

Christian

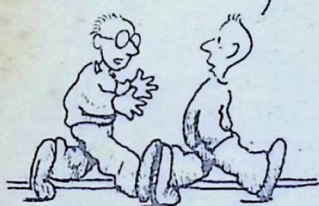
NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

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IT'S TIME WE GOT WITH
IT, AND ADOPTED A
POST-MODERNIST VIEW
OF RELIGION!

POST-WHATSIT?



POST-MODERNIST!
THAT MEANS WE HAVE
TO ACCEPT THAT
NOTHING HAS AN
ABSOLUTE
MEANING!

NOTHING?



YEP, BECAUSE THE WAY I
SEE SOMETHING IS ALWAYS
GOING TO BE DIFFERENT
TO THE WAY YOU
SEE IT!

I SEE...



AND THE WORDS I USE
TO DESCRIBE SOMETHING
CAN'T REALLY
DESCRIBE IT!

THEY
CAN'T?



IN FACT, COMMUNICATION
IS ACTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE!

GOLLY!



BECAUSE WORDS ARE JUST
WORDS, AND WHATEVER
MEANING YOU MAKE OF THEM IS
JUST AS TRUE AS ANY
MEANING ANYONE
ELSE MAKES!

SO
WORDS DON'T
HAVE
MEANING?



THAT'S
RIGHT!

SO THIS SIGN THAT
SAYS "DON'T WALK"
DOESN'T MEAN
"DON'T WALK"?



ERR... I GUESS
NOT!

SO LET'S
GO!



WELL, PERHAPS WE CAN
EXCLUDE ROAD SIGNS
FROM POST-MODERNIST
REVISION!

ABSOLUTELY!



MOORE



Editorial

Post What?

DON SMITH

Maybe you have never heard of Postmodernism. Well don't feel bad about that. I imagine you can join a great number of our readers. * Of one thing you can be sure, it won't go away. Maybe you've heard of the Middle Ages, the Medieval Period or the Enlightenment. Well now we have the Postmodern era. * Our writers discuss some of the issues. Tim Corney, for example, looks at our world from how someone under 30 may see it. This time round we haven't loaded you with answers. All this may be difficult and make you impatient, but if churches are to meet our current situation, we must



try to understand the issues. I try not to react negatively, even though some things seem ridiculous. Dean Moore, our cover cartoonist, has made that plain enough. But behind the humour there are actually deep issues, indeed challenges to faith. Can you think of some even from the cartoon? Sometimes our convictions will be challenged. The way forward is through better understanding and not hostile reaction. The church advances when it understands the culture in which it lives. When we fail, our situation worsens. * We need new interpreters, preachers, scholars and informed leaders to help us respond effectively. One writer, Harvey Cox, says the task of postmodern theology is to interpret the Christian message at a time when the rebirth of religion, rather than its disappearance, poses the most serious question. Let's affirm with Lesslie Newbigin that the "light" in the Enlightenment was real light. Hostility towards reason could ultimately lead towards chaos. But times move on. Now we need a leap of faith, believing that the Gospel has much to say to our day and that there are even more opportunities. How surprised I was to hear Darren Beadman, the rider of Saintly, the winning horse in the Melbourne Cup, give thanks to Jesus for his win in a brief interview as he rode back to the enclosure, and then again give God the glory in his speech. Somewhat Postmodern I think! How do Churches of Christ cope with that? *

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is the hallmark of our culture, but many do not understand it. We try to shed some light on postmodernism and its implications for the Church.

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

Euthanasia

To the Editor,
On behalf of the Returned and Services League of Australia, I write to seek your support to condemn the practice of Euthanasia. The Returned and Services League has for eighty years clearly expressed its role to foster and maintain the ideals of mateship and care of our fellow human beings. Those of us who have, through the tragedies of history, come to terms with death, know well the value of life.

Specifically, the RSL believes:

1. In the dignity of human life, and the principles of Hippocrates, which are the preservation of human life and to ameliorate pain and suffering;
2. That human weakness as demonstrated in so many ways by

such evils as those encompassing the rules of Hitler, Idi Amin and others, would, through euthanasia, set precedents to allow by law means for human beings to exterminate each other;

3. That euthanasia is wrong in asking for "intentional killing of a patient by a doctor" when today, with the availability of palliative care, the dying patient is assured of compassionate skilled care. This care provides alleviation of pain and distress for the patient with terminal illness.

4. We do not think it possible to set secure limits on voluntary euthanasia. It would be next to impossible to ensure that all acts of euthanasia were truly voluntary. We are concerned that vulnerable people—the elderly, lonely, sick or distressed—would feel pressure, whether real or imagined, to request early death.

—W.B. (Digger) James
(National President, RSL)

Homosexuality


To the Editor,
In his letter, Mark Fletcher ("AC" 7.9.96) makes me wonder why he views homosexuality so favourably. I wonder why he suggests Dr Jago is so wrong.

I would like to correct some of Mr Fletcher's statements.

Homosexuality is a choice. It is an inner state of being which is with someone regardless of their upbringing.

It can be overcome. Homosexuality is a wrong to be righted. Promiscuity among gay men, lesbians, and heterosexuals represents a very dangerous and very wicked lifestyle and this would be a very grave concern to Dr Jago.

I would agree with the description of Mr Fletcher in that he writes, "The words will only add to the guilt and pain they suffer as they consider how to cure them of this evil choice that they have made."

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lasts all
year

Letters to the Editor

To me homosexuality is a temptation which is a deliberate decision on the part of the person concerned, saying either "Yes" or "No" to it.

Over the years I have suffered temptation to petty stealing of small things people have left lying around. I have seen some very untidy places and I have been very tempted to set fire and clean up the place (arson). Then a chap treated me very badly several times and I was tempted even to commit murder, but by the grace of God I rejected the temptation. Five Scripture references which make the wickedness of homosexuality very plain to me are Lev 18:22; 20:13; Deut 23:18; Rom 1:27; 1 Cor 6:9.

—Dudley C. Harper
(Murray Bridge, SA)

Millennium and Mission

To the Editor,

The theme of the 1910 International Missionary Council in Edinburgh "The evangelisation of the world in this generation" is pertinent to the views expressed about the Millennium ("AC" 19.10.96). Every generation has its own urgency in reaching our needy world with the gospel. There are many Christians who see a renewed urgency for us to proclaim the gospel to the whole world as we near the end of the century. "Target 2000" is a network of missionary organisations (including Churches of Christ Overseas Missions) with a focus on reaching every unreached people group with the gospel. It is their aim to see 2000 Australian churches linked to unreached people groups by the year 2000. Youth With A Mission (YWAM) is working closely with Missions Interlink and have presented Nights of Mission throughout Australia over the last two years.

To date over 1600 churches have responded. Churches of Christ mission secretaries in each state have details —Barry Jenkins

(Caulfield, Vic)

Homosexuality

To the Editor,

Recent letters to the "AC" concerning homosexuality appear to have a fundamental flaw in their argument. They assume that sexuality is a clear undiluted male/female division. This assumption is undoubtedly wrong. From the fact that barramundi all commence life as male, and all end life as female, to the fact that some human beings change sex during their lives, there are all sorts of natural anomalies and uncertainties in regard to sexual orientation.

It is fallacious to say that homosexuals all choose their sexual orientation. In most homosexual people their sexuality is as given as my heterosexuality. What they choose is a lifestyle. The lifestyle they almost all chose in my youth was one of secrecy, shame, and repression. Most now choose a lifestyle of openness and honesty.

To bluntly quote biblical texts to condemn what a person cannot change lacks both compassion and justice. The issue of homosexuality is a complex one and it is not solved through judgemental dismissal by a few texts. There are much broader and deeper biblical principles which need to be brought to bear. —Alan Cant

(Carine, WA)

Miraculous Stories

To the Editor,

I am a retired commissioner of The Salvation Army and the author of several books. Currently, I am preparing a volume under the title *Truth—stranger than fiction*, with the aim of bringing together a collection of personally

well-authenticated stories of answers to prayer or remarkable examples of God's guidance or providential care.

Stories to be considered for possible inclusion may be sent, in writing or on audio tape with the name, address, phone number and church affiliation of the sender, to me at 2a Edinburgh Road, Blackburn South Vic 3130. Phone (03) 9898 9868.

—Wesley Harris.
(Blackburn South, Vic)

Leadership 2000

To the Editor,

After the recent trip to America there will be a follow-up conference (2–3 November) for participants with their representative board members or elders. This is obviously an important strategy.

I for one would be interested in an article for the "AC" written by one of the recent participants. It would be useful for us less fortunate ones to know in outline the itinerary of the trip and, most important, what ground-breaking insights were learned. For example, what aspects of US models of evangelism, mission and church growth are culturally appropriate or challenging for the Australian context?

I attempted such an exercise after my experience of ministry in a Karen refugee camp in February ("AC" 3 August). So, please, are there any takers? For it would be helpful if such information be disseminated beyond the ambience of the Senior Minister's guild.

—Kim Thoday
(Pascoe Vale South, Vic)

Update

Dear Readers,

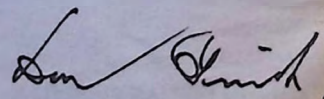
Nigel and I once again express our appreciation for the continuing stream of positive comments about the paper. Your support is most encouraging. With each issue the subscriber numbers climb. Please encourage others to take out a trial subscription. Maybe you would like to make a gift subscription to someone this Christmas. Simply fill in the form on page three and return it to us.

I hope you enjoy the cartoon by Dean Moore on our front cover. Illustrating the theme of post-modernism posed a problem for us and along came the suggestion of using the cartoon medium. We shall be returning to Dean's cartoons in the Christmas issues.

A further gift of \$200 has been received for our computer

equipment. Our thanks go to a Victorian church. We are half way now and beginning to look at the latest prices!

In this issue we include the second of two profiles of students who have undertaken their theological training in a different way. Greg Illingworth is a mature age student. We welcome his contribution. In looking through our accounts, we note that there are still some unpaid subscriptions for this year and 1995. We would appreciate your payment before 31 December. Our two Christmas issues are fully planned. We already have some of the articles in hand. I'm sure you will enjoy the diversity of the material.



Seniors' Special

**Seniors Christian Convention
successful event**



The Australian Carnival of Flowers, held each year at the outset of spring in Toowoomba, was the connecting link in this city for the first ever Seniors Christian Convention in Australia. The Convention was conducted over three days at the Toowoomba Church of Christ on Hume Ridge.

International guest speaker was Dr Bill Blevins from Johnson Bible College in Knoxville Tennessee. Bill and his wife Peggy were great value in sharing with the registrants for the event. Each morning we had Bible study followed by a period of electives. Popular elective subjects were: "Maintaining Motivation" with Beverley Grenfell from Queensland Health; "Cooking for Retirement" with South West Power and

"Herbs for Health" with Greenridge.

The afternoon tours to the prize-winning flower gardens were popular and the evening rallies were a big hit. We had visiting choirs, ventriloquists and Dr Blevins with outstanding messages. Most of our visitors came for the prior weekend and watched the great annual Floral Parade. They then shared in the Sunday worship programs of the church and were ready for their Convention. We received registrations from Victoria, Canberra, Sydney, Maleny, Ipswich, Brisbane and of course Toowoomba. We are already planning our second Convention for September 1997.

—Bruce Armstrong

New Arrivals and Departures

**Missionary babies and
"baby" missionaries**

Well the long wait is finally over for Shem and Elizabeth Tema. (Nine months give or take a few days!) Their new baby arrived at 4.00 am on Saturday 26 October. Many will have read Shem's wonderful account of the recent Youth and Sports Convention in Papua New Guinea, especially of how tired he was at the end of the program.

Since early September, when the Temas returned to Vanuatu to await the arrival of their baby, Shem has been busy looking after Elizabeth and their five year old son, Steve. He tells me that housework is harder than youth work!

The newest Tema is a little girl named Sandra. We praise the Lord for her safe arrival.

Mark Dodd from Henley Beach, SA, is about to depart on an exciting adventure. Mark is to undertake a twelve-month mission internship with the Overseas Mission Board in Vanuatu.

Over the course of the year, Mark will work on three islands under the supervision of Senior National Pastors August Ben, William Vuti



Rose-Mary Hunt

and Hosea Buli. He will also undertake some special studies by extension in cross-cultural mission. This is a new venture for the Overseas Mission Board and we look forward to Mark's participation as he prepares himself for long-term missionary service.

Rose-Mary Hunt from Mundulla, SA, departs early November to work as a short-term volunteer at Khayelihle Children's Village in Zimbabwe. Rose-Mary, a widow, has extensive experience with Mobile Mission Maintenance and ministry within her own neighbourhood and church. She will oversee the Khayelihle Children's Village home outside Bulawayo while the Directors, Paul and Karen Reyman, have a short break in the United States.

There are still many more places available for those called to cross-cultural ministry. In particular, we need at least two teachers for 1997, one in Vanuatu and the other in Papua New Guinea. Both positions offer excellent opportunities for serving the Lord and making many new friends. See advert on page 17.

—Jeff Weston

L. C. F. Higgins

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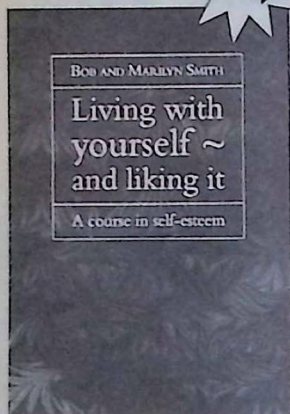
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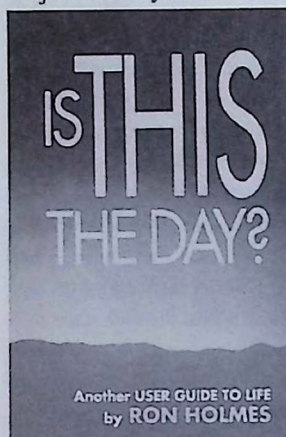
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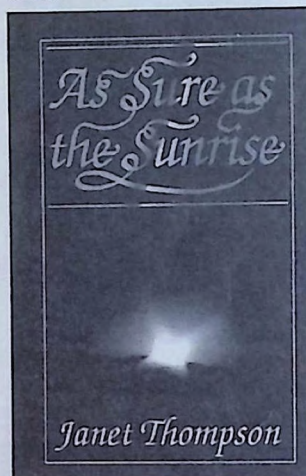
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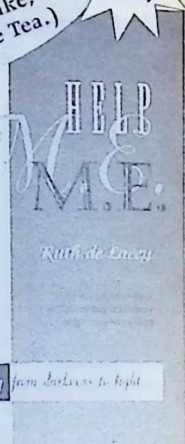
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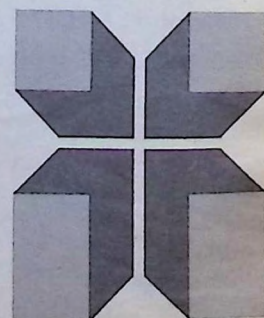
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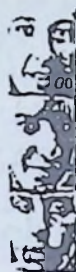
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For further information contact,
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Telephone (066) 24 3519 or (066) 24 1690.

Reg Combridge

A Grateful Church Pays Tribute

We thank God for the thirteen and
a half years of wonderful ministry
served with the Bayswater, Vic,
church by Reg. Combridge. He
came to us after he and Beryl had
served ten years as missionaries
in New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and
after ministries at Boonah (Qld),
Bordertown (SA) and Colac and
Springvale in Victoria.

He was a man of deep faith, con-
secration and humility. He was
unswervingly loyal to God's Word
and he preached it fearlessly and
capably. Reg was a caring and lov-
ing pastor whose shepherd heart,
cheerful nature and personality,
endeared him to all. His love for
his Lord and the church was evi-
dent in his life and ministry. Reg's
leadership and encouragement of
the congregation to build and
open a church, free of debt, to the
glory of God will always be grate-
fully remembered and will cause
us to ever be thankful to God.
Reg's painful battle with leukae-
mia was fought with courage and
patience until his death mid-year.
His fortitude and trust in God, in
adversity, have been an inspira-



tion and a witness. "We thank God
for every remembrance of his
work of faith, labours of love and
patient hope in the Lord Jesus
Christ". (1Thess 1:2)

We thankfully, acknowledge Ber-
yl's support and partnership dur-
ing their long ministry. Her calm
but strong faith, caring vigil and
many labours of love during her
husband's long illness were an
inspiration. Beryl, the family and
all loved ones have been held in
our Christian love and prayers.

—The Elders

(On behalf of the Church)

Here and There

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It is desirable that the successful applicant will have a recognised degree or diploma in social work, welfare or counselling.

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Applications close on Saturday 30 November.

Apply in writing to Maureen Hungerford
Chairperson
Epping Church of Christ
31 Bridge St
Epping NSW 2121

A job description and more information may be obtained by calling Maureen Hungerford on (02) 9876 6742 (home) or (02) 9858 5634 (Thurs/Fri only).

Assistant Director

Australian Churches of Christ
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Applications are invited from persons with financial, publicity, promotional and theological skills. We recognise that some skills can be developed on the job.

The Assistant Director will share with the Executive Director and work under his guidance in the areas of administration, publicity, deputation and education. The financial accounting of the Board's funds will be a particular responsibility, with back-up from secretarial staff.

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For further details or in making application, please contact the Executive Director,

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*For more information contact John U'Ren, School of
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Postmodernism

Opportunities and Limits

BRIAN HOLLIDAY

The terms modernism and postmodernism have many different definitions. Here we seek to explain them in a way appropriate to the Church. *

With the progress of science and the increase of knowledge since the period called the Enlightenment, a hope was born that a new future and society could be built through the throwing off of past traditions, superstitions and religions. The promise of a world where technology and the human mind will save the earth is still with us in many forms. It is highlighted by the "cult of

In the postmodern world the Church, too, is caught in paradoxes.

the new" and the continued Westernisation of world cultures. *

This process of modernisation has led to worldwide features such as urbanisation, the rise of individualism, the growth of giant multinational corporations and media empires. However, the once bright image of an enlightened future has been irreparably tarnished by the misuse of technology as seen, for example, in the tragedy of two world wars. Thus, although modernism portrays exciting possibilities, it also embodies a hopeless despair and an alienation experienced by all the world's people who are caught up in the processes of modernisation. *

Postmodernism opposes the universalism and domination of modernisation. It sees the world through different eyes, so that minorities are empowered and the past is brought to life again. An interest has re-emerged in tradition and

religion, while the domination and ethics of science is deeply questioned. *

The stories of nations, ethnic groups, indigenous people and families are being rediscovered as regionalism is championed and Western universalism is rejected. Architecture, art and literature are revisiting the past, not to rediscover "truth" but to reinvent the past in the present. Postmodernism is characterised by multiplicity and a self-awareness that all ways of seeing and doing things, including Christianity, are valid but limited. The postmodern asserts that often the opposite of what we say is as valid as what we argue, and both must be heard. This self-awareness includes postmodernism itself, for the postmodern world is full of paradoxes. So, for example, both the local of postmodernism and the universal of modernism remain important. *

An example is the internet, through which millions of people have access to the same material, so a modernistic, universalising effect operates across social barriers. However, the postmodern opposite is also true, for the internet allows opportunity for local input and for individuals to express themselves to many small audiences. *

In the postmodern world the Church, too, is caught in paradoxes. On the one hand, the modernist pride of science and human achievement continues to marginalise the Church, but, on the other hand, because the Church is marginal, traditional and historical, the postmodern allows the Church's voice to be heard, although only as one voice among many. The Church is allowed to preach its message, but it has no "right" to claim universal truths, such as the Gospel message being the only way of salvation. The message then, unless thought through and presented clearly



to postmodern people, is in danger of being accepted only provisionally. *

Postmodern people need to understand the Gospel's difference from other "truths" and that difference is centred in an understanding of the nature of the Scriptures and the God who speaks. The Church must find new ways to communicate to a segmented, postmodern world, especially with the resurgence of other religions and minority beliefs that demand us to take them seriously. This is a challenge we must meet in a constructive, rather than a dismissive way. *

Never before in this century has the Church had such an open door to preach to so many local and worldwide contexts. However, the Church must grapple with the difference between Scriptural and postmodern truth or its effectiveness will be restricted. The challenge is to understand and employ postmodern difference and variety in order to present the truth of the Gospel so people actually hear the message God desires for them. *

Brian is Registrar of our WA Ministry Training Centre, and is completing a Doctorate in Cultural and Australian studies. Brian and Glenis and family attend the Thornlie Church.

Postmodernism

Postmodern Spirituality

PHILIP JOHNSON

Two hundred years ago secular humanism arose. It rejected Christianity and offered a rationalist, scientific outlook which has dominated Western thought. Now we stand on the threshold of a new perspective called postmodernism. * It is in the throes of supplanting secular humanism as the dominating outlook. One aspect of postmodernism is the clamour for spiritual things at a mass level. *

Many Australians have no idea that God did indeed become "one of us" in Jesus.

Let's chart some trends. First, consider the statistics gathered at new age festivals. In 1989 18,000 people attended Sydney's inaugural Mind*Body*Spirit festival. In 1990 25,000, 1991 44,000, 1992 60,000 people attended. The Sydney festival is so popular it is now held twice a year. At the May 1996 festival 42,000 people came in just three days, this is twice the number of Christians involved in the March For Jesus. At a Melbourne festival in 1995 8,000 visitors were surveyed with these results: 70% were women, 61% were aged 20-40, 22% were aged 40-50, 58% were first-time visitors. *

Next, consider radio and TV. In Sydney on any Sunday evening 25% of the radio audience tunes in to Bridget the psychic. Her audience is larger than the combined figures for all Christian broadcasts in Sydney at that time slot. On TV more Australians saw *The X Files* than Ray Martin's interview with Sir Donald Bradman. The show's soundtrack has been a top ten album,

and each *X Files* novel sells 50,000 copies here. Earlier this year Channel 7 and the ABC screened specials on angels. *Star Trek Voyager* now includes spirit guides and psychic powers. The *Midday Show* has featured yoga, reiki and other new age elements. *

Thirdly, sample the best selling books and magazines. For the past two years the number one best selling book in Australia has been the new age novel *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield. His sequel, *The Tenth Insight*, is now top ten. Visit any major secular book store and you will find that the growth area for sales is in self-help and spirituality. Consider women's magazines: each weekly issue of *Woman's Day* and *New Idea* (both with circulations of 800,000 per week) usually have five pages of new age columns. The June 10, 1996 issue of *Who* devoted 18 pages to ghosts (over 10% of the magazine). This highlights how people are quite open to spiritual things and that they are mainstream issues in society. This widespread openness to spirituality however is completely bypassing the Church and we must wake up to this fact. *

Fourthly, consider the lyrics of two female pop stars: Joan Osborne and Alanis Morissette. Osborne's recent hit "One of Us" asks what if God had a name, a face and looked like us. Many Australians have no idea that God did

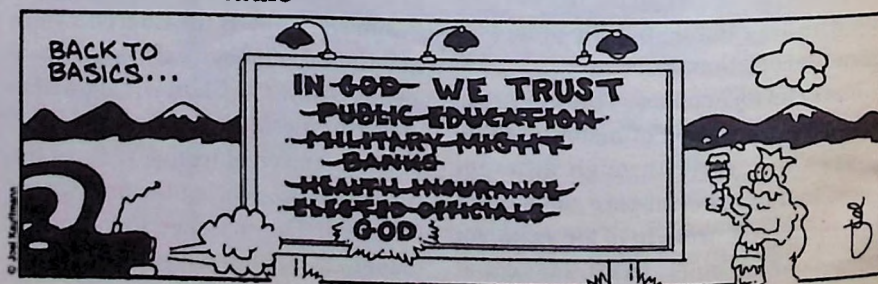


indeed become "one of us" in Jesus. Alanis Morissette's album "Jagged Little Pill" is replete with poignant, hard-hitting lyrics. Some of her songs encapsulate the postmodern quest for integrity, commitment, healing and spiritual meaning. She sees right through men who pursue sex in the absence of commitment, and she longs for a soul mate who is "a spiritual man". In "Hand in My Pocket" she admits she hasn't got life "figured out". In "Forgiven" she flees her childhood Catholicism, laments on unanswered questions, pleads to be able to believe and asks if she can be forgiven. Can we take serious note of all this? *

Phillip Johnson has spent 18 years ministering in the field of alternative faiths. He is a graduate of the University of Sydney and co-author of the best-selling book *Sacred Quest*, available from New Age Mission, PO Box 83, Crows Nest NSW 2065.

From *APL Today*, September 1996. Used with permission.

Pontius' Puddle



Postmodernism

The Root of all Evil?

MARK BRETT

According to some accounts, the Bible has been repackaged lately as a commodity in the supermarket of life—one choice among many, at the mercy of consumer whims. Some church leaders have associated the down-sizing of faith with a movement called “postmodernism”. In fact, this new “ism” has become the scapegoat for a range of contemporary evils: the loss of common values; lack of commitment; rampant individualism; the fragmentation of church and public life. Such pessimism is in some ways

In fact, this new “ism” has become the scapegoat for a range of contemporary evils

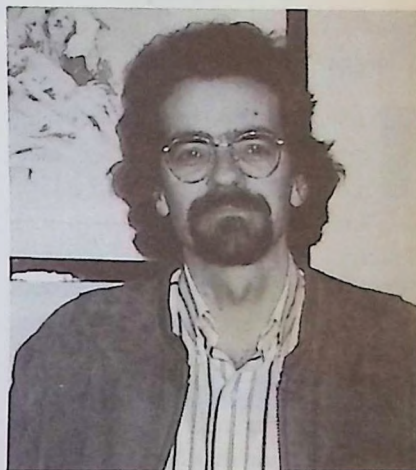
justified, but I doubt whether postmodernism is to blame. *

Individualism, for example, has many historical roots. The Reformation produced the idea that lay people could read the Bible **for themselves**. Enlightenment philosophers advocated the idea that Reason was something that had to be exercised **for oneself** lest one fall prey to the prejudices of tradition. Eighteenth-century defences of capitalism, argued that the **individual's** pursuit of profit would do no harm to the common good, the whole society would benefit. If we are looking for the sources of individualism, then we need look no further than modernity. * Democracy, also, created the impression that every individual participates in government. But democracy has led to a range of new ways to suppress the interests of minority groups. Increasingly, democracy in the West has come to serve monetary interests. Mr

Kennett's version of Victoria is a logical extension of the modernism which elevated the market above any discussion of public values. A system that pays corporate directors monstrous salaries while demoralising teachers and nurses might know something about costs, but it knows very little about social values. Mr Kennett's version of Victoria is modern, not postmodern; its focus efficiency, not care. *

Like the Israelite prophets, postmodern theorists have unmasked the hidden self-interest of the powerful. Like Amos and Hosea, they criticise the dominant culture. While resisting the illusion that everyone in a mixed society can share the **same** values, postmodernists are not champions of individualist ethics. They argue that we are never simply **individuals**: our identity is always made up of a whole range of traditions and practices. Our interpretations of events, and of texts, are always marked by communal affiliations. Hence, postmodernism has been associated with the espousal of multiculturalism, affirming the diversity and **mixture** of ethnic identities, rather than the erasing of differences through assimilation. This approach rejects all forms of racism, but it also opposes the denial of ethnic politics, such as when people say that Asian immigrants are welcome in Australia as long as they speak English and contribute to the economy. Cultural differences are actually undermined by affirming the homogenising, fundamental reality of the market. Postmodernists espouse the tolerance of diverse, minority cultures over against the majority. *

Historically, the principle of tolerance was advocated by the Free Churches over against the authoritarian intentions of the established Church of Eng-



land, and the postmodernists have reshaped this tradition for our new context. Some despairing versions of postmodernism seem to promote tolerance on basis that everyone's truth is equally valuable and **our** truth can never be brought into meaningful dialogue with others. But this is just a new type of intolerance which ends up being indifferent to the stories of our neighbours. It also contradicts one of the main premises of postmodernism: if our identity is always composed of many different traditions and practices, then **conversation** is inevitable. This is well illustrated by the recent American television series *Genesis: A Living Conversation*, written up in *Time* magazine (4.11.96). The series brings together a diverse collection experts and non-experts, religious and agnostic, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, to reflect on the ambiguities of the text of Genesis. Whether we like this series or not, it demonstrates that the Bible still has the power to draw people into its world—not by force, but just by the everyday grace of conversation. This is postmodernism at its best. *

Dr Mark Brett is Professor of Old Testament at Whitley College, the Baptist College of Victoria.

Postmodernism

Looking for Hope in the Ruins of Postmodernity

TIM CORNEY

I belong to Generation X—the children of the most divorced, most mobile parents this century. I live in a time of exceptionally high incidence of youth suicide and drug induced road trauma, of child abuse and violent crime. Hope, for my generation, has gone missing. I have accepted the global media's paradox of macro-homogenisation and micro-fragmentation. The result being that I no longer know

Technology is no substitute for the future that was promised. The key to our survival must be the sharing of hope, the experiencing of hope, the realisation of hope, the incarnating of hope.

who, or what I am supposed to be. Gender distinctions have been blurred. National cultures appropriated and dismantled. Normative values have been turned on their head. Institutions ridiculed and maligned. Societies' structures and functions are breaking down. *

This is not an ideological revolution. The only blood on the streets is my own. The old has not gone; it has been deconstructed, the guts surgically removed leaving only the great external shells to gaze and marvel at. *

As a child, I was promised a future. A future full of idealism and hope. The hope of racial equality, of gender balance and economic justice. I am the child of a generation of counter culture parents. I watched as they grew their hair, took their clothes off, sang songs of peace and love and then orchestrated the largest global recession in recent history. Instead of hope, we received green house, ozone holes and the bulldozing into extinction of the humble tree. *

The lost ideals, the dreams and visions were replaced with technology and then force-fed to us, the siblings of the summer of love. *

Technology is no substitute for the future that was promised. The key to our survival must be the sharing of hope, the experiencing of hope, the realisation of hope, the incarnating of hope. * The answer it seems is not in a return to modernity, for, ironically, "progress" has moved us on. For those under the age of thirty, Post-modernism is a western social reality. It has been subliminally propagated into our genes and neuro cells by the media, arts, literature and education, and there is no going back. Those concerned for this generation must learn to embrace rather than reject hope. They must use the vehicles of a postmodern world to convey hope—The Hope. *

I recently attended a Christian Conference on Postmodernism, the most interesting feature of which were the open forum discussions. One senior leader said to me after the conference, "This could have been 1970 instead of 1995, the same prophets, urging the church towards relevance, and still no

one listening." I came away from the conference asking myself the question, "What hope has the Church got?" If it didn't learn anything the last time a cultural revolution came to town, what will it learn this time? The difference between then and now is hope. The 1970s were full of hope, the 1990s are not. *

As I walk the streets of my city, the spray-can voices shout out in polychrome unison the disillusionment, boredom and helplessness of a street culture that has stopped trying to make sense of the world. Thieliicke said, "The Gospel must be continuously forwarded to a new address because the recipient is repeatedly changing his place of residence." The current address for the average young person is as far from the church as the East is from the West. Perhaps this is a time of exile for the church and, like long ago, God has sent his Angel of Death to pass over the lintels splashed with blood, only to find that the church has not made the hard decisions, has not made the sacrifices, is not packed and ready to go. The blood of obedience is not splashed on our door posts and the Angel of death, instead of passing over, has taken up residence. There are those, though, who have seen the signs and responded. For them, this is a time of exciting change, another chance has been presented to realise the lost dreams and visions of peace and love, equity and justice, forgiveness and reconciliation, and the opportunity to offer again to those without hope, Grace and the eternal hope that it brings. *

Tim Corney works with the Division of Mission and Revitalisation of the Vic-Tas Conference.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism and Gospel

LYN MCCREDDEN

I'd like to examine two questions: "What is postmodernism?" and "What do postmodernism and the Gospel have to say to each other?" These are not very postmodern questions, because they treat both their terms—postmodernism and the gospel—as if they were unified categories. The key note of postmodernity is fragmentation. After the modern comes postmodernity, when the certainties, belief systems, and the big narratives of history Christianity, Reason, Logic,

Postmodernity insists on the radical ambiguity of claims to truth, or unity, or oneness.

Enlightenment—are revealed in all their self-contradictoriness. For Australian academic David Tacey it is an important cultural shift in which the once-solid world has been dissolved in the ambiguity of otherness. *

If we take one focus and its implications, the potential for promise and for threat will be clearer. Human "identity" is subject to fragmentation in postmodernity. Many would argue that the old humanist, and some might say Christian, notions of integrity, wholeness, unity are implicit in any sense of identity. Postmodernity insists on the radical ambiguity of claims to truth, or unity, or oneness. Postmodern humans, adrift on a sea of otherness, can no longer maintain a semblance of integrity, but must accept the partiality, the fragmentariness of selfhood. *

After Freud and his split psychoanalytic subject; after Marx and his history

constructed through class categories; after Derrida and his rewriting of Western philosophy as premised upon rigid, polarising foundations good/evil, rational/emotional, male/female etc.—postmodernity delivers the "schizophrenic subject". That is, the human as split, incoherent, unknowing. *

One positivistic account of postmodernity places emphasis on the constructed nature of the self. This is not simply a version of "you can be whatever you want to be". Rather, because "the self" is considered to be completely without essence or foundation, humans must construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct the self, in a necessarily endless process. Any claim to have discovered the true or whole self is regarded as laughable as the bogies of postmodernity—closure, truth claims, stasis, moral or any other kind of foundational thinking—are repudiated. Sexuality, family structures, language, identity, morality, art are all seen in flux, with no possibility of finality or definitiveness. *

For some this condition is exhilarating. For others it is relativism run amok. Where can "the Gospel" enter this debate? The late twentieth century is heir to the holocaust, the killing fields, to many wars, to the global victory of capitalism and consumerism, to the decline of Christianity in the West, to huge changes in technology. As we look back over the past century, do we see tribalism, disintegration of traditional Christian values, consumerism run mad? Many would agree with this description of Western societies. But there are also those who want to work with postmodern emphases, who see some hope in the present flux and fragmentation of Western culture. Tacey writes: *

"Postmodern spirituality resembles Hiroshima after the bomb: new life



grows from the wreckage of the old cultural order; strange new plants, mutants or exotic species of symbolic life push up from the rubble and move toward the sun." (*Edge of the Sacred*, 194) * I don't find this apocalyptic exoticism very satisfying. For me, the promise of postmodernity in relation to the gospel of Christ can be found in such notions as Paul's invocation to (in what many now read as worn out, gendered language) become all things to all men. Similarly, Peter's vision of the freedom allowed—in cultural matters such as eating, circumcision, worship practices—is a freedom to seek God's desire for our selfhood in terms which are not fixed but open-ended. And Christ's command to go into all the world, embracing the other, loving the other as one loves the self, is ripely open to postmodern rethinking. We are not asked, as Christians, to love one another if and when that other conforms to some neat sense of one's self. It's not that cosy. In the process of rethinking this command, the self is necessarily in a constant process of redefinition, a refining and redeeming which is not finished for any of us, yet. *

Lyn McCredden worships at Ivanhoe Church of Christ, Vic. She teaches literary studies at Deakin University, Burwood.

Personal Profile

Cross-Cultural Chills

GREG ILLINGWORTH

The theme song of the musical "Oklahoma" speaks of the "wind sweeping down the plains". We felt the impact of that wind as we arrived on 2 January this year at Will Rogers airport in Oklahoma City to a temperature of -2°, and a wind chill factor of -29°. Because we had just left behind temperatures around 32° in Australia, the icy wind was even more noticeable. For each member of our family, the time in Oklahoma has brought maturity and growth. Being a great distance from home has also made us appreciate our family and friends more, as well as our loving "home church" family. They have all prayed and kept in touch with us. *

Living in a small city with a population of 50,000 has been fun, especially when, in the local supermarket or bank, people would gather around just to hear us talk. We keep telling them that they are the ones with the accents, not us! *

As I have studied at Phillips Theological Seminary, I have been impressed with the way we have been welcomed by students and faculty alike. While my workload has been a heavy one, it has been worth it to know that at the end of the year I will have completed my Bachelor of Theology Degree. Through my studies at Phillips this year, I feel that my knowledge of God's word has increased substantially. I feel very confident in the call of God on my life. It seems that the more you know, the more you don't know. (If that makes sense!) I realise that my learning about God and life itself will be a lifelong process. It has been great to have another Australian as the president of



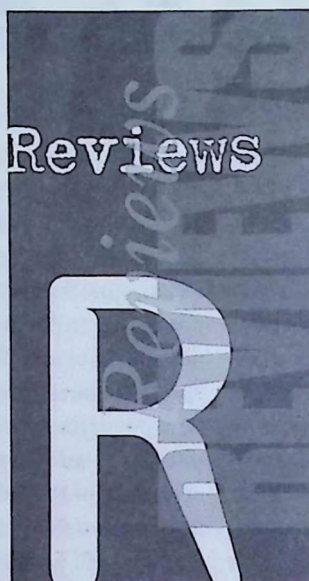
Phillips Seminary in Bill Tabbernee, who, along with his wife Sandra, has done everything to ensure our time here has been rewarding. *

We have also been blessed to be placed in a church in a town of 1500 people called Crescent. As their pastor, I have been grateful for their friendliness. We will miss this church and surrounding community when we return home. *

In summary, what can I say then about this year? It has been great, and an experience that I would recommend to anyone given the opportunity. I am grateful to Phillips Theological Seminary and the Churches of Christ Theological College, Mulgrave, for establishing a student exchange program. Living and ministering in the United States, participating in a different culture, and serving with the Australian version of our churches has expanded our horizons and prepared us even better to face the challenges of ministry in a rapidly changing context back home. We know that God led us here and has been our constant guide, encouragement, and inspiration. *

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Reviews



New Age Mission



by New Age Mission.

\$49.00

New Age is fast emerging as a tenacious spiritual alternative to Christianity in Australia. The sign posts of this can be seen in books,

TV, radio, magazines, and at New Age festivals. Sydney now hosts the largest New Age festival in the world.

New Age Mission is a 165-minute training video designed to help Christians better understand and reach the New Age with the Gospel. The presenter is Philip Johnson, who is a graduate in world religions and theology from the University of Sydney. He co-founded the first Christian exhibitor's stall at the New Age Mind*Body*Spirit festival in Sydney. This outreach has been generously supported by the Northside Community Church, Crows Nest, since 1993.

The video examines the current paradigm shift out of the Age of Reason into Postmodernity. Then eleven basic characteristics of New Age folk are explored, followed by an audience interactive study of an appropriate missions model to reach them. The video also includes some role plays on how to begin sharing your faith. Nine key New Age concepts are analysed from a Biblical perspective. The video may be ordered from New Age Mission P.O. Box 83, Crows Nest NSW 2065.

—Tom Glynn

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Media Matters

The Born-Again Cinema

VINEY LONGTHORP

When television was barely a decade old it seemed that it would reduce the cinema to a terminal decline. Witness, then, in the 60s and 70s long-established movie houses being demolished or put to alternative uses. *

But there is no such thing as the status quo in the entertainment

Cinemas have become the new cathedrals with film makers as the new priests.

business. Thus television having just celebrated its fortieth birthday is now experiencing its own mid-life crisis, while the cinema is enjoying a renaissance. Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indi-

cate that the cinema is easily the most popular form of public leisure activity. We Aussies are patronising the movies as never before. One can hardly avoid noticing the building of many new cinema complexes, usually as adjuncts to new shopping malls. *

There are mundane reasons for this change in popularity, both positive and negative. For one, the cinema remains a relatively inexpensive form of entertainment for people who like to get out and about in the company of others. *

On the negative side, television is now no longer a novelty. It is now part of the living room furniture and a form of "visual muzak" to fill "empty spaces of time". As Errol Simper of *The Australian* writes: "[Many have come to] deplore commercial television; its mindlessness, its banality, its speciousness, its manipulative practices." Due to

changes in public taste, we now have many viewers who want something better than say, the pseudo-sport of "The Gladiators" or the inanities which occupy those brief time slots between the ads. *

On the positive side, the cinema at its best is now providing that "something better". Many film makers in Australia have gauged to a nicety what many locals are coming to expect. Hence we have such worthwhile productions as *Gallipoli*, *My Brilliant Career* and *Strictly Ballroom*. Even Hollywood has lifted its game with recent, first-rate productions, while British and French producers continue their pursuit of excellence. In all probability, the overall level of creativity in the movies has never been higher. *

The really positive reasons for the surge in the cinema were given at a recent seminar by Michael Frost, entitled, "St Paul Goes to the Movies". Michael explored ways films are expressing the longings of our society. People are turning to films to tell the "stories" which are significant for our understanding of living, stories which captivate and satisfy our yearnings. "Hence cinemas have become the new cathedrals with film makers as the new priests." *

There are four themes variously expressed in the modern movie. First of all there is the myth of redemptive violence. The "goodie" who overcomes the "baddie" symbolises a powerful yearning for salvation. Second, there is Creation and creator. "In such films as *Terminator*, human beings (the creator) eventually have to triumph over androids (the created), because the creator has to be greater than the created." Mr Frost contends that this is deeply sym-

bolic of our deep need "to believe that there is something greater than us". Third: "In many films ordinary people seek to be transformed into something higher. This expresses the need to go beyond ourselves, a quest for the transcendent." Finally, there is the myth of childhood innocence. "Popular culture sees children as the embodiment of purity and innocence. Although romantic, it nevertheless reveals a yearning for primeval innocence" and unsullied idealism. *

Among samples of films of significance such as Michael Frost would commend are the following (my recommendations). *

Dead Man Walking. In this American production a nun ministers to a convicted rapist and murderer. In the scenes on death row, much of the language and the relationship appears to be on a secular plane. But the meanings are spiritual; all about salvation, guilt, sin, hope. *

The *Three Colours* trilogy. The Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski traces our profound attachment to the many manifestations of justice and liberty. It is about "individuals who can't quite find their bearings, who don't quite know how to live, who don't really know what is right or wrong but are desperately looking". *

Small Faces. Teenage gang warfare breaks out in the Gorbells, Glasgow in 1968. This British film with a vivid lyricism traces how human values prevail. *

Then there is the acclaimed Australian production, *Shine*. It tells the true story of the making of a brilliant pianist (David Helfgott) who has to contend with a profound neurosis induced by an overbearing parent. *

GRADUATION

Invitation:	You are invited to attend the Churches of Christ Theological College Graduation Service and the National Conference of Churches of Christ Ordination Service
When:	Friday 29th November 1996 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
Where:	Blackman Hall, Hawthorn Institute of Education, 442 Auburn Rd, Auburn Vic (Melway's Map No. 59 E2)
Speaker:	Charles Bayer, BA, BD Visiting Lecturer in Ministry, Mission and Practical Theology

C.C.T.C.

1996 ORDINATION

Classifieds

DEATHS

LUNN, Arnold (Passed away 9 October) Loving husband of Alice and loving father of Helen (dec.) and Judith, kind and loving Pa of Tarsha and Kelvin. "At Peace"

GOLDEN WEDDING

NORLING Alice and Allan celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary 23 November and Allan's graduation NSW Bible College (Woolwich) the previous night. God has been good! Greatly blest with loving family and friends. Address 27 Lyndon Way, Beecroft 2119

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Coffee Break Making Friends with Tigers!

CAROL PRESTON

As I look back on the things we've talked about this year (moving away from a self esteem based on performance, dealing with difficult emotions around the unknown, loss and unfulfilled expectations) I see we need to deal with stress, because these issues are very much related to stress. * The pressures of work, family, relationships, crises and changes in our lives, are all



Even things like holidays and Christmas require adjustments and energy

stressors, as are the high levels of noise, stimulation and the very fast pace of life, much of which we adapt to without realising the cost. We get used to being tired, busy, and tense, as if it's normal. Even good things like marriages, births, holidays and Christmas require adjustments and energy that tax us. * We have amazing physical resources for responding to crises and challenge. And a certain amount of pressure is actually good for us. The mechanisms that are triggered and the hormones that are released motivate us and equip us to focus mentally and perform well. But these resources are meant to be used, and then rested and replenished, not to be in a perpetual state of alert. It's the ebb and flow of pressure that keeps us coping and growing. Distress occurs when we are in a con-

stant state of arousal. But the symptoms of distress are actually our friends. They are warning signals, like a red light at an intersection. If we make the right response, it might just save our life! If we ignore the signals, or cover them up with pills or alcohol or with more activity, we are heading for burn out or blow up! It's frightening to think that many people in our culture are getting so used to living with high levels of stress that they often have no resources in reserve for emergencies, and so many are slowly destroying their bodies. In the executive world it seems that ulcers are seen as a sign of success, an indicator that a person works really hard, rather than as a sign of personal damage. Research suggests that many people have become so adapted to living with high levels of stress that they are constantly seeking out pressure for the rush of adrenalin they have grown accustomed to. (Dare I say addicted to?) *

If you are stressed, have your cuppa ready next month and we'll look at stress management. If you don't think you're stressed join us anyway. Just in case there are tigers in your life you need to befriend! *

BAPTISMS

•Wayne & Astrid Thompson, Swan Hill, Vic •Amanda Burns, Kelly Cotton, Happy Valley, SA •Terry New, Maitland, NSW •Meg Kang, Josephine Ng, Endi Wong, Carnegie, Vic •Mandy Shepherd, Balaklava, SA

MARRIAGES

•Rebecca Hagen & Jason Lowe, Mount Clear, Vic

DEATHS

•Alice Francis, Victor Harbor, SA •John Jaap, Bellarine Peninsula, Vic •Ada Malone, Swan Hill, Vic •Miriam Field, Mornington, Vic •Nial Michael Krelle, Horsham, Vic •Val Marr, Vic Jenkins, Mildura, Vic

CHANGES

VICTOR HARBOR, SA—Minister Graeme Rogerson, 3 Swain Road, Victor Harbor SA 5211. Phone (085) 52 1718. **GEELONG EAST** New address PO Box 303, Drysdale Vic 3222. Administrator Cliff Barker (052 531137), Secretary Sue Magee (052) 48 7535, Treasurer Frank Butterley (052) 48 4007.

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
JAAP, John

Born in 1925 in Glasgow John's working life was with mining. Joining the British Army, he saw service in Greece and Egypt before returning to Glasgow where he was converted at Bethany Hall Assembly in 1949, where he also married Helen Stevenson in 1952. In 1971 the family, comprising two sons

and two daughters, migrated to Australia, settling in Altona, Vic. In recent years John and Helen moved to Barwon Heads and became members of the Bellarine Peninsula church, Vic, in 1993. Of broad Scottish accent and a keen sense of humour, John has contributed much to our fellowship from his wide experience and single-minded commitment to Christ.

KRELLE, Nial Michael

(23.10.96) Nial was born 12.8.96, six weeks premature. He grew in strength and after three weeks in hospital, went home to his parents, Dianne and Herb, his sister Sarah and brother Carl. They were delighted to welcome him into the family. The church family at Horsham enjoyed fellowship with Nial when he came along to church. It was a shock to us all when Nial died, after a struggle with whooping cough. His family's faith in God's love was evident as they mourned Nial's loss and planned a farewell that would offer a message of hope.

MARR, Valda Grace

(22.9.96) Val had been in membership at Mildura since 1976. Born in 1919, Val was baptised at Kersbrook, SA, in 1930. She lived out that commitment without wavering. After marrying Vic

in 1940 and moving to Melbourne, they were involved with churches at Lygon St, Malvern-Caulfield, Essendon and Pascoe Vale (now Strathmore) which commenced in their lounge room. Portland, Red Cliffs and Mildura also gained their membership. Over the years Val ministered through music as an organist and vocalist. She was a soloist at State Conferences in Victoria and South Australia We extend our sympathy to the Marr family, Barry, Allen, Chris, Doug and Suvena.

—DB

MONK, Elizabeth Mary (nee Gould)

(3.9.22–19.10.96) Betty was simply born into the faith. Appointed to Norseman Mission (49–50) she was soon transferred to Carnarvon as cook. Met Bernie Monk here and married at Toowoomba 1.11.52. Betty and Bernie moved into farming at Naremben and then Wandering. Here Ruth, Peter and John were born. Later they moved near Albany and came into the church there. Failing health brought about a move to Perth's outer suburbs. This proved all too brief as Betty was called to be with her Lord. A very large group of family, friends, and fellow Christians gathered for a service at Wandering, 28 October.

—EBC

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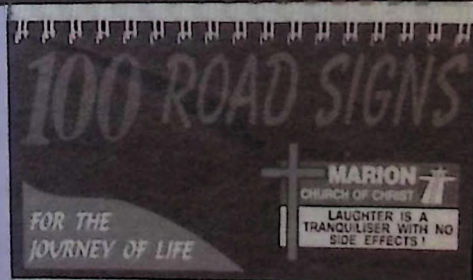
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QLD

ANN ST BRISBANE (W.J. Flett) CWF members assisted in packing clothing for Mareeba & Normanton ... Church saddened by death of Mrs Meryl Muller ... Speaker at Gospel service 13 October, Clem Fryer, spoke of chaplaincy work at Kelvin Grove HS ... CWF participated in Ecumenical Fellowship Day ... Sharing Time held following morning service 27 October for auxiliary progressive reports ... Church bookstall reactivated ... Wendy Taylor & Melissa Gayton baptised 27 October.

SA

VICTOR HARBOR (G. Rogerson) Approx 235 people welcomed Graeme, Bronwyn, Helen & Leanne Rogerson on 13 October as Graeme commenced ministry ... Church appreciated interim ministry of Harold Long ... Sunday School Anniversary was well attended with all age groups participating ... Church saddened by death of Alice Francis.

HAPPY VALLEY (Andrew Ratcliff) Church involved in Southern Hills Share'N'Care ... Peter Kneebone guest speaker on Fathers Day ... Kelly Cotton baptised at Youth Service, Kirrilie Baggs spoke on "It's A Beautiful Life" ... Andrew leading Discipleship Classes ... "Living Movement Dance Group" performed at Youth Spectacular ... Young Adults group commenced ... Lynette Leach led Children's Ministry Workshop ... Youth attended Teens Camp in holidays.

FLINDERS PARK (A. Boucher) Church celebrated 70th Anniversary with service & lunch for past & present mem-

bers. A great day of worship & fellowship during which we confirmed plans for future service in our community.

BORDERTOWN (John Main) Church in good spirit, though saddened following minister and half the congregation, merging with local AOG. We continue as a contemporary, evangelical community, encouraged in our belonging and identity ... John Main interim minister until end January, as we seek leadership in partnership with Mundulla ... Youth activities in place with new leaders ... Two elders & four deaconesses added at AGM ... We invite prayerful encouragement of churches.

BALAKLAVA (M. Munyard) Church sponsored outreach tent at Balaklava Agriculture Show ... Laundry & garden evening held for Sue Greenshields & David Dayman prior to their marriage on 19 October ... Anniversary service held 27 October featuring musicians "Heaven Bound" ... Minister leading series of baptism classes ... Mandy Shepherd, Liz Wilds & Noreen Baker welcomed into membership ... Dedication service held 3 November for newly appointed elders & leaders.

TAS

HOBART (C. Wardle & A. Tonkin) 16 ladies attended Women's Camp at Bicheno ... Understanding & Responding to Loss Seminars held, speaker Allan Anderson, Nowra church ... John Batchler, Gavin Thompson, John Westmore re-elected as trustees to Church Trust Fund ... "A Night in Italy" dinner held, followed by Covenant Players ... Peter & Beth Kearney—a son Jonathan, Andrew & Kylie Tonkin—a son, Joshua.

NUBEENA (G. C. Cumbers) Annual meeting held 13 October, two new deacons elected to church board ... Grief counsellor Allan Anderson held meetings with service providers & the public ... Minister & family attended Minister's Retreat at Bicheno ... Two attended seminar at Howrah to hear Martin Robinson speak on "The Challenge of Change in the Church & Society".

NSW

MAITLAND (R.N. Hawkins) Hunter School Biblical Studies under way, M. Hall doing "Revelation" & B. Aldous on "The Church" ... Child Dedication, Thanksgiving for Tia-Rose Mills, daughter of Mark & Rosalyn ... Fun night with Line Dancing raised \$70 towards Phil & Jenny Bryce, missionary couple with WEC in India ... Youth camp led by Glenn Baigent, returned for evening service to witness baptism of Terry New.

TWEED HEADS (Bruce Warwick) John Bagley brought greetings as Conference President ... John Tully, Social Worker on Gold Coast, spoke on "Addictions" ... Seven have come to faith in last two months ... Julie Adams, State CWF President, & Dianna Catts, representing OM, speakers at CWF special day ... Murwillumbah ladies joining with us ... Great afternoon & night of fellowship & fun at Camp Fire at Bob & Fae Treadwell's.

CHATSWOOD (Norris Brook & Rosalie Rofe) Church blessed with a great potential, being in the heart of a thriving shopping area ... Church rising to meet the challenge & is presently seeking a new minister ... There are regular weekly FM broadcasts & refurbish-

ing of the church facade is under way, together with construction of a street-side luncheon area with seats, tables & umbrellas.

VIC

SWAN HILL (Larry Edwards) Church dinner held in local restaurant as part of second Call to Commitment program for 1996, speakers were Bevan Looney, Ken McCarron, Gordon Owers & David Holt, items by youth group ... Married couple baptised 13 October ... Ken & Vicky Ayars & Wayne & Astrid Thompson welcomed into fellowship ... Chapel filled to overflowing at funeral service for much-loved, long time member, Ada Malone.

MORNINGTON (A.A. Avery) We have enjoyed a number of guest speakers including Ashley Barker, Paul Creasey, Vivienne Burns & Gil Askey (past musical director for Diana Ross) ... 8th birthday celebrated in September with fellowship lunch ... Mim Field's funeral service was held at Box Hill where she had been in membership prior to joining Mornington.

FRANKSTON (Jason Potter) Jason Potter appointed part-time youth minister from 20 October ... Graeme & Bev Muir moved to SA ... New members welcomed—Michaela Cole, Nichola Crouch, Beryl Douglas, Haley Iles, Nancye Johnson, Rachel Prentice, David Prentice, Rachelle Timmermye & Elizabeth Wormald ... Many young people attended Halls Gap camps as leaders or campers ... Greenways Village celebrates 20th anniversary with visit of Gordon & Bev Moyes.

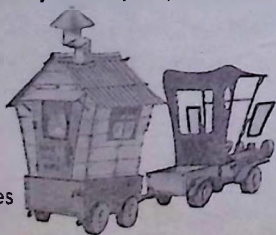
NORTH ESSENDON (Mike Esbensen) 45,000 show bags packed by mem-

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Further details from Mrs Glenda de Jager, Ministry Coordinator, International Needs. Phone (03) 9723 9065.

Church News

bers, local C of Cs & Uniting Church in August–September ... Theological student Frank Rosol preached several times for visitors normally unconnected with church ... Keilor Road Uniting joined us 20 October, church band led musical items ... Campfire tales & barbecue for show bag packers 27 October ... North West Christian Centre joined us for worship 3 November.

ASHBURTON (Keith Wiggins) New Board members, Bruce Robinson & Len Senaris, elected at Annual Meeting, tribute paid to Frank Robinson retiring treasurer ... Len Senaris elected to Elders Board & retiring elder Ron Strongman honoured by appointment as Elder Emeritus ... Visitors from Gardiner, Camberwell & Hartwell hosted by CWF at Trivia Quiz luncheon ... Visiting speaker Viney Longthorp ... Members appreciate help from Wendy Sowler who plays organ each Sunday.

MOUNT CLEAR (Dale White) Hundreds attended church fair which raised over \$1500 towards cost of new hall ... Mayor James Coghlan officially opened the hall during 133rd anniversary service ... Five new deacons elected at AGM on 3 November. Appreciation expressed to retiring elder Bob Elms after 22 years' continuous service to Board ... Recent evening services have included MAF, Phoenix Christian Jazz Band & combined service with Ballarat Central Church of Christ.

BURWOOD-MOUNT WAVERLEY (Peter Wing Tang) AGM held 27 October, new elder Kevin Miller elected ... Church rejoiced on occasion of Parent Dedication & Child Naming of Eliza Jane Purdie ... Despite bad weather garage sale most successful on 27 October ... Ewan & Elizabeth Cummings, preparing for overseas mission work in Chad with Wycliffe Bible Translators, guest speakers at morning service ... Church saddened by recent deaths of Perc Ruff & Vic Smith.

CARNEGIE (Neville & Pam Wight) Celebration Sunday well attended with

3 baptisms & one transfer ... As new organisation of church is in progress, AGM held at new time in October, constitution being revised ... Garage/craft sale held ... Minister attended marriage counselling course ... Asian students busy preparing for exams ... Speakers have included R. Foreman, lecturer BCV, & B. Jenkins ... Bread ministry continues.

OKAILEIGH (Don Milne) 80th anniversary services held 20 October,

Neville Farmer presided, Keith Farmer of CCTC, Carlingford, preached. Representatives of Polish & Chinese churches present. Temple day offering exceeded \$2000 ... All CWF office bearers re-elected at AGM ... Ken Masterton compiled & presented history of church 1966–1996 ... Prayer & Bible study group studying Mark's Gospel ... Church anticipating visit of Mrs Prue Gashumba.

MILDURA (Tom & Ruth Edge) Recent guest speakers have been Don Langley, Gideons, Dr Deane Woods, Adelaide College of Ministry ... Musical input to services from Country Music Festival soloist & Jazz Festival Band ... Sunraysia Conference guest speakers were State Conference President Greg Elsdon & Conference Executive Officer Lynette Leach ... Church saddened with deaths of Val Marr & Vic Jenkins.

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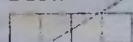
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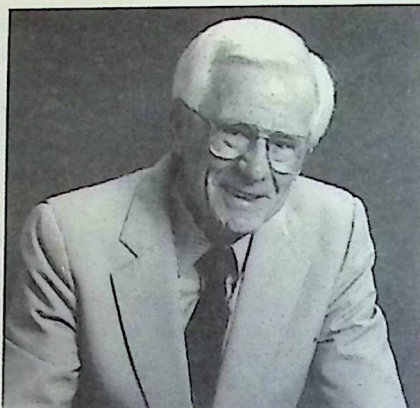
Snippets from History

Beginnings

GORDON STIRLING

Miss Eadie graduated from the New Zealand Bible College in 1937 hoping to work with Maoris, but found no opening. Not sure of where God might be leading her, she came to Australia hoping to work with Aborigines. She called at the College of the Bible, looking for a woman graduate who might join her. Ethel Bentley responded. * In 1939 they travelled west, their destination determined by their available finances. Ethel wrote, "We boarded the train and asked the Lord to show us a place where the Aboriginal people needed help." * Eventually they found themselves at Norseman, WA, on foot on their way to the Aboriginal Reserve 6 km away, carrying their cases and a portable organ. They pitched their tent on the Reserve and gathering the children together soon had them singing choruses and listening to Bible stories. They taught children and adults to read and write as well as practising first aid. A nearby dam was used for baptisms. *

When relatives of Ethel Bentley visited the West 50 years later, they met Natalie who has six children, one a pastor, who told them, "When I was five Miss Bentley taught me to read and write and to love Jesus." * Life on the Reserve was not easy, especially when unscrupulous whites sold illicit alcohol to the inhabitants, with wild brawls to follow. At first they had no transport, but some young Anglicans in Kalgoorlie heard of their work and supplied them with a



bicycle each. The work was financed by relatives and friends of the two women together with their own meagre savings. Soon the Kalgoorlie church became interested and made representations to Federal Conference, resulting eventually in the establishment of the Australian Churches of Christ Aborigines Mission in 1940. *

During 1942 Ethel Bentley's health declined and she and Miss Eadie offered to hand "the mission" over to the new Federal Board. Ethel retired, subsequently to serve with the United Aborigines Mission at Mt Margaret from 1945-50. Joan Saunders was appointed as Norseman Mission Superintendent, with Miss Eadie as honorary helper until her return to New Zealand in 1943 to work with Maoris. *

These were the beginnings of Churches of Christ missions to Aborigines, now at work in five Australian states. *

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The Last Word

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.

—Albert Einstein

"Waiter! There's a dead fly on my plate!"

"That's all right sir, it won't do you any harm."

"Maybe not, but thirty of its friends have come to the funeral."

"I guess I have lost another pupil," said the professor as his glass eye rolled down the kitchen sink.

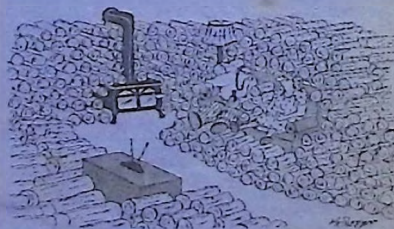
If you think fishermen exaggerate, try asking joggers how far they run every morning.

If at first you don't succeed ... you'll get a lot of unsolicited advice

The local TV news ended with this message: "We are unable to bring you the weather. We depend on weather reports from the airport, which is closed, due to the weather. Whether we will be able to give you the weather tomorrow will depend on the weather."

Even if your friends will listen to reason, they may not like to hear the same one over and over again.

One thing about being a comedian—you can have the last laugh.



"Do you want to be the one to go outside when it's minus 15 to get some firewood?"

All right then, quit complaining!"

From The Honeymoon is Over by John McPherson (Zondervan, 1996).