his gaze to the starry heavens, he utters his prayer to the same God that the Christian addresses? Is not the Muslim worshipper addressing the same Great Spirit of the Universe as we Christians do? Does God only respond to the Christian's prayer? We create God in our own image. The Great Spirit of the Universe is beyond and above all our image-making. He is none other than The Lord of the Universe.

—Charles Kimber
(Westside, Qld)

Mosaic

Women's personal and professional development

There are many courses available in community groups and the workplace for women. But there are not many offered through the church, that focus on personal and professional development. Yet, by maximising our potential and developing our strengths, we can be as effective as possible in our various areas of Christian ministry and life. Mosaic is a personal and professional development course for women. The name Mosaic suggests all the

dimensions of life which are part of the experience of women (home, work, family, church, community, relationships) being integrated in an overall design or purpose.

Prepared by Irene Creasey (Knoxfield, Vic) and Lynette Leach (DMED, Vic-Tas) who will present it over four weekly sessions, it deals with confidence, communication, conflict and change. Christian principles and values underlie the whole course. It is designed to

be a useful tool in outreach, providing worthwhile experiences for women who are either involved in the church or who do not regularly attend.

It is being offered jointly through Conference Departments; namely, Community Care and Mission, Education and Development. The first series of workshops will be held

at the Williamstown Church of Christ on 20 February, 27 February, 5 March and 12 March commencing at 7.30 pm. The course fee is \$80, concession \$60.

For further information about this series or holding this course in your church, contact Irene Creasey on 018 053 854 or Lynette Leach (03) 9326 8900.

Volunteers Needed

Helpers wanted for Conference office

Most Christian organisations are working with increased demands but limited staff. The Vic-Tas Churches of Christ Centre at 77 Capel Street West Melbourne is no exception. To assist with various office tasks at times of peak demand, a pool of volunteers is being sought for such routines as photocopy-

ing, collating and mailing. Volunteers nominate when they are available and how often they want to work. Barbara Richards (Hartwell, Vic) is coordinating the pool of volunteers, so if you would like to register your interest in providing this service, contact her on (03) 9889 7536.

Summer Holidays

Meeting various holiday needs

The summer holidays which were offered by the Department of Mission, Education and Development (Vic-Tas) catered for different needs: camps for young people, girls, singles and one parent families, family holidays, and the Croajalong Trek. Managers of the campsites, directors and team leaders ensured that each camp offered a quality program. Participants appreciated the ability to relax with other families; a safe, friendly environment; a sense of community; meeting new people; participating in new activities; and encountering God in worship and nature.

Some families have asked about a Family Easter Holiday at Camp Acacia, Halls Gap. Paul and Linda Fry directed a previous one, but because of

increased responsibilities and demands at Camp Waterman, Monbulk, they are unable to do so this year. If there is a family who would like to take up the challenge to organise and lead a Family Easter Holiday, please contact DMED on (03) 9326 8900.

Dear Reader,

The first issue for this year was hardly in your hands before copy closes for the next issue. In that brief time we have received numerous notes and telephone calls expressing appreciation for the issue. Looking back on the final rush with that issue, I am reminded of the task of berthing a ship. The aim is to get close to the jetty, but not bump it. Well we just made it!

In this issue we welcome two more regular writers. Gordon Stirling is well known to our regular readers. You will enjoy his treatment of history. Carol Preston's "Coffee Break" will help you do just that. Glynthea Finger introduces our "World View" feature: She will correspond from time to time. It is good to be welcoming new women writers. I hope you enjoy the work of Dean Moore our new Australian cartoonist. Nigel and I have seen his folio and look forward to sharing his work with you.

In this issue you will find a special election feature. John

Forrest, the Member for Mallee, was helpful in some initial planning. *The Australian Christian* offers no endorsement of any party, but we are encouraged by the faith commitment of such a diverse group of candidates. As the months pass, we shall be introducing further features. These are in the planning stage. We also have three special issues for you in the next three months. Wider matters relating to content, style, aims and promotion will progressively be considered. We shall keep you informed. Your comments are always welcome. Many of you wrote a word of encouragement when you paid your 1995 subscription. They have been too numerous for me to reply to personally, but thank you.

By the way, can you help enlist a new subscriber?

Until next time,

Sam Smith

Pontius' Puddle



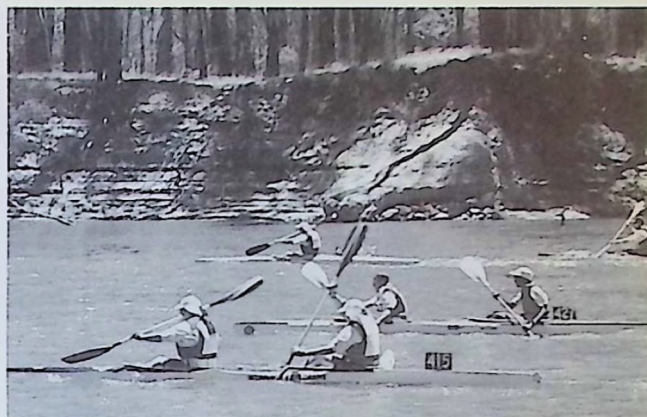
Mastering the Marathon

Explorers in the Murray River Marathon

A record 1,100 paddlers took part in the Red Cross Murray Marathon held 27-31 December 1995. Churches of Christ teams have competed since the first Marathon in 1969. Two Melbourne groups, Team and Werribee Explorers had 19 paddlers and 37 land crew in the race. The five-day event over 404 kilometres, ending at Swan Hill, is the most grueling of its kind in Australia. Echuca and Swan Hill churches gave outstanding support, with Echuca providing a roast dinner, spa facilities and great masseurs. The race was marked by four days of non-stop sun,

followed by rain squalls on the last day. Three New Zealand competitors from the Waitara River Kayak Club linked with the Explorer team and won first, second and fifth in their events.

Explorers won three first places, two seconds and a fourth place in overall events. This is a great achievement given the intense competition and training among paddlers. Setting up a base camp each night in readiness for a tired team of paddlers is a demanding task. Andrew McMillan, minister of Maidstone church and chaplain for a second time, led worship each day and gave



• Werribee Explorers (number 415) paddling the marathon

strong support in erecting tents, cooking and land crewing. Groups interested in participating this year should contact Cathy Negus of the Explorer

Canoe Club telephone (03) 9801 6820. The club is a part of the Adventure Committee of the Vic-Tas Department of Mission Education and Development.

150th Commemoration

Grote Street, Adelaide

People from Victoria waited for the doors to open for an unforgettable day at Grote Street, Adelaide, 7 January. They preceded a flood of people spilling into the lecture hall for an overflow meeting which included the use of a TV relay screen. It was 150 years since the Church of Christ, built by Verco-Santo, opened its doors in Franklin Street.

Some 500-600 people came from everywhere, from professional vocations to the toilers of the land. Special guest, Her Excellency, The Honourable

Dame Roma Mitchell, AC, DBE, Governor of South Australia, was greeted by the minister and his wife, Phillip Anderson, and Board Chairman, Don Pearce. Some forty members of the Adelaide Male Voice Choir created a worshipful rendering of The Lord's Prayer and then lifted the congregational singing with the stirring "Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven". Mr Shaw, Woodville High School, led the choir.

Descendants of the pioneer founding fathers of the Restoration Movement; Thomas Magarey, Alexander Campbell and James Verco, were strongly represented, and Karl, Leon and Philip Verco sang triumphantly, "I Hear Thy Welcome Voice".

Her Excellency read the New Testament Scriptures and Philip Verco the Old Testament. "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross", preceded Communion, presided over by Grote Street minister Phillip Anderson. Graham Bell, guest pipe organist, sang with great inspiration, Gounod's "Divine Redeemer".

"The Church's One Foundation", fervently launched Alexander Campbell's descendant, Miss Constance Magarey, into a glowing account of the three families—Magareys, Campbells, and Vercos—starting from the time of Thomas Magarey's conversion in New Zealand, his marriage to Elisabeth Verco and their son's marriage at the Campbell mansion to her grandmother Virginia Campbell, West Virginia, USA. This was heard with rapt attention, especially her account of Alexander Campbell being a wealthy landowner ploughing his money back into church work, but when freeing his slaves found the lack of income limited expansion. Miss Magarey's sister, widow of Canon Ray, the first Principal of Adelaide's Pulteney Gram-



• Dame Roma Mitchell, Governor of SA

mar School was also present.

The Adelaide Male Voice Choir preceded guest preacher, Ian Corlett, Associate State Minister, who preached on "The Challenge of 150 years". The sermon gave an extraordinary upsurge to the singing of the final hymn "O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing".

—Arnold Caldicott

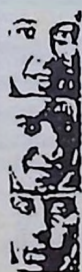
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Sunday School in a Box

75 years at Boronia



• Boronia's original chapel, built by volunteers in two days

Just 75 years ago the first Sunday school in Boronia, Vic, was commenced by the newly formed Church of Christ. A large marquee was borrowed from the North Fitzroy church and erected for the first time on 20 March 1921. It came in a large box, complete with poles and chairs. The box was used

for the kindergarten and the rest of the 30 plus children met either in the tent, or in the large covered wagon that brought them along the muddy tracks and unmade roads. The tent was erected every Saturday afternoon, used on Sundays for church services and Sunday school, and packed away in the

box that night. A portable organ was brought from the Goodwin home each Sunday.

When North Fitzroy needed the return of the tent, the vestry of the future church building was hastily erected and used for three months.

Later, an attractive weather-board chapel was erected towards the end of the year and served its purpose for over 50 years. It was put up by volunteers in two days. Trusses and church pews had to be carted from Bayswater Station on H.R. Chandlers horse drawn wagon. A party travelled with them to lift them over the rails of the narrow culverts in Dorset Road. Workers came from all over Melbourne on Show Day 22 September and also the following day. The following notice appeared in *The Australian Christian*: "A working bee for the erection of the Boronia church building will be held on September 22. Carpenters, plumbers, painters and general hands are needed. Meals provided. Trains leave Flinders Street at 5.50 am, 8.25 am and

1.00 pm. Come and spend a day where boronia and daffodils bloom, and help this new church. Bring tools."

The building was officially opened on 2 October. There was no electricity available, so lighting was by "Gloria Light", with a petrol cylinder outside, fitted with a pressure lamp. Whenever lights began to fail, someone had to run outside to "man the pump" to get them going again. Some of the Sunday School scholars who met in the tent in 1921 are still in membership with the church: Gordon Chandler, Madge Dobson, Ivy Burden, Laurie and Mabel Maguire, and Essie Bird.

The 75th. Anniversary of the Boronia Church is being celebrated on 23 and 24 March 1996, with Gordon Moyes as guest preacher. At 7.30 pm on the Saturday his seminar subject is "Marching into the New Millennium", and on the Sunday at 10.00 am, his subject is "The Shape of the Church to Come". For further information phone (03) 9762 1143, (03) 9762 6348 or (03) 9762 5209.

Moving with Monash

Glen Waverley developments

A new chapter has begun for the Glen Waverley, Vic, church when it officially adopted a new name on 4 February. Now known as the Monash City Church of Christ, the name has been chosen to more accurately reflect the nature of its mission and ministry.

In the recent amalgamation of local councils in Victoria, the former city of Waverley was renamed the city of Monash. With a population of 166,000 within its boundaries, it is the largest municipality within the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Monash City Church of Christ is aptly named because the buildings are situated within the designated business

precinct and are close to the commercial and civic centre of the city.

The congregation has a vision for the whole city of Monash. With more than thirty nationalities represented in the congregation, the church is a microcosm of the city. Renowned for its strong evangelistic and pastoral ministry, the congregation currently num-

bers more than 360 active members with another 100 people meeting regularly for worship with the church.

New signs at the front of the buildings features the new corporate logo designed by Keith Smith from Asprey Di Donato Design and provide a clear identity.

This year the church is celebrating its 43rd year of worship and witness in the area. The senior minister, Ron Elbourne, celebrated his 25th year of ministry with the church in February.

This strong, active congregation prayerfully looks forward with excitement to the future that God will unfold for it.

Ron Elbourne said, "We want to be true to our slogan."

"A community church, in the heart of the community, with the community at heart."

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Pastor Required

The Forest Hill Church of Christ near Mt Barker in Western Australia is looking for expressions of interest for the position of part-time pastor.

Those who respond should be able to show leadership in the fellowship and be a good Bible teacher. This person needs to be looking at this as an opportunity to serve God in this way and be able to support themselves part-time. Those interested, and for more information, please contact Mr Ray Pickens on (098) 51 2192, or write to the Church Secretary, PO Box 442, Mt Barker WA 6324.

Congregational Size

Issues for small and large churches

Regardless of whether their congregation is large or small, most attenders would like it to be larger. Australia is a nation of small congregations. More than a third of congregations have fewer than 25 attenders. Only 1% of congregations has more than 500 attenders.

Congregations with 300–499 attenders have the highest growth rates. Growth rates decline in congregations with more than 500 attenders.

Three quarters of attenders would like their congregation to be larger; 58% think being larger would make the congregation more effective, 18% feel their congregation won't survive unless it grows.

Large congregations generally have a higher proportion of young attenders than small congregations.

Attenders in large congregations are just as likely to have friends in the congregation and feel a sense of belonging as attenders in small congregations. Attenders in large congregations are less likely to have a role and be involved in making important decisions, but more likely to be aware of their leader's vision.

• The high level of concern about long-term viability suggests that many traditional models of ministry may be under threat. Congregations can no longer assume that by hold-

ing services, people will come. Small congregations, which are questioning their ability to survive, may need to explore different ministry models.

• While size and numerical growth should not be considered sole measures of spiritual health, growth appears to be seen by most attenders as a sign of life and effectiveness. It may be important for congregations to include goals for growth in their vision statements.

• There are clearly issues of scale to deal with when congregations reach 500 attenders. Growing congregations may need to look at ways to include more attenders in roles and decision making so that church does not just become a spectator sport for the majority of attenders. Large congregations may be better able to support

attenders who work in religious and mission organisations outside the congregation.

• While attenders in large congregations claim to have similar levels of belonging and friendship, this doesn't mean that leadership does not need to consider these issues as the congregation grows.

• Attenders at smaller congregations are more likely to have administrative roles than attenders in large congregations. The challenge for small congregations is to ensure that they are not over administered, diverting energy from an outward focus. Attenders in small congregations are less likely to be aware of a vision for the growth of the congregation; this issue may also need to be addressed. —National Church Life Survey

Why People Don't Go to Church

People give their reasons

The most frequently expressed reason for not going to church was that they lacked strong belief or did not believe at all. Most of these people said they had no religion. 2% of the sample held to a religion other than Christianity.

Other people said they believed in God and even affirmed the resurrection, but did not see the need to go to church or had other priorities. Many indicated that they felt that the Christian faith was an important source of values. For some, however, not going was a matter of time. They worked long hours and their spouses

worked long hours. These people were mostly in the 30–49 age bracket and had dependent children. What spare time they had, they wanted to spend with their families, they said.

Another factor was a dislike of church or bad experiences with people at church. For some, the idea of church services was quite unattractive, while others did not like churches as organisations. Some, particularly among younger people under 30, indicated that they did not agree with church morality. 9% of the respondents said that they had had previous bad experi-

ences with people at church and 7% said they were not comfortable with people at church.

Invitations

Would they accept an invitation to go to church if given by a close friend or family member? One third of those who did not go to church more than once a month said they would do so. Another 20% indicated that they might. One third said they definitely would not, and the final 11% said that none of their friends or family went to church. Those who had indicated that they did not have time to go to church, or used to go and had dropped out, were most likely to respond positively to an invitation.

What would be attractive to

them in attending church? Most important was that the service lasted only one hour. Three-quarters also indicated they would like a short, simple sermon. Two-thirds indicated that off-street parking would make church-going more attractive. About one half said that it was important to go with a friend. Not having too far to go and not having reading to do in the service was affirmed by almost half the sample. The least important item in the list presented to the respondents was "up beat songs".

—Philip Hughes

As part of his work towards a post-graduate degree, John Bellamy of the National Church Life Survey team conducted a study in four suburbs in Sydney asking residents about their attitudes towards church attendance and the Christian faith. 1,119 responded. John has put together three reports on his study. For more information, and copies of the reports, write to John Bellamy, PO Box 129, Telopea NSW 2117.

[From *Christian Research Association Bulletin*. Reprinted with permission.]

"An Impossible Dream" (by Ruth & Keith Skillicorn)

Rejoice with the Skillicorns in the publication (by invitation) of their above-mentioned book on the Internet at:-

<http://www.sccsi.com/martin/d/TOC.html>

Also by invitation (from the W.H.O.) they conduct their "Forum on Leprosy" at:-

<http://www.who.ch/programmes/lep/keith.htm>

Their "home page" for discussion on theological, social & environmental issues is at:-

<http://dove.mtx.net.au/~rkskill/dovehpag.html>

R & K Skillicorn, 292 Milne Road, Modbury Heights SA 5092
Phone (08) 265 0417 E-mail rkskill@dove.mtx.net.au

Correction

Please note that the advert immediately to the left contained two mistakes when published in our last issue. The URL for the Skillicorns' book contained an extra period, and a "k" was omitted from their e-mail address.

Betty de Jager

Twenty-six years of service recognised

Betty de Jager's work with blind people at the Elanora Home in Melbourne was recognised recently when she received an award from the Governor of Victoria, Richard McGarvie, at a special presentation at Government House. The presentation marked 26 years of service, which included weekly visits to residents and the conduct of a chapel service each month.

Betty is a member of the Brighton church. Over the years, Betty has undertaken special training to equip her for specialised work with blind people. The Association for the Blind has some 3,500 volunteers, of which 120 received a special badge to mark their distinguished service to blind people. The garden party held at



• Mrs McGarvie congratulating Betty de Jager following receipt of her award from the Governor

Government House marked 100 years of work by the Association.

Silver at Glen Waverley

25 years of ministry



• Ron and Mavis Elbourne

Wednesday 7 February marked the anniversary of Ron El-

bourne's commencement of ministry at Glen Waverley, Vic, in 1971.

Over the years, a large number of people, both young and old, have given their lives to Jesus Christ under his care and preaching.

To mark the occasion, a presentation of tickets for a tour of the Holy Land, and a "trip book", were recently made to Ron and Mavis Elbourne, with grateful thanks to both for their sacrificial service to the church.

For about half of those 25 years, Ron was the sole minister and led the church to see

Illingworths to the USA

Exchange studies in Okalahoma

Greg and Jenny Illingworth, together with their children Stephen, Laura and Hayden, will spend 1996 in the United States. This news was received with mixed emotions at the Manifold Heights, Vic, church. On the one hand, the congregation was reluctant to lose their strong and creative leadership, on the other, they were pleased that they were responding to the call of God. The church has released them with their deepest prayers, assuring them of their ongoing love and support.

The Illingworths will be located at Enid, Okalahoma, where Greg will study at Phillips Theological Seminary as an exchange student from the Churches of Christ Theological College, the National College of Churches of Christ in Australia at Mulgrave, Vic. This opportunity has been offered to Greg in light of his effective and sustained ministry at Manifold Heights, his commitment to his studies at CCTC and his potential to benefit from his experience in the US. Studies completed at Phillips will be credited towards Greg's Bachelor of Theology. He also expects to be engaged in a student church



• Illingworth family

placement during this time. Greg's participation in this exchange program for students and faculty continues an established arrangement. The first CCTC student to study at Phillips was Michelle Martine. Graeme Chapman spent the first six months of this year at Phillips as visiting professor of Christian Spirituality.

Greg and his family are looking forward with eager anticipation to this new opportunity, believing that it will enrich their lives and contribute to their preparation for ministry in Australia.

beyond itself in caring for others and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

This emphasis has never wavered and team ministry has been added to enhance the coverage of ministry to the church and the wider community. The church owes its present life and witness to the leadership that Ron has given in obedience to his Lord.

Ron has ably represented the church as Vic-Tas Conference President, on conference committees, at senior ministers' conferences and training seminars, at business seminars and in civic affairs.

Ron is recognised in all these various arenas for the significance and variety of his contributions.

Mavis Elbourne has always been a very able support for Ron and many a sacrifice has been made to allow Ron to give so consistently of himself to ministry. She also has used her gifts and talents in many ways at Glen Waverley and other churches, and across denominational boundaries in Australia and overseas.

The newly-named Monash City Church of Christ congregation thanks God for the commitment, love and dedication which have been Ron's hallmarks towards the people over the last quarter-century. They pray for God's continued leading in the years ahead as they work together for the growth and development of his kingdom in the city and beyond.

Ecumenical Service

St Paul's Cathedral

3.00 pm Sunday 17 March 1996

Senior citizens of all faiths and their families are invited to a special service to celebrate Senior Citizens Week. The Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, The Most Reverend Dr Keith Rayner will preach. Singing will commence at 2.30 pm, lead by the popular Maroondah Singers. Light refreshments will be served after the service.

Enquiries to Anglican Homes for the Elderly: (03) 9818 0988.

Alexander Campbell and Politics

Leroy Garrett

This article was written for our election issue. Dr Garrett is a distinguished church historian among our American churches.

Aussies may have their Australia Day, but never having had to fight a war for independence, they do not have the likes of "the Fourth of July," which is America's most distinctive holiday, "Independence Day" it is called. It was especially dear to Alexander Campbell, who, having migrated to the United States from his native Ireland in 1809 when only 20, became one of his nation's proudest adopted sons. "The Fourth," as Americans often call it, became Campbell's own independence day, marking his deliverance from both the religious and political obscurantism he had experienced in the old world.

When Campbell began his first journal, *The Christian Baptist*, he concluded his preface with the notation: "Buffaloe, July 4, 1823". Buffaloe was his village's first name, which he renamed Bethany when he himself became its first postmaster, which gave him franking privileges, allowing him to mail all his publications free! No wonder that he loved America and "the Fourth"! At that time the new republic was only 47 years old. Campbell was a pathfinder on the American frontier.

Throughout his journalistic career, which extended over 40 years, Campbell never ceased to applaud his adopted country and its "free institutions", always honouring the Fourth of July. Once he founded Bethany College in 1840, he decreed that it should celebrate its commencement each year on July 4. It was a time for patriotic speeches as well as orations for the improvement of the mind. One Churches of Christ pioneer, J.W. McGarvey, who graduated from Bethany on a Fourth of July, gave his

valedictory address in Greek! Bethany also graduated future statesmen, including Joseph Rucker Lamar, who sat on the US Supreme Court.

To Campbell his adopted country meant far more than freedom and opportunity. It would be the catalyst for what he called "the millennial church". There was a reason why he named his second journal the *Millennial Harbinger*, which he began in 1830. It would help bring in the millennium, which would mark the end of sectarianism and the beginning of the united church, which God had ordained for America. These idealistic, postmillennial concepts, which included a victorious reign of the gospel, were tempered by time and circumstance.

When the dark days leading up to the Civil War came, which divided his beloved country and threatened the peace of his church, he no longer wrote of an earthly millennium, but of heavenly hope when he would be "absent from planet earth". Yet he often wrote of the "amelioration of society", which depended upon both religious and political institutions.

It follows that one of such intense interests would be close to the political scene, even if he sometimes questioned whether a Christian should get involved. General William Henry Harrison, who became the ninth President in 1841, was a friend, as was General James Garfield, a Churches of Christ minister, who became the 20th President in 1881. Both of these men died in office, the latter by an assassin's bullet. Campbell served with former Presidents James

**The
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institutions**

Monroe and James Madison in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829.

President Madison, known also as the father of the US Constitution, heard Campbell preach on several occasions, while the Convention was in session in Rich-

mond. While hailing him as an astute statesman, he insisted that it was as a preacher that he excelled. Madison went so far as to say that Campbell was the finest expositor of the Scriptures he had ever heard. General Robert E. Lee (the only general to be offered the command both the Union and Confederate armies!) was a friend who visited Campbell in Bethany.

When Campbell spoke at the Baptist Church in the nation's capital in 1858, President James Buchanan, part of his Cabinet, and numerous members of Congress were in the audience. The President afterwards invited him and Mrs Campbell to the White House, along with two of their daughters, where there was animated conversation about affairs of church and state. All this was arranged by Campbell's close friend, Judge Black of Pennsylvania, who was US Attorney General.

Campbell was wine and dined by the great and near-great all across the American frontier, where he was as well known as Billy Graham is today. It was common for him to speak not only in county court houses but before state legislative assemblies. Stores would close to allow their employees to hear him. A frequent theme was "The Philanthropy of God", based on John 3:16, in which he pleaded for the edu-

cation of both heart and mind.

While it is commonly reported that Campbell once addressed both Houses of the US Congress, it was not quite that way, not officially at least, and the address is not in the Congressional Record, to the disappointment of a few researchers. In 1850 he did preach on a Sunday in the chamber of the House of Representatives to members of Congress and their families, and again his theme was the philanthropy of God, a subject he hoped would ease the tensions caused by the slavery issue. It was a kind of "Congress Church" that invited prominent ministers that visited Washington. While President Nixon had a "White House Church" for a time, the US Congress is not so religious now!

The Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829 was Campbell's only venture into politics, an office for which he campaigned and was elected by the citizens of Brooke County, Virginia, now West Virginia. This experience did not augur well for him. Every measure he proposed, even the minor ones, were rejected.

It was just as well, for God did not call Alexander Campbell to politics but to the renewal of the church. Had he chosen politics he might well have gone far, very far. He chose rather to be "The Fool of God", as Louis Cochran calls him in that historical novel. The "19th Century Reformation", which he led from his little village in Virginia, within a half-century made its way across the States to Canada, Scotland, England, and Ireland, and on to New Zealand and Australia, bringing its blessings to church and state alike. ❖

Leroy and Ouida Garrett, who visited Australian Churches of Christ in 1994 send their greetings from America to their beautiful sisters and brothers in Australia.

The Election

We hope you enjoyed Leroy Garrett's introduction to our election feature. Now read on and meet a number of members of Parliament who are standing for election. They are all members of the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship. We have endeavoured to have most states represented. We asked four questions of each candidate:

- 1. Why are you standing for election as a member of your party?**
- 2. Does your work in Parliament ever conflict with your Christian values?**
- 3. If so, how do you handle these difficulties?**
- 4. What impact as a Christian can you make in Parliament?**

**NEIL ANDREW, MP
Liberal Party**



Neil Andrew is the Liberal Member for Wakefield, SA, in the House of Representatives. Wakefield is a rural seat north of Adelaide. Neil Andrew is a member of the Tod Street, Gawler, Uniting Church and Chairman of the Coalition Primary Industry Committee.

Q. 1

One substantial reason for my standing as a Liberal is the

fundamental respect my party has for my individual rights and my own sense of accountability for the God-given talents I have exercised. If my party were to place demands on my loyalty to it ahead of my loyalty to God, it would give itself a power over my free-will that God denies himself. I also believe that individual human creativity cannot be fathomed and economic success will best be generated by unfettered human activity. The role of the government is to discourage exploitation of the weak by the strong, while maximising the opportunities all have to develop their individual attributes. To claim God is on one's side in a political context is unfair. The Gospel predates and transcends the politics of "left" or "right". Without the Gospel, socialism could be an excuse for selfish inactivity and capitalism runs the risk of being cruelly exploitive.

Q. 2

Being a Federal Parliamentarian is a privilege. I am where the laws that shape society are made and I have an opportunity to help shape them. I do not find my role as a Representative puts me in conflict with my Christian values, any more frequently than my former role as a primary producer did. The temptation to compromise one's standards exists in all vocations, even the priesthood.

Q. 3

Compromise for Federal Parliamentarians is only noteworthy because it is so public. Along with (I hope) all MPs, I determined many years ago a loyalty priority. I consider my first obligation is to my conscience—can I live with and be ultimately accountable for the decisions I take? The second is to my electorate, however, I cannot do only what is popular. My third loyalty is to my political party. When all three are in harmony, life is easy. If one of my loyalties is in conflict with the others, I face a challenging choice. As a Liberal I am fortunate. My Party never forces me to follow the party line. Along with about 30% of

my SA Liberal colleagues, I have crossed the floor in defiance of my party's attitude to an issue and there have never been recriminations. Contrary to the views expressed by the popular press and by political commentators, I am compromised only by my choice and not by Liberal Party demands.

Q. 4

Parliament opens with prayer. This is not of itself a Christian act, the prayer uttered could just as easily be offered by someone of another faith. A number of Federal Parliamentarians, including myself, belong to the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship. This quiet retreat never engages in political lobbying and only runs the risk of being compromised by its flag waving National Prayer Breakfast, which seems to me to run counter to the parable of the pharisee and the tax collector. (Luke 18:9-14.)

**John Bradford MP
Liberal Party**



John Bradford is the Liberal Member for McPherson in the House of Representatives. He has served for six years as the local member of this Gold Coast electorate. He and his family are members of the Southport Church of Christ.

Q. 1

I am standing for election to Parliament again in 1996 as a Member of the Liberal Party because I believe that God has called me to do so. My motivation during my first six years has been to serve God and during that time I have prayerfully sought his will in all the delib-

erations and decision-making processes which my job involves. I have been a member of the Liberal Party for many years because I believe it best represents my own political philosophy and is consistent with my Christian world view.

Q. 2-3

Only on rare occasions over the past six years have I found there to be a conflict between my work and my Christian convictions and values. All Christians face such conflicts from time to time in their daily walks. I start each day in the Parliament with a time of Bible reading and prayer and meditation, as I seek God's will for the day ahead.

From time to time, where serious potential conflicts have arisen, I have sought the counsel of like-minded colleagues and we have often made a decision to take a common point of view, which may be, for example, in opposition to a party policy or direction. Most often our views have prevailed in the debate which has ensued in the Party Room. On one occasion, I chose not to vote with my party in the Parliament where the party had taken a decision with which I could not fundamentally agree. I would not hesitate to do so again in the future in the same circumstances.

Q. 4

I believe I could make a significant impact as a Christian in the Parliament. I strongly believe that Christians have a responsibility to be both salt and light in the community. Being a Member of Parliament gives me a particularly privileged position to be that salt and that light. More Christians are needed in the Parliament and I am sure that God will call others.

Already I am aware of a number of candidates standing at the next election who profess to be Christian. I am sure that as more Christians are elected to Parliament, as independents or as party representatives, the Parliament will make better decisions and, as a result, our nation will be blessed.

The Election

Senator Christabel Chamarette The Greens (WA)



Senator Chamarette was appointed to the Senate for Western Australia in 1992 and represents The Greens (WA). She is a clinical psychologist and has worked in private and public practice. She is active in the Anglican Church in Perth.

Q. 1

I was a founding member of The Greens (WA) when it was formed on 1 January 1990. I had previously been a member of the Alternative Coalition, which was a community-based group seeking to put an alternative view in political debate. The Greens (WA) hold that the four fundamental principles, or "pillars", form the basis for a

sustainable and equitable future for society. These principles are peace and disarmament, social justice, the environment and participatory democracy. As my Christian journey has involved working for peace and social justice for many years. The Greens (WA) presents an opportunity to bring those concerns into the parliamentary arena.

Q. 2

One of the constant tensions that I find in my role as a member of Parliament is the challenge presented by issues on which a position must be taken when faith pulls in more than one direction. This was remarkably demonstrated in the debate on the Native Title Bill, when many church people were calling for me to support the legislation unequivocally, while others wanted me to oppose it. Yet others were calling on The Greens (WA) to work to make significant changes to the legislation, as in fact we did.

Q. 3

During my time in Parliament I have been assisted by a wide range of people whose expertise and opinion I value. Some of these have been staff, others close friends, still others members of the community who have been prepared to share their views with me. Of course, The Greens' (WA) four principles, provides a frame-

work in which we can consider issues and what impact they have on the community. I see these four principles as being a clear expression of my Christian faith and how it relates to the world around me.

Q. 4

My work within the Parliament must be connected to the four principles of The Greens (WA). I try to work for the things I really believe in, truth, justice, compassion and love. Love and compassion have to be connected with truth and justice. You can't have justice if there is a lack of love in it. Justice cannot come from fear or a desire to control. I want to live my life in such a way that I walk gently on the earth and be of service where I can

John Forrest MP National Party



John Forrest is the National Party Member for Mallee in the House of representatives. He was elected in 1993. Mallee is a rural seat in north-western Victoria. Prior to entering Parliament he was a consulting Civil Engineer in Swan Hill and Mildura. John and his family are in membership with the Swan Hill Church of Christ.

Q. 1

My standing for election to our national Parliament springs from my Christian values developed over a period of years. I have taken seriously Jesus' concern for the poor and disadvantaged. In the Sermon on the

Mount Jesus also challenges us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

This light is not meant to be hidden and it is my increasing conviction that there is a need for this message to be experienced in our society today. I believe that in Parliament one does have an opportunity to influence decisions which are being made at many levels about the life of our nation. I have worked as a consulting engineer in the Mallee area of Northern Victoria and understand many of the issues confronting the community.

I am comfortable with the values of the National Party and feel free to express my Christian perspective within the party.

As I look at the life of Jesus, I believe he taught a work ethic, thereby promoting individual responsibility and accountability. My experience is that my values and ideals sit well with the stance of the party.

Q. 2

There are times when I am conscious of secular influences which may challenge my view of, say, family values. Politicians have pressures upon them to reflect the values of society as they are.

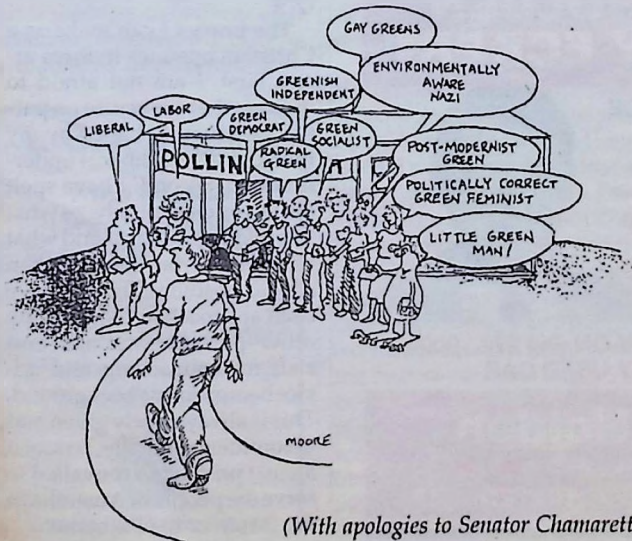
I would never want to compromise my principles for the sake of advancement or pleasing others.

Q. 3

In the political process, it is inevitable there will be conflict and difficulties in relationships. If you put any group of people together in a room to discuss issues there are likely to be differences. I believe that Christians are provided with a powerful framework for conflict resolution and I try to draw on the example and teaching of Christ in these situations.

Q. 4

One must first of all seek to reflect to others the values and lifestyle seen in the teaching of Jesus. One will hope to be able to influence policy and decision-making so that wherever possible these reflect or have their source in Christian teaching such as the Sermon on the Mount.



(With apologies to Senator Chamarette)

The Election

Jim Snow MP Australian Labor Party



Jim Snow has been associated with Churches of Christ from his birth as the son of Les Snow, a former minister. Jim has had an active association with a number of Victorian Churches of Christ congregations before moving to Queanbeyan. He is associated with the Uniting Church of which he is now a member. There is no Church of Christ in Queanbeyan. He joined the Australian Labor Party in 1957 while living in West Footscray and is currently Chair of the Australian Parliamentary Labor Party (Caucus).

Q. 1

Selection of the ALP as the party of choice in 1957 has been vindicated by time and events. My belief at the time that no party had a monopoly on decency or altruism has also been vindicated. Well before I first stood for Federal Parliament in 1988, I had developed the view that Labor was closer to assisting those who were poor and those who were in need.

Q. 2

My work in Parliament is sometimes in conflict with my Christian convictions and values, but no more often than was my work in a pharmacy, the St Arnaud flour mill, the armed services or in local government. It is tempting to speak in terms of good and bad when the honest answer is much more complex, especially when confronted by an angry crowd—of timber workers for example. It is also tempting to cover up

information to avoid conflict. Sometimes party discipline has come close to demanding that I do something that I find objectionable, but there is usually a resolution of the matter before it happens.

Q. 3

Preparation is vital each day. While I do not see daily Bible reading as essential for others, it is for me. I read a Proverb, a section of the Gospels and a reading from the remainder of the New Testament or the Old Testament each day. Each reading has its purpose—not determined by me. Interaction or prayer occurs through the day, but rarely in a planned way. At night I sometimes read a little theology or philosophy—it could be from Christian, Muslim or other religions. Then, through the day difficulties are handled with all the cunning I can summon!

Truth and love cannot be compromised. Gradually, people get to know their MP, and even in a hostile situation, they learn to accept his or her refusal to say "the only good tree is a horizontal one" or "all greens are dole bludgers and on pot".

The provision of information should be open and balanced and I've often ignored advice to conceal information. I also strongly contest party discipline where it is wrong.

Q. 4

Members can make an impact on legislation through party policy committees and a Christian can do this by preparation as outlined above. Preparation leads to spiritual strength. Spiritual strength leads to integrity, power (not necessarily power over others but certainly power in effecting end results) and good interpersonal relationships with colleagues.

Senator John Woodley Australian Democrats



Senator Woodley was elected to the Senate for Queensland in 1993 as a member of the Australian Democrats. He is a minister of the Uniting Church and a

member of a number of Senate Committees.

Q. 1

I am an Australian Democrat Senator because of my conviction that the three major emphases of the Australian Democrats—environmental sustainability, social justice and participatory democracy—are in line with my Christian experience and commitment to Biblical principles. That is, I believe Christians are called to be stewards of the creation, advocates for those who have been pushed to the edges of life and inclusive in their sharing of resources and power.

Q. 2

I believe that no political party or structure can demand of a Christian that they compromise their commitment to Christ as Lord. However, not all Christians agree always on the specifics of that commitment. For me two points of conflict are the constant personal abuse which seems to be part of our adversarial parliamentary system and the rigid nature of party politics.

Q. 3

I try never to be involved in denigrating other people no matter how much I disagree with them. It is important the Parliament get back to debating real issues instead of people. While I work through the party of which I am a member, I am ready to acknowledge policies and initiatives of other parties with which I agree.

Q. 4

The impact I can make as a Christian operates in three areas. First, I am not afraid to indicate that my stance on particular issues is shaped by my theological and Biblical understanding. Second, I have spelt out in a number of debates what this understanding is and what I believe to be the Christian ethical position. Third, I have been approached regularly by other parliamentarians and staff for counselling and advice because of my background. This is always freely given and in confidence. Finally, I count it a great privilege to be called to serve the people of Australia in the forum of the Parliament.

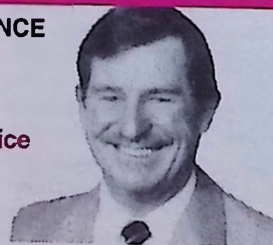
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Restoring the Balance

Alison Carr

Imagine two tall cliffs. At the top of one is barren desert, stretching as far as the eye can see. At the top of the other is lush pasture and wildflowers. At the bottom of the cliff is a rocky ravine, with a river rushing through it.

Right at the very top of the cliff, if you look closely, you can see a rope stretched from one side to the other. Walking on that rope, heading for the lush pasture, is a man. The man is holding a balancing rod to help him remain sure-footed and to prevent him from falling to his death. But, if you look even more closely, you can see a basket hanging precariously from each end of the rod. In one basket are three fat jolly ladies and gentlemen, enjoying a party. They seem oblivious to the peril of their surroundings. In the other basket are three haggard-looking, sad, starving people. These people are sadly neglected by the three in the other basket, and are losing weight and becoming more pathetic by the minute.

The man has come so far on his perilous walk, but now he is struggling to keep his balance. As his right side gets heavier and his left side gets lighter, he is finding it difficult to prevent himself from falling. The struggle is showing on his face and it seems as though it will only be a matter of time before he—

and his passengers—fall to their death.

No one is around to help the man. No one is even there to observe his struggle ... except one man. On the far side of the cliff—the green, lush side—a man is watching. He can see the danger. He can see what is going to happen—sooner, rather than later—and he is shouting to the man, warning him, giving him a glimpse of the future. But the man refuses to listen.

A Warning to Israel

The picture you have just imagined is a picture of the Old Testament book of Amos.

The man is the nation Israel—God's chosen people. They had come from a history of slavery and oppression, but they had shaken off their past and were now enjoying prosperity and power.

The basket on the right, and its occupants, represent power, wealth, and religion. The people of Israel were well-endowed with these at the time of Amos' prophecies. From 786–746 BC, during the reign of King Jeroboam II, most of the people in Israel were enjoying one long party. There were no wars because they already had control over their smaller, neighbouring nations; and the larger nations, Assyria and Egypt, were preoccupied with other matters. Because of their position of power, Israel also enjoyed increased trade. New houses were filled with beautiful, lav-

ish furnishings. Parties were thrown for any occasion. Long feasts were held while listening to some of the latest music. Sexual immorality was rife.

The basket on the left and its occupants, represent humility, justice, and integrity. These were sadly neglected.

The nation of Israel had got itself into a situation where the rich were growing richer and the poor were growing

poorer. Yes, many of the people in Israel were enjoying wealth and prosperity, but this was at the expense of others. The poor were taken into slavery as repayment for debt. Deceitful business practices flourished. The rights of the weak were violated. There was exploitation of the socially underprivileged.

Not everybody in Israel was enjoying the party.

Somehow, the people in power had got so carried away that they forgot all about social justice, humility and integrity. They didn't realise that without these things their society would overbalance and crash to a miserable death.

The man on the cliff is the prophet Amos. A righteous man who stayed close to God. A man who studied the Scriptures for himself and didn't rely on what other people told him. A man who served God in the midst of the religious chaos that Israel had created. An ordinary man—an agricultural businessman—who was sensitive

enough to God's will to see a need and who was strong enough to do something about it.

Where is God?

So there you have it—a picture of Israel during the reign of King Jeroboam II. But, you ask, where is God in this picture?

He is there grieving for his people and reaching out to them.

However, he is not reaching out to them on the tightrope, nor supporting the man to stop him from falling. His people have to learn for themselves the kind of balance that is required. They need to learn that power, prosperity and religion are OK, but they must be balanced with humility, justice, and integrity.

Neither is he reaching up to catch the man when he falls. The people of Israel need to deal with the consequences of their actions themselves.

God is waiting at the bottom—waiting for the fall. He is waiting to help those who turn to him find their way back to the top. He's waiting to heal their wounds and then guide them up to the green pastures at the top of the cliff.

The fall is inevitable—but hope remains.

A Warning to Australia

The book of Amos, written almost 3,000 years ago, serves as a powerful warning today. You don't have to look too closely to see how much our country resembles Israel.

Are we, too, losing that balance? Are we getting so carried away with our power, prosperity, and "religion" (whatever form that may take) that we're neglecting humility, justice and integrity? If so, how long will it be before we end up at the bottom of that ravine? It's scary, isn't it?

❖ *Allison Carr is a member of the Doncaster, Vic, Ministry Team.*



Not everybody in Israel was enjoying the party

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DEATHS

CANNON Keith Francis Passed away peacefully at Canberra on 31 January 1996, aged 68 years. Dearly loved husband of Olive. Loving and loved father and father-in-law to Bruce and Anne, Karen and Bruce Green, Peter and Helen, Kelvin and Michelle, Michael and Jeanine. Loving Papa to Paul, David, Ben, Jonathon, Troy, and Aaron. Peace, perfect peace.

GREENWOOD Bill Esteemed brother-in-law and friend of Rex and Elaine Chamberlain. Uncle of Diane and Jeanette. Passed from this life to be with Christ on 5 February 1996 at the Kalamunda Hospital, Perth WA. Psalm 37.

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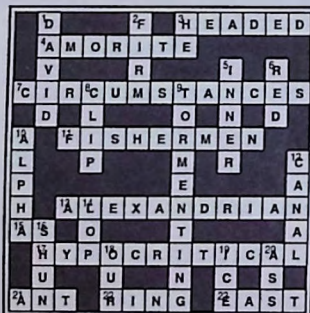
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Coffee Break

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"Principles for getting what you want in life."

Titles like these are being multiplied in our society at a great rate.

People want to find the secrets of personal satisfaction, successful living and effective relationships. Christians get caught up in it too. We know that God does not promise us a life free of obstacles, pain and conflict, but he does want us to

have abundant life, and it's only natural that we want to feel happy and fulfilled. All around us there are opportunities for achievement, recognition, status and gain; with all manner of seminars, books, techniques and gimmicks to aid us. It's easy to feel that we are being left behind, lazy, foolish, or even spiritually lax, if we don't get on board and look at improving ourselves in some ways, "making something of our lives", "developing our potential".

Unfortunately, much of what we read and hear is a very different approach to personal development than that which God would call us to as Chris-

tians. It's often about self-actualisation, rather than Christ-likeness. It's about creating the life we imagine we need, rather than seeking the Kingdom of Heaven. It's centred on the supremacy of human beings, rather than the

sovereignty of God. We need to be very specific about what we are trying to achieve in personal development, why, and with what resources.

But shouldn't we as Christians be in the forefront of evidencing personal growth, fulfilment and abundant life?

Shouldn't we be models to the world of loving relationships? If we're to be salt and light to the world, shouldn't we be noticeable by the effectiveness of our lives? Shouldn't the fruit of our lives be such that people will be drawn to us and want to know the source of our strength and joy?

This is a challenge we need

not ignore. We can be witnesses to the power of God by taking seriously his call to wholeness, effectiveness and abundant life; by investing time, effort and the right intentions in our own growth.

It's a challenge we'll explore this year in this column. ❖

Shouldn't the fruit of our lives be such that people will be drawn to us and want to know the source of our strength and joy?



Media Matters

A Fine Romance

Viney Longthorp

By all accounts, Jane Austen must be, as they say, the flavour of the month. For the BBC have just finished production of yet another version of her novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. There are no less than three versions of *Emma* in preparation, while next month, Emma Thompson's account of *Sense and Sensibility* will reach our big screens.

Now Newvision has just released its widely acclaimed production of *Persuasion*. It is an excellent film which we highly recommend.

Persuasion is a love story, of love lost and second chances. The setting is England at the time when the Napoleonic wars were coming to their shuddering climax. Both the opening and closing scenes show us the navy, but the real wars and stratagems, conflicts and victories, take place in England's green and pleasant rural reaches, especially in the lovely environs of the city of Bath. This city is shown at the time when Beau Brummel made the boorish aristocracy clean up their social manners as well as their linen. It is also the scene of the marriage and mating games where love was often used as a pawn in the maintenance of social, political and economic power, more than for respect for human happiness. (Do I hear anyone ask: "What has changed?")

This is the scene when we follow the fortunes of Anne Elliot. Our heroine had previously renounced love at the age of 18, convinced at that time by the seemingly faultless opinion of a close friend, one Lady Russell, that a penniless naval officer was no match for the daughter of a baronet.

Our story begins eight years later when Anne, now 27, is, according to the attitude of the times, on the verge of dreaded spinsterhood. The officer in question, one Frederick Wentworth, is now a captain and on account of the Prize money system operating in the Royal Navy in those days, is now very wealthy. Through chance, the captain now enters Anne's somewhat claustrophobic social circle. Their meeting gradually gives voice to long-buried feelings, which changes their lives forever—and for the happier.

This is almost a nineteenth century update of the Cinderella story. Anne is plain and unprepossessing, but she is caring and deeply sensitive.

The film is true to this picture of Anne, as Jane Austen wrote. "Here is a woman who has no voice at the beginning of the film, who slowly learns to speak. She comes up against new ways of behaving, new ways of talking and new ways

of having an equal relationship with men and women." (Roger Mitchell, Director)

Anne overcomes many impediments in the way of true love. Well-meaning advice is offered by many. Others try to sabotage the union by stratagems which would do credit to Machiavelli.

The word "persuasion" runs through the story like an operatic leitmotif, which lends the story its marvellous coherence. Such is Jane Austen's literary trade mark.

Some think that *Persuasion* was the most deeply felt of all Jane Austen's novels. Many refer to its "autumnal tones"; it was written during her final illness and was published posthumously in 1815.

The film will delight both the ear and the eye. The language used is Jane Austen's own. We hear her acute sense of character delineation, her bland irony. The film follows her exquisite powers of organisation and presentation, which has the power to turn the uneventful lives of a group of unremarkable people into an enchanting story.



Finally, a brief reflection on one of the significances of the "classics". I guess you all delighted in the television presentations of *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Middlemarch*.

Whence, then, this fascination with the past? It is not really a new phenomenon. The Italian renaissance of the fifteenth century drew much of its inspiration and artistic power from the forms and ideals of ancient Greece and Rome. A vision of the past helped to revitalise the present of a jaded society.

By definition, the classics contain the best of previous cultures. In one sense they always judge succeeding generations since "they have a daily beauty which makes us ugly". Also, the best of the past gives us a deeper sense as to where our own contemporary ways have come from.

We are wise to heed the felicities which a Jane Austen has to offer. Maybe such considerations make us take the more seriously the words of that doughty old warrior for truth: "What do you possess that was not given you?" ❖

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

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Persuasion

a film by Roger Mitchell
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Rating: G



1997—The China Syndrome

Glynthea Finger

"Ask not what China can do for Hong Kong but what Hong Kong can do for China."

Such were the words spoken by Rev Dr Tso Man King, General Secretary of the Hong Kong Christian Council, in his recent sermon to the Kowloon Union Church. A catch phrase that would later appear in one of the Hong Kong English speaking morning papers in the "Letters to the Editor" column.

The British-China hand over scheduled to occur at midnight 30 June 1997 looms large in the thinking and in the behaviour of the Hong Kong people—whether it be the Members of the Legislative Council, the "copy watch" sellers along Nathan Road, foreign domestic workers or the Sunday morning sermons—all in Hong Kong are consumed with what is going to happen in 1997.

International

Bible Society Raided

A raid on the premises of the Colombian Bible Society has resulted in the death of a security guard. Equipment and materials worth more than \$US15,000 were also stolen. In 1990 the former Bible House was destroyed in a bomb blast and in 1994 thieves entered the building, beat the security guards and caused damage costing more than \$US30,000, which seriously affected the Society's Scripture production and distribution plans.

Procter & Gamble

Procter & Gamble is going to the US Federal Court to fight an unfounded but persistent rumour that they are owned by Satanists and that its well-known "moon and stars" logo is a satanic symbol. They filed a lawsuit accusing Randy Haugen, an Amway distributor, of spreading the rumours using Amway's electronic voice mail system. In the past 16 years, the company has received nearly 200,000 calls and letters about rumoured links to Satanism.

Will the streets echo to the marching tread of the People's Liberation Army under the red and gold flag as the change over ceremony takes place at the Central waterfront?

In the early hours of July 1, will the polished patter of the BBC presenter be replaced by patriotic martial music instead?

What will happen to the thousands of foreign domestic workers currently in Hong Kong, keeping the households of the Hong Kong residents turning smoothly, and finally, what will happen to Hong Kong itself?

As shown in the content of Dr Tso's sermon, the churches of Hong Kong feel the approaching changeover also.



Whether the future is dark or rosy—only the future and the Chinese officials can determine

What will it mean to be Christian from mid-1997?

A large percentage of Christians have left the Territory to begin a new life away from the anxiety and problems they feel arising in Hong Kong.

Many of these are the clergy and lay leaders.

The churches are experiencing the loss of these people as they struggle with the looming future.

Many Hong Kong people, including Christians, now have dual passports and have returned to Hong Kong to await the future.

They will be ready to leave

if the situation slides into the worse scenario that has been painted—the loss of the freedoms, including religious freedom.

Of course, we cannot say what will happen after July 1. However, we can see, whether

one is in optimistic or pessimistic mode, the anxiety level is high as the people of Hong Kong face their uncertain future.

In the days of this final countdown to the changeover, what the residents of Hong Kong want above all else is an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process.

The people of Hong Kong need to have a voice in the future of their homeland—to be involved in the process where freedom and justice are the major issues.

Decisions that affect the lives of the people need to be in the hands of the people, not only in the corridors of self-interest and power.

We can only wait and see what the years will bring. Hong Kong is a city of wealth as well as poverty; it is one of the major ports in the world; it is a major player in the world of the stock market.

Much is to be gained by China from its return to the Motherland.

Whether the future is dark or rosy—only the future and the Chinese officials can determine. Meanwhile, the people of Hong Kong and the Churches of Hong Kong struggle for their voice to be heard amid the clamour of the world powers. ❖ *Glynthea Finger is an Australian Churches of Christ minister and a staff member of the Christian Conference of Asia, who is based in Hong Kong.*

T.E. Rofe Settlement

Applications for grants to assist with fees and books from the T.E. Rofe Settlement are invited from ministers who are graduates of the Churches of Christ Theological College, Vic, and who are studying at an Australian tertiary institution. Application forms are available from CCTC (PO Box 629, Mulgrave North Vic 3170. Phone (03) 9790 1000) and will close on 8 March 1996.

Want something to do on a Sunday afternoon?

Like Singing Hymns?

Why not join us on Sunday 3 March, 3.00 pm, for a joyous time of hymn singing?



Church of Christ Gardiner
1536 Malvern Road, (corner Scott Grove)

Disturbing the Church Roll

Ray Hawkins

I have been a member of various sporting and service clubs over the years.

Each year there comes a decision about renewing membership. It requires a reappraisal, a willingness to pay the cost and an involvement in the particular scene and its requirements.

I have been a member of the local church for many years. Not once, to my knowledge, have I been forced to re-examine my membership.

This may be due to the fact that I've been regular, involved at various levels and unspectacular.

Just the other day, I was wondering about the worth of membership in the local church. As long as I turn up, give some money secreted away in the envelope and don't disturb the

peace, I'm seen as a good member. But am I?

What would happen if we were called upon to renew our church membership each year? Would we reflect upon what the covenant of membership is all about?

Would we have a deeper appreciation of what discipleship with and for Christ requires?

Would it allow for a personal appraisal of faithfulness to the cause of Jesus Christ, as expressed in

and through the local church? It strikes me that while salvation is eternal (for which I praise

the Lord), local congregational membership should be renewable. People should not imagine that once listed in the roll book and seated in the pew weekly (or is it weekly!), they are members in good standing (seating?). They need to realise that membership is a responsibility, not a right. It is a commitment, not a privilege. It is own-

What would happen if we were called upon to renew our church membership each year?

ership of the vision, not a pew ride on the river of praise.

So, I think I'll talk to my minister about conducting a yearly membership renewal Sunday. It can stir us up about what is inherent in membership and what its cost is. I fear that some might be worried that our statistics would suffer, because some might not want to renew membership. That is a risk, but at least it would give a bit more honesty to the statistics and a bit more significance to membership.

There are probably some finer details he (she) has to work out, but then that is what ministers are for isn't it? Then if it doesn't work out, I can change my membership to where I'm not accountable.

I look forward to joining you in the pew. ❖

Marsden

Persistence in Prayer

Neil Marsden

Prayer is one of those things that confuse many people.

With all the different forms, the different emphases placed on it by different denominations and the fact that requests aren't always answered, all go together to cause people not to bother with it very often. To

some, it's just like talking to yourself, so what's the point?

Jesus spoke about prayer often and participated in prayer it seems at almost every chance he had. He didn't miss opportunities to speak to his Father, it was one of the foundations of his life. Communicating and confiding in his Father was an important element of his ministry—as was teaching his disciples how to pray.

The idea that God will grant whatever we ask for in prayer, like

some heavenly genie whose granted wishes aren't limited to three, is rife throughout the world. It's something that actually draws people to Christianity and pushes others away. People leave disappointed, almost as if they walked into a

shopping centre sale only to find the things they were so looking forward to buying aren't available. God doesn't work that way, he doesn't exist to satisfy our every material whim and desire. Those

things aren't important to him and I'm sure he doesn't care if we yearn for a new car or not because, as far as he's concerned, our lives should be centred around him.

What we offer up to God in prayer though, is important to God. He loves us and wants us to set before him our thoughts, praises, hopes and dreams. Persistent prayer shows God we have yet to lose faith in him. We can ask so many things of God, but only a few are likely to be granted by God as needed and useful things. Still, we don't know God's desires and must be diligent and persistent in our prayers. We have no right to demand anything of God, only to ask, and to ask often and sincerely. ❖

What we offer up to God in prayer though, is important

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Personal

Changes

VICTOR HARBOR—Secretary: Mrs Joan Strudwick, 1 O'Leary Street, Victor Harbor SA 5211. Phone (085) 52 3575.

RICHMOND—Minister: Linda Pilton, 6 Murphy St, Richmond Vic 3121. Phone (03) 9428 4844.

Baptisms

•Paul Brown, Amy Pamment, Dunja Winkler, Sandra Steiger, Barbara Williamson, **Manning Valley, NSW** •Bradley Thomas, Bronwyn Horne, Rhonda Taylor, Amy Gunther, Earl Osborne, James Dicker, Kyle Hoppitt, Joanne Law, Leeanne Ritchie, **Hurstville, NSW** •Renee Sanford, **Albany, WA**

Marriages

•Madeline Borg and Kevin Farnham, Hermione Scurr and Peter McCormack, **Manning Valley, NSW** •Angela Villacorta and Alfred Zammit, **Fremantle, WA** •Marieanne Petrusma and Scott Haas, **Howrah, Tas** •Cheryl Cann and Owen Nelson, **Ormond, Vic** •Jill Meehan and Andrew Bonsor, **Montrose, Vic**

Deaths

•Irene Daley, **Maidstone, Vic** •Aubrey Carr, Ethel Warner, **Tumby Bay, SA** •Beth Morgan, **Fremantle, WA** •Jean Richards, **Goolwa, SA**

Obituaries

Obituaries limited to 100 words
Warmbrunn Annie Irene

(4.1.96) Irene's earthly life came to a peaceful end after an acute worsening of chronic ill health. She was 79 years of age. A thanksgiving service for her life was held at the Dandenong Church of Christ, Vic, after a private family burial. It was a fitting tribute to Irene's Christian life, with most family members participating, and a time of praise and thanksgiving shared by all present. Irene was the loving wife of Clive (dec), much loved mother of Eris, Darren (dec), Marion, and adoring Nana of Bronwyn, Carolyn, and Kristen. She holds the record as the longest serving member of the Dandenong Church of Christ.

Quayle Victor

(19.1.96) Vic was born in December 1920 at Gilgandra, NSW. He left employment there to train for ministry at the College of the Bible. He married Lesley Gedy in 1948. Lesley died two years ago. They have three children, Jenny (Wilkes), Rosemary (Weston) and Len. Vic served the Wedderburn, St Amaud, Pyramid Hill and Boort circuit, followed by the churches at Warragul, Portland, Essendon, Sunshine, Moreland, Thornbury, West Preston, Hurstbridge, Coburg, Pascoe Vale and Brunswick. A thanksgiving service was held at Brunswick, Vic, church on 23 Jan. Vic will be remembered as the embodiment of one who fulfilled Christ's command to "feed my sheep". —CPC

Personal

NSW

HURSTVILLE (Ian Adams) Steve Wescombe completed one year of youth ministry in December ... Christmas celebration service included baptism of Joanne Law ... Encouraging start to 1996 with baptism of Leeanne Ritchie on 21 January ... Australia Day picnic well attended.

MANNING VALLEY (Barry Rice, Guy Cooper, Alex Wilson) Good responses to special Christmas programs: Carols at the Pub, Pageant, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services ... New Year's Eve party held ... One-week family camp held at Scott's Head, opportunity for low income families to have a holiday ... Stephen Emerton graduated with honours from Carlingford ... YF's for school years 6-9 held in conjunction with evening service proving popular.

TELOPEA (R. Lewis) Release of "Beyond", Telopea Music's first CD very successful ... David & Alison Doran home from Nigeria ... Medical supplies & support for prison ministry in Moscow arrived safely ... Tim Hanna recent guest speaker ... Senior Pastor & elders waiting on God for additions to pastoral team ... Thursday Church resumed under oversight of Student Pastor, Graeme Foster.

SUFFOLK PARK (Stephen Templeton) January attendances increased by 22% & offerings up 76% over 1995 ... Corazon Music Ministry to Schools preparing for Tas Tour ... Home groups commence in February ... Wedding held on beach for contact couple ... Church unable to support ministry full-time, S. Templeton will do some study in 1996.

Vic

MAIDSTONE (A. McMillan) Recent events include Explorer Boys' break up, Sunday School BBQ, Christmas luncheon, carol service and Christmas Day service, all of which Tottenham Baptists attended ... Church saddened by death of Irene Daley & Edith Sellars (former member) ... Faye Freiberg preached in absence of minister.

OAKLEIGH (W.J. Edwards) Jack & Barbara Edwards conclude ministry April ... Every member present service held 4 February, new minister Don Milne and wife Topsy introduced ... Clyde Taylor & Bert Edgcombe in hospital ... John Moore thanked for painting church doors ... Missionary project unveiled ... CWF recommenced 6 February ... Family directory issued.

CARNEGIE (Neville & Pam Wight) Members attended ordination of Neville Wight. Neville & Pam have accepted offer of 5-year extension, to 2001 ... Elders & Board members attended retreat to plan for 1996 ... Christmas luncheon attended by approx 100 members ... BBQ & Sports night held New Years Eve ... Sunday School started in 1995 doubled numbers by end of year ... Three baptisms during year. **BORONIA** (Keith Milne, Darryn Hickling) Church celebrated 60th Anniversary of Gordon Stirling's induction into ministry, Gordon preached and luncheon followed ... Church school led morning service before Christmas ... Acknowledgment made of Beverley Watson's services prior to leaving district ... Study groups using "Discovering Jesus" by Gordon Moyes. **MONTROSE** (Harvey Clark) New minister Harvey Clark and wife Elizabeth welcomed. Pat Greig, Conference President, took part in induction service. Fellowship BBQ tea at Camp Waterman concluded a good day.

COLAC (Bill Moore) Bill Moore inducted to ministry on 4 February and welcomed into church with his wife Lorna and sons Thomas & Stephen. Church looking forward to their ministry.

ORMOND (J. Moore, M. Dodd, M. Uldrich) Church raised \$340 toward Christmas hampers ... A free concert with music by a classical ensemble was held. Offering raised funds for Banmatmat College library ... Norma Nash retired as pastoral care assistant at Betheden Home after 15 years service ... Kids' Club featured a Christmas play in morning worship ... Jonathan & Tricia Moore rejoicing in birth of son Taylor.



Church of Christ Boronia

75th Church Anniversary
March 23rd and 24th

Speaker: Dr Gordon Moyes

Saturday March 23rd, 7.30 pm

"Marching into the New Millennium"

Sunday March 24th, 10.00 am

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Church News

Tas

CAVESIDE (John & Colleen Harrison) Christmas Eve carol service well attended. Service included drama by young people ... Roof & external cladding almost completed on building extension ... Tony & Elaine Butters interviewed prior to departure for PNG ... Harvest thanksgiving planned for 10 March.

HOBERT CITY (C. Wardle, A. Tonkin) New youth minister, Andrew Tonkin, commenced early February ... Carols in the car park held with local Anglican congregation ... Special New Year's Eve service held ... Voluntary labour from church members will be used to make new church pews ... Church library extended to include videos ... Sunday night cafe held following evening service. Profits help church projects ... Home groups being set up for first term.

HOWRAH (P. Kerrison) Interim minister, Paul Kerrison, inducted by brother Wayne Kerrison of Launceston church. Paul, Elizabeth and children welcomed. Induction followed by luncheon. Congregation gave gifts for manse pantry ... Home meetings held to introduce Paul & Elizabeth Kerrison.

SA

VICTOR HARBOR Church farewelled Don, June & Justine Wesley prior to departure for Vic ... All groups currently in recess ... Dedication service for elders, deacons and deaconesses held 21 January ... First prayer breakfast for 1996 held in January.

MURRAY BRIDGE Morrie & Florence Munyard farewelled after 5 years' ministry ... Daryl & Ruth Telfer commence ministry in March ... Roger Brown speaker for six weeks of Sunday at Seven in Edward Square. Puppets, singing groups & clowns entertained from Sound Shell. Effective sound system reaches beyond the park ... Roger interviewed each week on local radio.

TUMBY BAY (David Jolly) Nathan work experience in Pt Lincoln ... David led Carol Service on the school lawns ... Combined Christmas Day service with Uniting well attended ... January services had lots of variety with many holiday-makers from all over Australia attending ... Some families away and others returned for Christmas ... Beach mission 1996, "Body Builders", was a great success with over 100 children taking part and several commitments being made ... Church in prayer for Hazel

Pugsley, was is in RAH has now returned to TB hospital.

GOOLWA (Chris Ambrose) Chris & Mary Ambrose welcomed to ministry, guests welcomed from other churches at induction ... David Marr farewelled as interim minister ... Successful children's holiday program held in January.

WA

ALBANY (John Spencer) AGM held 29 October, deacons reappointed were B. Monk & K. Robinson ... John Spencer invited

to extend ministry for a further 3 years from end of year ... First Sunday service for year included a baptism and dedication of baby Sarah Cooper, message brought by Barry Ryall.

FREMANTLE (J. Caporn, R. Fairman) K. Caporn's play, "What is Christmas", presented at Carol Service ... Morning tea held to hear Sally Bender of Interserve speak of work in Pakistan ... Frank & Merle Gason with church in January ... Cooking fruit for distribution by Living Stone Foundation commenced.

Qld

ANN ST BRISBANE (W. Flett) Successful Carols in the Square held on 17 December, with Indonesian members participating ... Elders N. Watson & J. Ferguson spoke while minister on leave ... Kenmore student Ardal McMahon accepted further one-year term for youth ministry ... Derek & Melinda Smith gained university entrance ... Russell Vincent appointed JP ... CWF achieved target of \$900 for Tanna Tank project in 1995.

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Buried the Wrong Way

Gordon Stirling

My boyhood home was a good Church of Christ home. On the wall of my father's study were three pictures. There was "Jesus in Gethsemane", and there were pictures of Thomas and Alexander Campbell as early leaders of our movement.

I always thought that Alexander looked a bit stern. I was attracted to Thomas. He was a kindly looking old man and he wore his glasses on his forehead. (Bifocals had not been invented then!) I used to wonder how he kept them there. I tried it once with my father's specs, but it didn't work. I've had a soft spot for Thomas Campbell ever since and was glad of the opportunity, when in America, of walking in his footsteps.

One day, I pushed through brush in a Pennsylvania woodland to find a deserted cemetery. It was surrounded by an ancient wall. This metre-high structure was all that was left of the Presbyterian chapel where Thomas Campbell preached, and from which he was driven by the "hierarchy" for opening the communion table to other Christians. As the members all decided to go with Thomas, the little building fell into disuse.

It became a stone quarry for surrounding farm buildings, except for the bottom of the walls, which the locals used to enclose their dead. I noticed that all of the



graves followed the usual custom of lying north-south. All except one, which was by itself and went east-west. An old lady had requested that she should be buried where Mr Campbell's pulpit had stood. The only way that they could fit her in was to bury her the wrong way round.

They excommunicated Thomas. His friends, together with a number of sympathetic people from other churches, decided to form what they called "The Christian Association of Washington". (Penn, not DC.) It was probably the first ecumenical body since the Reformation. Its members hoped that such associations of Christians would be formed all over America to bring all churches into union based on the Bible. But it was 1809 and they were over a century before their time.

Eventually the little group applied for affiliation with the Presbyterian Church of America, but the "fathers and brethren" of its Assembly decided that unity movements were dangerous and the application was rejected. So, calling themselves simply "Disciples of Christ", they set up a worship centre at a place called Brush Run. All that is left of their first building is a single stone, now raised as a memorial to a group of people who wanted to unite all Christians but were driven against their will into a separate existence. ❖

The Last Word

True stewardship is complete; it's our whole being, not just our financial means. We are to give all we have, in joy or grief, in faithful, unending love.

—Kay Antrim

That's a writer whose books will be read long after Shakespeare, Dickens and Henry James are forgotten. But not until then.

Mechanic: How did you smash up your front bumper like that?

Driver: "Hitting pedestrians."

Mechanic: "You did all that damage just hitting pedestrians?"

Driver: "Well, they were on a bus at the time."

A boss is someone who is early when you're late and late when you're early.

I lost control of my car the other day ... I forgot to keep up the payments!

If all men are born free, why hasn't anyone told the maternity hospital about it?

I'm afraid I just don't trust my partner. Even if he promised me he was lying, I still wouldn't be sure he wasn't telling the truth.

Pessimists are people who burn all their bridges in front of them.

Yes, I do a lot of travelling. I've been to nearly as many places as my luggage.

If only I knew what I was so worried about, I wouldn't be so worried.

Sunday School teacher: "Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to Jerusalem with them?"
Student: "Because they couldn't get a babysitter."

What did one tooth say to the other at the dentist?

Boy, do I feel bored.

What did the first strawberry say to the second strawberry?

However did we get into this jam?

Have you got any holes in your socks?
Certainly not.

Then how did you get your feet in?



30 Years Ago

Decimal Currency commenced on 14 February and churches received a range of suggestions about accounting and related issues. The editor A.E. White noted that the price of *The Australian Christian* had been adjusted to take account of the new currency. A subscription for 1966 cost \$4 pa.

60 Years Ago

Picnickers from Hindmarsh Sunday School reached their destination at 11.30pm after being held up at Belair following a rail car derailment on points. Launceston church reported on a large memorial service to mark the death of King George V. Dr Karl Barth made an appeal to Swiss churches to remember their German Protestant brethren in their hour of trial. He denounced the German State in its dealings with the church.

90 Years Ago

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