

THE AUSTRALIAN

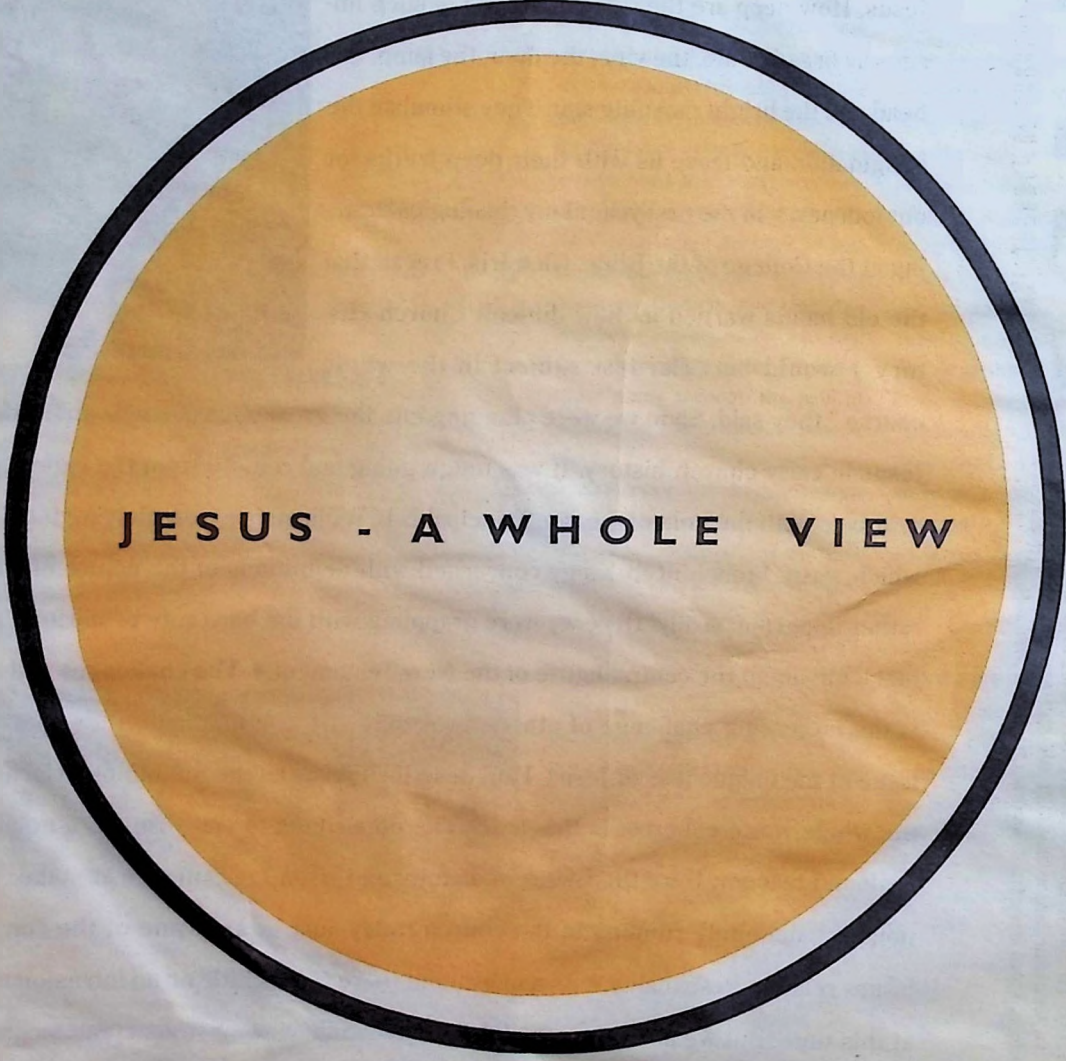


# Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

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JESUS - A WHOLE VIEW





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# Editorial

## Who Is Your Jesus?

DON SMITH

**A**ustralian opals fascinate me with their brilliant lights, their inner fires and soft colours. The person of Jesus is like that. The New Testament writers abound in colour and descriptive images of Jesus. How deep are the ideas conveyed in such images as bread of life, the vine, the door, the lamb, the head and the bright morning star. They stimulate the imagination and leave us with their deep truths for our journey.\* In the first year of my theological training at the College of the Bible, Glen Iris, I recall that the old hands warned us how difficult Church History 1 would be. "Hardest subject in the whole



course," they said. Soon we were plunging into the great controversies about the person of Jesus in early church history. It was tough going and remote from the experience of a 21-year-old. With the help of the late Principal E.L. Williams we were delving into Christology, which was a branch of theology concerned with definitions of the nature of Christ. It was rather important really! Here we were grappling with the hard core of spiritual and intellectual truth about the central figure of the New Testament.\* The challenges still exist. There is the increasing challenge of other world religions in a multicultural society raising the issue of the uniqueness of Jesus. Paul describes Jesus as the upholding principle by which the whole world coheres. Is this true? The opposite is to see Jesus as a good man and a profound teacher. Here the issues of divinity and risen Lordship are at stake. These questions are definitely running in the church today, just as are some of the complex ethical issues relating to sexuality.\* As a movement there seems little or no intrusion of such ideas at this time. But we are vulnerable! A high apostolic view of Jesus creates conviction, passion and energy. A low view leads to dissolution of faith and decline. Where are you as a minister/leader/reader in all this? Christology is the touchstone! Karl Barth, the great twentieth-century German theologian, observed, "Tell me how it stands with your Christology and I shall tell you who you are." \*





## Jesus

**Five writers view Jesus from different perspectives**

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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.**

### Here We Grow Again

To the Editor,  
I noticed in the "AC" (21 June) that the Balaklava, SA, church was mentioned twice in regard to the initiative undertaken by our pastoral care groups in seeking to meet a need in the local community. Working in conjunction with SA Community Care and, in particular, our facilitators Kerri and Maureen Godwin, the program has been a resounding success. An enthusiastic support group for those going through the pain of separation and divorce is now in place. Australians pride themselves on "having a go" and being willing to take a risk. I believe God has honoured our step of faith in this particular area of need.

Balaklava may be a country church, but it is exciting to see God at work as his people are prepared to at least try different approaches in order to show his love to those in need as well as earning the right to share the Gospel. I mention this in hope that it will be an encouragement to everyone looking at reaching those outside the Kingdom. Be willing to "ave a go!"

—Grant Spangenberg.  
(Balaklava, SA)

ism, Easter and has even leant a little towards the charismatic. I submit it is about time we considered social justice. The word justice is conspicuously absent from your pages.

At a time when all the forces of economic rationalism and right-wing governments are engaged in making the rich richer and the poor poorer and powerless, where is the voice of the Christian church?

To be sure we have charities, op-shops and food parcels. These are only symptoms indicating something very wrong. The church needs to ask very loudly, "Why?" Why are these things necessary? Why do we have this scandal of poverty in an affluent country? It seems that every day our papers record another law change or regulation further depriving the people unable to retaliate. The list is too long to state here.

The theology of the church as the people of God should not permit such things. God is involved in the very fabric of this world—we are his hands and his voice.

—Max Collyer  
(Boronia, Vic)

### Creation

To the Editor,

It must come as most welcome news to Bible-believing Christians that the building being purchased and renovated by the Creation Science Foundation in Sydney is now completely owned, debt free, and without recourse to lending organisations.

It must also be a blow to the like of Plimer, and also the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane and a number of other so-called Christians, including sadly, some Churches of Christ members, who loudly decry the Old Testament teachings of creation and the flood as myth and unscientific nonsense.

### What about Justice?

To the Editor,  
So far this year *The Australian Christian* has featured such things as singles, environment, family, Pentecost, postmodern-

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# Letters to the Editor

Looking back over past editions, such names as A.F. Cant ("AC" 6.8.94 and 4.2.95), G. Keeler (4.2.95), G. Ayers (6.5.95) and others over the years come to light, all opposing the Biblical truth, and some at times accusing the CSF of being a wealthy sect and other totally unfounded accusations. All of this is untrue as was the recent ABC accusation of it being a sect of American origin. CSF is no more a sect than Adrian van Leen's CCG Ministries.

One can only quote 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture [Old Testament] is God-breathed" etc. Again, "If God is with us, who can be against us?" Clearly God is with CSF, as witness the marvellous way in which time and again provision has been made so that the word of truth could be disseminated.

—J.H. Luxton  
(Biggenden, Qld)

## Homosexuality

To the Editor,

It is pleasing that Kim Kemmis ("AC" 7.6.97) acknowledges Dr Jago's critical assessment of the assumptions made by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission in their publication "Human Rights for Australia's Gays and Lesbians", however the claim that homosexuality is not a "pathological disorder", and "has nothing to do with disease" is completely at odds with the facts. "Pathological" includes "morbid and abnormal moral conditions", and as for disease, does one really need further confirmation? Dr Jago is right ("AC" 3.5.97), homosexuals can change—that's not a furore on his part!

The sensual acts of homosexuality may well be based on emotional needs (including sexual) and a need for identity (as male or female), but these acts are not sexual—that relationship is limited by nature to heterosexuals.

Sorry Kim, but whereas we all have similar intellectual, physical, spiritual and social needs, in the case of sexuality, heterosexuals have chosen to conform to the divine plan, and it works! For example refer letters 5.10.96 and 19.10.96. A research paper is available from Focus on the Family (03) 9558 2977. —Vin Waters (Essendon, Vic)

## Homosexuality in Leadership

To the Editor,

Reaction in the press to concerns expressed by Alan Walker and Gordon Moyes over the "self outing" of the Uniting Church's Dorothy McRae-McMahon reveals the wide gulf between liberal secularists and those who seek to take the Bible seriously. These eminent churchmen have been accused of insensitivity, hypocrisy and anti-Christian attitudes.

The idea that entry into the church is based on repentance for sin and that the Christian life requires an attitude change towards God seems foreign to these secularists. Of course we all sin after conversion, but there is a vast difference between incidental and unintentional sin and deliberately living an unacceptable lifestyle (see 1 John 3: 6).

It is perhaps unfortunate that homosexuality among all sins gets singled out for so much attention: it is just that it is often so blatant. Living in a homosexual relationship as a "Christian" is no more acceptable than living in an ongoing adulterous relationship.

Underlying the secular position is the myth that homosexuality is not a matter of choice. It is. Even for the less than one percent of the population who have been born with a homosexual orientation, there is vast jump between orientation and actual behaviour. When many young people are

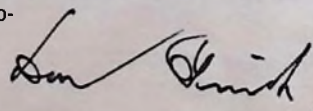
## Update

Dear readers,

All Australian churches should have now received our promotional package. We hope the attractive poster is well displayed to assist in introducing your attenders to the paper. A goal for new subscribers has been suggested according to church size. Some churches are already close to achieving their goal. The goals should be achievable with some special promotion in the coming weeks. If additional copies of the paper are required please phone. Suggestions for promotion have been enclosed. One church is planning to have copies of the paper at each of its small groups and promote in that way.

By enlisting new subscribers you can help them enhance their own faith development as well as helping us to take further steps to improve the paper. Whatever we receive in income from new subscribers will be ploughed back into the paper by way of improvements. There is no lack of ideas about this. Leaders can contact their state representative on the "AC" Board for help in promotion (see page 2 for

who they are). In Victoria Gordon Stirling and I are available to visit churches. We recently heard from a subscriber who can no longer read the paper because of declining eyesight. This lady has read the paper since childhood and is now in her eighties. We would like to explore the possibility of providing help for the print handicapped. Is there a volunteer who could read sections from each issue for recording on tape? Two people working together would make a great team and provide a change of voice. We would also be interested to hear from potential users. Finally we have received a letter of thanks from Michal Weremiejewicz in Poland. He deeply appreciates the reader who donated a subscription. Michal says that the paper is read by the whole staff and is available to students of the Christian Bible Institute also mentioned in this issue. He noted how much the churches enjoyed the visit of the women mentioned in our report on page 8.



ambivalent about their sexual orientation it is highly undesirable that people like McRae-McMahon should continue in situations where they can be role models. In a survey published by the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 14 July it was pleasing to see that 89 per cent of

Churches of Christ members were opposed to homosexuality in church leadership (and 4 per cent undecided). This figure was higher than for all other communions mentioned in the report.

—H.E. Hayward  
(Pymble, NSW)



## Superstars

Kidsmin presents popular rock musical



These are some of the 25 young stars performing in Jesus Christ Superstar in Adelaide this month. More than 50 people, including the Kidsmin Orchestra, are involved in the six performances at the Kidsmin Playhouse, Torrensville. Kidsmin in SA is one of the few groups in Australia to receive a licence to perform the musical this year.

### Churches of Christ Kidsmin in SA

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popular rock musical

## Jesus Christ Superstar

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## Women of the Century

*Women of the Century* is a tribute to the women of Churches of Christ in South Australia. It was launched at the South Australian Conference in May and has been a great success. Nearly 250 copies were sold in the first week.



Pictured above are the authors, Shirley Holmes, Dorothy Jacobs, Shirley Burger, Lori McDonald and Marian Hackett, with Geoff Alves, from the National Literature Department of Churches of Christ, who published the book.

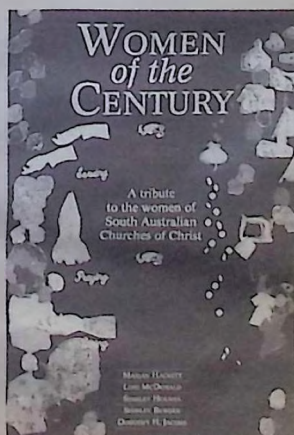
The book is presented in three sections. The first, "Historical Highlights", written by Marian Hackett, with additional material by Shirley Holmes, treats the reader to an overview of events and activities and includes photos and anecdotes.

Thirty-seven women are included in the second section, "Profiles", representing all those who were active in the church in some way—locally in their church and community, in the state, nationally, and on the world scene. Each profile is accompanied by a photo. Among those included are Eliza Davies (a friend of Alexander Campbell's family), Adelaide Green, Lesley Stirling, Pauline Crosby, Marj Dredge and Shirley Burger.

The final section is titled "Memorables". In this the reader begins to "live" the story as it unfolds.

There is a comprehensive index, which reveals the book's wide-ranging coverage. The book is attractive, very well presented and hard to put down.

Jeff May, SA Conference President, writes: "[This book] is unashamedly parochial. It is a celebration ... It is readable, well-written history in a flowing style."



Copies of *Women of the Century* are available from the SA office or from Vital Publications, PO Box 101, Essendon North Vic 3041 (telephone (03) 9379 1219, fax (03) 9379 0015) for \$22 plus \$1 postage.

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# Amazing Missionary Convention

**Swanston Street looks to the nations**



*Swanston Street, Melbourne, Vic. church*

The Swanston Street, Melbourne, Vic. church chose Habbakuk 1:5 as the theme for their 26th annual missionary convention. "Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told."

As the church "looked at the nations", they were amazed at the

results achieved during the past twelve months: the Bible released into new languages, leaders equipped and released for ministry, churches established and strengthened, redemptive relationships formed and God's love demonstrated in loving service. God is doing something in our day that is "unbelievable"! Dr John Ridgway, Director of the Naviga-

tor's Asian Frontiers, was the keynote speaker. Over 40 mission leaders and pastors valued a day with John exploring the implications of "Ministering in the Mainstreams".

Members participated in a 40-hour prayerathon and a prayer dinner.

Visitors included Elizabeth James and Melissa and Benjamin (AEF) from Perth, Allan and Val Webb, (OMF) from Sydney, and David and Sally Spencer (NAV), who are based in Melbourne.

The church's missionary family comprises 44 people (including children) serving in Central Asia, South-East Asia, Europe and the Pacific Islands.

On the Saturday the creative arts

ministry presented a musical on centre stage in the Melbourne Central shopping centre at lunchtime. It included mime, drama, dance and singing.

600 attended a combined morning service on the Sunday. During the service a love gift was received for the missionary family—\$36,700—and \$4,345 was promised weekly for the support of the growing missionary family. This will allow the church to release \$262,600 for global mission over the next twelve months.

Amazing! Yes, but the resources will be targeted to accomplish the God-given mandate to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every nation.

—Alan Baker

## A Close Shave

**No escape from the razor gang**



Andrew Twining, chairperson of the Preston, Vic. church board, offered to shave his head if Preston's Friday night congregation could raise \$100 or more for the World Vision 40 Hour Famine. Instead of the usual meal on a Friday night, rice was served and money collected towards these two worthy causes (40 Hour Famine and getting Andrew to shave his head). At first only \$85 dollars was forthcoming, but the hat was passed around again and Andrew had to come good on his promise.



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## Real Resolve

**Baptism in challenging conditions**



*Sunday, 1 June, the first day of winter, began with a temperature of 1°C and a heavy frost covering the ground—not ideal conditions for a baptismal service in the cold waters of the Murray River. All this did not dampen the resolve of teenagers (from left) John McCabe, Allira Robertson and Kelly Ayars, with minister Larry Edwards (centre), of the Swan Hill, Vic, church, to obey Jesus in believer's baptism. Following the 10.30 am service, a large number of the church family and members of the young people's families gathered at Riverside Park in bright sunshine to hear the testimonies of John, Allira and Kelly and witness the baptisms. The church praises God for the courage of these three young students, who obeyed their Lord in a very public way.*

### "THE MISSION AND MESSAGE OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE NEW CENTURY"

by Gordon Stirling

Boronia Church of Christ

59 Boronia Road

Sunday, 31 August at 2 pm

A repeat of the second annual "G.R. Stirling Lectureship" presented at the SA Churches of Christ Convention in May (followed by questions and afternoon tea)

## Minister Wanted

The Church of Christ at Camp Hill, Qld, seeks a pastoral minister to start January 1998. Must be a person of compassion and a team player who is prepared to work within the church and the community.

Applications close 30 September 1997.

Expressions of interest or inquiries should be directed to:  
David Markham  
PO Box 182  
Carina Qld 4152  
Phone (07) 3390 6737 (AH).

## Hedland Building

**New complex opened in WA's north**

There were cheers of joy from the gathered crowd as Ray Schmitt unfurled two flags (an Aboriginal and an Australian) and hoisted them to the top of the flagpole to declare open the new chapel complex at Hedland, WA. Ray was chosen because of his 40-year association with the ministry to Aboriginal people in the north of WA and involvement with the Norlings during their first year in the area. In an opening service of worship, Sonny Graham brought a challenging message and greetings were given from national and state conference representatives. Major Newman of the Salvation Army, with whom we negotiated the sale of the impressive facilities, also sent a greeting. Prior to the opening, a team of six from the Dalkeith Road church helped prepare the property for the opening.

Helen and Ross Norling took possession of the manse several months ago, saving rent. (Rent for a normal three-bedroom house in Hedland is \$350+ per week.) The purchase included furnishings and a clothing store at the rear that the Salvation Army was pleased to include. The total investment of \$470,000

for the properties was financed by a grant from the Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation and the proceeds of the Floreat Park North West Fund. The Association of Churches of Christ is delighted to have been able to purchase this property for the use of the church in Hedland to expand their important ministry to surrounding areas. The move fulfils a long-held vision of ministry in the north. National Home Evangelism has agreed to assist the Church Development Board of WA in financial support of the venture. The town of Hedland is some 1500 km from Perth and has a population of approximately 15,000.

Recently 34 tribal Aboriginal people were baptised at meetings conducted in the Strelley and Warralong areas. Over 80 baptisms have taken place in the last 18 months. We look forward to great blessings in the Hedland, Marble Bar and Warralong areas under Ross and Helen's ministry as we see a reaping after years of sowing the good news of the Gospel.

—Des Croot



*Ladies choir at the opening*



# Australians Discover Polish Links

1000-member goal by 2001 for Warsaw church



Janet, Muriel and Val with the Warsaw church in the background

He was just a name at the head of an article in *The Australian Christian*, then at the end of a fax and finally a voice at the other end of a telephone. Thus three Australian visitors came

to meet Michal Weremiejewicz in Warsaw, Poland. Muriel Coventry and Janet Thoday, from SA, and Valda Williams from Victoria, the Australians, were part of a group visiting Europe

on holiday and doing some family research in the Sudeten Mountains area of south-west Poland. Michal is the Director of the Christian Bible Institute of Churches of Christ in Warsaw.

The next few days were spent with Michal meeting members of our Polish churches and visiting places of interest. The churches have been financially assisted by our American churches, but are now trying to become self-reliant. The Warsaw church is located in a four-storey building that includes a shop selling Bibles and other Christian literature.

The offices of the Christian Bible Institute, which has a large proportion of correspondence students, are also located there. The chapel has been enlarged twice, seats 500 and is usually full. The church is growing fast despite the fact that converts often face rejection by family

and friends after their baptism. The church has a goal of 1000 by 2001.

A 100 km drive took the visitors to the town of Ciechanow. On the way they saw men, women and children and their horses doing farming work. Most farm vehicles were horse drawn. Wheat, corn, sugar beet, legumes, vegetables and blackcurrants were being grown on small strips of land. At the church service in Ciechanow the Australians were warmly welcomed. Later they viewed the ruins of a twelfth-century fortress nearby.

Churches of Christ are the fastest growing of the evangelical churches in Poland with 27 congregations. They believe they are meeting the very real needs of the people in a rapidly changing society. The members showed considerable interest and pleasure in their recently discovered Australian links.

## Ron White Leaves

### Ministry concludes

Following 15 years of service at the Noble Park, now Keysborough Church of Christ, Vic, Ron White concluded as pastor on 16 March 1997. His ministry over the years has been significant and greatly appreciated. He leaves behind many friends. The church experienced great grace on the day and the luncheon that was held following the morning service proved to be a memorable occasion.

Keysborough Church of Christ members extend to Ron, Esther,

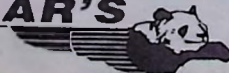


Miriam, Naomi and James, our Christian love and continuing prayer support as they adjust to the new plans that God has for them.

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# Jesus in My Life

MARIAN HACKETT

**M**y mother loved to tell the story of when I, as a three-year-old, disappeared from home and was found trudging up a steep hill in a nearby park. I was carrying a toy shopping basket and, pointing to the clouds at the top of the hill, I said, "I'm going to Jesus for a pound of potatoes." \*

Was I seeing Jesus even then as my source of supply? I doubt it, because for a number of years after my Christian conversion at age twenty, it was God the Father who was usually uppermost in my thoughts and to whom I turned for all my needs. So much so that there came a time when Jesus said to me, through the fourteenth chapter of John's gospel, "You believe in God, believe also in me." Of course I believed in Jesus! I had been baptised in his name. But he was saying now, "Trust me in a new way." \*

*Infinite, eternal love,  
continuing to seek the  
lost into eternity. This  
is the God I see in  
Jesus*

God had already brought me to understand that we (our family) would go to the other side of the world, and there I would tell others what I had learned of him. Jesus was promising to go on ahead to prepare the place, and we must trust and follow. \*

It was all very bewildering and quite incredible. Yet, three years later we were disembarking from the ship that had brought us as "ten-pound migrants" from our comfortable home in England to South Australia—knowing no-one,

having no home and no means of livelihood. \*

True to his promise, Jesus had gone on ahead to prepare the way, and this was demonstrated in many ways. A Marconigram to us, aboard the ship approaching Fremantle for a day's refuelling, amazed us with the news that a Baptist minister and his wife would be at the dock to meet us and offer hospitality. Other Christians, also unknown to us, were waiting to help us disembark at Adelaide and see us safely to our hostel. With their help, within three weeks we were in our own home, with loaned or donated furniture—and my husband had a job. \*

Over the many years since then I have sought to fulfil the words of God by teaching in Sunday school, adult Bible classes and in state schools when this was allowed. But I was doing that in England. What more had God in mind for me here? It was not until some twelve years ago that I realised that Jesus was leading me into writing about what I had learned of God. \*

And whatever I have learned has come to me through looking at the life and death of Jesus. \*

Seeing Jesus healing the sick in body and mind, has shown me that it has always been God's desire that we humans should be physically and psychologically sound. That Jesus turned no-one away, not even a pagan Roman centurion, reveals a God whose help is certainly not for Christians alone but for all who come in need. \*

That Jesus had women friends whom he loved dearly demonstrates the place women hold in the Father's heart, and the Lord's joy in little children demolishes for me the old doctrine that the human race is born depraved and in need of forgiveness from birth. \*



His friendly call to Zachaeus, his gentle dealing with the woman taken in adultery, his refusal to bring down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village and the fact that numbered among his friends were people who were "beyond the pale" of society bespeaks a God whose love is unconditional and who refuses to condemn and punish. \*

In the meekness and self-giving servanthood of Jesus I see nothing of a God whose holiness and justice demands satisfaction. His weeping over Jerusalem in his anguished longing to save its people from their folly, reveals a love that takes no account of its own needs, a love that is itself prepared to accept responsibility for that folly. A love so wide and deep it, surely, would not, could not, end at the unbeliever's moment of death. Infinite, eternal love, continuing to seek the lost into eternity. This is the God I see in Jesus. \*

Marian Hackett is a member of the Ellan-bath, SA, church. Her first book, *I'd Like to Believe in Christianity ... but ...* is available from VITA Publications, PO Box 101, North Essendon Vic 3041, for a special price of \$6 if you quote this article. She was also a major writer for *Women of the Century* (see page 5).



# Jesus

## Jesus—Companion, Brother and Lover

ROBYN WALSH

**Jesus is our companion on the journey of life!**

Jesus enters human experience, becomes immersed in the messiness of human life and challenges the norms of his day and today. God's Son became human, male, flesh. Through the very process of Jesus' birth, he shows his (and God's) love and appreciation of women. When Mary gave birth to Jesus, she was regarded as unclean by the law. Therefore she was excluded from worship, community and touch. Nonetheless, during this time Mary suckled Jesus, the divine One, holding and cuddling him in her arms. She offered him her body in communion: "This is my body given for you." \*

God, in Jesus, offers salvation, wholeness and deliverance from the binding forces of fear, shame and guilt. We are invited to embrace faith, grace and forgiveness. Jesus invites us to allow him to companion us on the journey of life! \*

*Jesus invites women,  
indeed the whole of  
creation, into  
relationship with him*

**Jesus is our brother—the one who offers us citizenship in the realm of God!**

Jesus says, "Who are my mother and my brothers? ... Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:33–35) A woman sits with her head in her hands. She has just been diagnosed HIV positive. While she is fearful of death, the fear of losing

friends and family through the declaration of her diagnosis is far greater. Will her relationships survive? The story of the woman with the haemorrhage in Mark 5:24–34 offers some insight into who Jesus is for women. The woman faces her own mortality. Her health is deteriorating. Jesus is the one who, by touch, becomes "unclean" so that the woman may become well. Then Jesus asks, "Who touched me?" Imagine the fear of the woman evoked by this question—the fear of being shamed in front of the crowd, of being reprimanded for disobeying the law and for making someone unclean by touching them. Imagine the fear of being shamed by family and friends, of being reprimanded for contracting the HIV virus and for potentially infecting a partner. But what does Jesus do? Does he shame her, make her feel guilty or reinforce her fear? No! Jesus says to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." He names her as a member of God's family, calling her "daughter". He offers her healing at the very depths of her being. He offers her peace and "ease" as a citizen of God's realm. \*

**Jesus is our lover—the one who loves us to the core of who we are, and to whom we offer ourselves in love!**

Dianna sits on a park bench with her partner. Somehow the spark of passion for each other, of deep love, has been rekindled. They now, again, make time for each other. They indulge in the extravagance of extra time together and the really valuable aspects of life. As I delight in the new level of their relationship, Mark 14:3–9 springs to mind—the



story of the woman who anoints Jesus' head when he is dining with Simon the leper. These women are taking risks! They are taking something that is very valuable and offering it in love to another. Others may criticise and scold, saying it is wasteful: "You could contribute more by doing something else." But Jesus responds by valuing women's expressions of love. Jesus is able to accept the love offering of these women to him in a way that values women, acknowledges the importance of their gift to him and eternally values what they have done. Jesus accepts love offered to him and offers his love to the world. Jesus is our lover—the one who offers us his human body: "This is my body given for you." \*

Jesus offers himself to us as companion, brother and lover. He is involved in the messiness of birth, relationships, love and life. He offers his body in communion: "This is my body given for you," the communion we have with him every moment of life. He longs for us to offer him our bodies in response. \*

Robyn Walsh is Office Administrator with the Overseas Mission Board.



# Jesus

## Paul and the Cosmic View of Jesus

LOUIS CLUN

**F**irst impressions can have a lasting impact. For those of us who are over about 35 years of age, the first visit to a dentist was probably unpleasant, leaving us with a permanent sense of trepidation, rekindled each time we go there. However, this does not apply to my own children—their first visit obviously did not leave them scarred. There are many examples of good first impressions, such as a love for a subject imparted by an enthusiastic teacher. These things stay with us. \*

We are then in a position to understand the faith of one who, while intent on stamping out the church, found himself confronted on the Damascus Road by the risen Christ. This was no mere inner conscience at work. Paul reacted typically like those who were confronted by God's presence—he fell down in fear. (See Acts 9:4, Ezekiel 1:28 and 1 Kings 18:39.) Paul was surrounded by a light from heaven, which flashed about him (Acts 9:3), and a voice identifying himself as Jesus. \*

In an instant Paul's days of persecuting the church were over. It must have been devastating and humbling. We read that he became blind and that he did not eat or drink for three days. Paul's first encounter with Jesus was not as a prophet-like figure teaching and healing the masses, but as the radiant risen Lord, whose mere presence made him fall to the ground in fear. This cannot but have had a lasting impact upon Paul. Furthermore, it is the only way we can properly account for his sudden conversion from persecutor to evangelist. We see this reflected in his letters. \*

In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul writes about the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. This is not an expression that one readily finds in the rest of the New Testament, but is consonant with Paul's experience on the Damascus Road. In 2 Corinthians 4:6 Paul adds, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." \*

*Paul's first encounter with Jesus was not as a prophet-like figure teaching and healing the masses, but as the radiant risen Lord, whose mere presence made him fall to the ground in fear*

Most of us clearly recall memorable experiences we have during our holidays or some trip. How much more would Paul remember such a dramatic, life-changing and awesome experience as he had. Many consider that the gospel of John is the one book of scripture that is redolent with the motif of "light". Yet the Old Testament has many references to the Lord being or bestowing light. We can cite Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation," 2 Samuel 22:29b: "The LORD turns my darkness into light," and Psalm 4:6b: "Let the light of your face shine upon us,



O LORD," reflecting Numbers 6:25, among many examples. Knowing these scriptures, it is not surprising that Paul uses the most exalted language for Jesus. Thus Philippians 2:10 reads: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." Paul is clearly echoing Isaiah 45:23, where the Lord states, "Before me every knee will bow." \*

Thus Paul was not merely content to exhort the believers to greater ethics, he was compelled to write about Jesus the exalted Lord. No-one who has ever been under the good care of a concerned and diligent doctor will fail to praise that worthy person when conversation turns to health care. So too, Paul seemed always eager to lift Jesus' name high. Referring to Jesus, Paul in Colossians 1:16, 17 writes: "For by him all things were created ... whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." \*

Paul's cosmic view of Christ Jesus owes much to his conversion on the Damascus Road, but it is totally in harmony with the rest of the New Testament—one only needs to read John 1:1-18 and hear the implications behind what Jesus said about himself. What Paul presents is an added emphasis on Christ Jesus' transcendental nature. \*

Louis Clun is the minister at the Howrah, Tas, church.



# Jesus

## Jesus in the Four Gospels

GREG ELSDON

**T**he careful reader of the New Testament cannot help but notice that the four gospels present the story of Jesus in very different ways. The synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are so-called because of their many *similarities*—especially when compared with John's gospel. In these first three gospels Jesus commences his public ministry in Galilee and calls ordinary people to follow him as disciples. He teaches the crowds about the kingdom of God, heals the sick and performs other mighty deeds. His ministry in word and deed is greeted with considerable enthusiasm by the crowds. After growing opposition from the religious leaders of the day he begins a journey to Jerusalem revealing to his disciples along the way that when he arrives there he will be met with ferocious opposition. He enters Jerusalem, causes a scene in the temple, is arrested by soldiers, given a mock trial before both Jewish and Roman authorities and is eventually flogged and executed by crucifixion. His body is then entombed and three days later he appears alive to some women whom he had befriended and to his disciples. \*

This summarises, roughly speaking, the storyline of Jesus' life in the synoptic gospels. But despite these obvious similarities there are also many differences between the synoptic gospels themselves. A brief look at the way Matthew, Mark and Luke portray the story of Jesus' resurrection is all that is needed to reveal the diverse perspectives of these writers who otherwise share so much in common. It would appear that Matthew, Mark and Luke all employed the traditions about Jesus available to them to express their own distinctive theological perspectives. \*

And what are we to make of John's gospel? John tells his "Jesus story" in a radically different voice. Apart from his account of the last few days of Jesus' life, John's narrative exhibits little if any resemblance to the synoptic storyline described above. So many of the ingredients that we would expect in any telling of the life of Jesus are absent from John. It has no parables, no exorcisms, no Sadducees, no scribes, no tax-collectors. John does not even allude to the virgin birth. He has no story of Gethsemane, no cry of abandonment on the cross and no reference to other significant events such as Jesus' baptism, temptation, transfiguration and ascension. And these are only the superficial differences! \*

*It should be no surprise to discover that all four gospels in our New Testament are very different*

The gospels are best understood as the **preaching and witness** of the earliest followers of Jesus. Each gospel writer retold the story of Jesus the way he did because of his belief that this "Jesus story" was of profound significance for life. They retold (preached) the story of Jesus in order to evoke and develop faith amongst their readers and hearers; faith in Jesus as God's Christ in whom God's saving grace is offered to all. \*

These gospel writers had access to different stories and traditions about Jesus. They lived in different situations, had different experiences of and insights into faith, and had different lit-



erary skills. **It should be no surprise to discover that all four gospels in our New Testament are very different.** Despite all these differences each author was successful in achieving the same end: they produced narratives that proclaim Jesus as the one who brings God's "good news". They chose different ways of doing it, but they all shared this one fundamental purpose and intent. \*

The variety of "Jesus stories" in our New Testament testifies to the height, depth and breadth of the experience of Jesus in the earliest Christian communities. Rich diversity in the Christian church is nothing new—it has been central to the life of the church from the outset. When we try to iron out the differences in the gospels in an attempt to make them all say the same thing, we run the risk of silencing the rich Word of God that speaks in many accents and addresses us in differing tones. The differences between the various "Jesus stories" in the gospels are not contradictions that need harmonising or discrepancies that need explaining—they are opportunities to encounter the living Word of God in all its freshness and vitality. \*

Greg Elsdon is the Principal of the Churches of Christ Theological College, Mulgrave, Vic



# Is Jesus Unique?

TED KEATING

**T**wo years ago the largest Buddhist temple in the Southern Hemisphere opened in Wollongong. This \$30 million edifice provoked a hostile reaction from many local churches. Some were jealous of the high visibility of the temple. Others saw it as a threat to Christianity and yet others denounced it as a "demonic place". \*

In reaction many local pulpits featured the exclusive revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Salvation could only be found in Christ and all other faiths were either demonic or devised by humans. Dialogue with our new neighbours? Only if it would lead to effective witnessing. \*

*The uniqueness of Jesus Christ is not our discovery, but due to God's gracious revelation*

Others deplored this reaction. Writers such as John Hick or Wilfred Cantwell Smith or Don Cupitt would have accused us of being "reactionary" and "arrogant": they would claim that Jesus Christ could not be the exclusive way to God as we cannot be sure that Jesus himself claimed such exclusivity. Robert Funk claims that the early church turned the revolutionary called Jesus into an exclusive human-devised icon called "The Lord". Others such as Hick and Koffman and Cantwell Smith would tell "arrogant Christians" that they are guilty of idolatry by turning Jesus into something he never claimed

to be. Christianity, to them, is not the one legitimate faith! Mission to the Buddhists? No! Rather, we should enter into dialogue with them so that we can discover what is Godly and Christ-like in their perceptions of faith. \*

Note how these contrasting approaches to other faiths are based on a person's view of Jesus Christ. Our eagerness for mission is related to our Christology! Beware of those new prophets who would discount Jesus Christ! \*

My own response to the Nan Tien Ssu Temple? Leslie Newbigin's book, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, helped me firmly stand on the unique revelation in Jesus Christ without displaying an ungodly arrogance towards other faiths. Newbigin, a former missionary in Southern India, reminded me that other, "demonic" religions are really formed by complex cultural factors. Newbigin pointed to the uniqueness of Jesus with humility, for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ is not our discovery, but due to God's gracious revelation. We are Christians by the grace of God, not by superior insight or intellect. "A need for humility," Newbigin wrote, "is strengthened by the fact that the church is not a 'possessor of salvation' but a witness to it." The fullness of Christ might dwell in the church but the church is not the fullness of Christ. Witnessing should be to glorify God, not to count heads or save "souls". That approach affects the "how" of mission and leads us away from arrogance and ungodly manipulation. \*

Is there anything God-like in another religion? According to Newbigin God is free to reveal himself in any way but Christ is the determinant of what is "God-like". \*

Dialogue? Yes! But not to discover the "God truths" in other faiths. Rather,



says Newbigin, if we are like the New Testament church, the dialogue will be initiated from the people of other faiths who will ask appropriate questions when they see the effectiveness of Christianity. \*

So what did I say to the Wollongong Church of Christ when the temple opened? The Buddhists have the same right to build a temple in Wollongong as Christians have to build a cathedral in Bangkok. We should respect the background of other faiths and traditions without compromising your own. If you learn about another religion, learn in such a way that it sharpens the focus of your own faith. \*

Christ is the Lord of the church and of the world and he desires that all come to faith in him. If we witness to the "Lordship of Christ" we do so with a sense of gratitude and humility. Our witness should be based on the Christ model, and that includes demonstrations of love. No arrogance or hostility! \*

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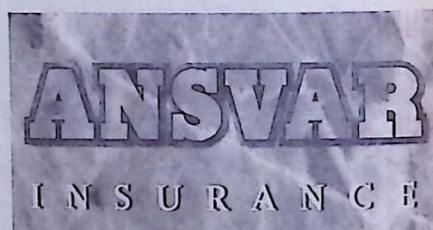
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Ted Keating is senior minister at the Wollongong NSW church.





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# A Magic Ministry: Ron Holmes

National leaders attending a morning service at Magill, SA, during their Assembly in Adelaide recently, were a little surprised when the preacher commenced his sermon with some sleight of hand with a billiard ball. In the absence of the regular minister, Lester Sutton, Ron Holmes was filling in. Now aged 72, Ron has been practicing magic for 60 years and thinks it's nearly time he got it right. His text was from Malachi 2:5—"The Lord Almighty says ... I will testify at once against those who practice magic." \*



Naturally the preacher pointed out that Malachi was not talking about entertaining people with sleight of hand and certainly not opposing the use of conjuring tricks to impress Christian messages on the minds of children. Ron has been doing this all his ministry, beginning in the days of the big Sunday school anniversaries and in early programs for the Christian Television Association. He is still in demand for kids clubs and family services. \*

Ron's magic is not confined to the church. On the wall in his study is an attractive plaque commemorating his winning "First Prize in Close Up Magic" at the 1991 Magicians Convention in Adelaide. Contestants came from all over Australia. He

is treasurer of the Adelaide Ring of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. The international magazine, called *The Linking Ring*, publishes reports of ring activities all over the world. A recent issue tells how Ron won the Adelaide monthly trophy for best performance with a trick of which the reporter's description concludes—"The patter had a Christian theme about creation and the presentation was terrific." Ron has more invitations to perform at Probus clubs, senior citizens groups, nursing homes etc. than he can fulfil. \*

This is partly because he has other things to do. Since his retirement he has utilised his magical knowledge in a series of children's novels about a travelling magician, Mr Ree. These are set in today's Australia and bring a Christian lifestyle message without being heavily religious. *The Magic of Mr Ree* and *The Man in the Yellow Suit* were published by Vital Publications and *The Weird Woman of Enfield Street* and *Sky Package* by Open Book. These have received encouraging reviews in various church papers and on ABC Radio. \*

Based on his preaching and counselling experience of 40 years in ministry, Ron has also written the "User Guide to Life" series. *Enough for One Day* and *Is This the Day?* published by Vital, have been extremely well received. When extracts from *Enough for One Day* were used by a prison chaplain in the Adelaide Remand Centre the effect was such that the Remand Centre Authorities ordered enough copies for one to be left permanently in each section of the prison. \*

In addition to writing and the usual preaching and part-time

*The magic of Mr Holmes: ham, minister, writer, golfer, artist ...*

ministries, Ron is Promotion Officer in South Australia for the National Literature Department. Over the past ten years he and his wife Shirley have visited churches all over the state and returned over \$25,000 in book sales to the department. Their only disappointment in this area is that there are not retired people in other states doing the same. \*

After three years in RAAF Radar during the war, Ron became a qualified and licensed amateur radio operator. His particular interest is antenna design and he has had one of his designs published in technical magazines in both Australia and overseas. Now that he and Shirley live in a block of units with restrictions on "visual pollution", he has had to concentrate on designing "invisible" antennas. This requires a little magic as well as technical know-how. \*

In his spare time Ron does some pencil drawing and he and Shirley try to have a round of golf each week. Shirley has just completed her task as the research person for *Women of the Century* (see page 5). Their four sons and eight grandchildren help to give life interest and keep them in touch with reality. \*

Ron is now working on *The Golfer's Bible*, a guide to the difficult game of golf and the even more difficult game of life—in 19 parts: one for each hole. (Vital Publications, price \$5.50—order this now!) and another book on presenting Christianity through magic entitled *Magic Message*. Ron retired from full-time ministry to a service pension on the eleventh day of the eleventh month twelve years ago. On that date each year he and Shirley celebrate the end of the war! \* Retirement can be fun! \*

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# Comment The Nondenominational Christian Churches

RONALD GRAHAM

**F**or the USA census of 1906, the a cappella Churches of Christ requested listing separate from others in the Stone-Campbell movement. Key elements in the division were: the church defined exclusively as the local congregation; identification of their interpretation of scripture as scripture itself; an anti-institution stance (in churches, opposition to missionary societies; in society, aversion to political involvement); the contention that what is not prescribed in the New Testament is forbidden (therefore the prohibition of musical instruments in worship); and their southernness, believing that "God had led them to slavery as a peculiar possession, to secession as a policy, and to battle [in the Civil War] as a means of defence of both". Today there are some eight wings of the "vocal music only" Churches of Christ. \*

*A key was the identification of their interpretation of scripture as scripture itself*

The second major division in the Stone-Campbell movement resulted in the formation of the nondenominational Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. This division also was a half-century process, reaching its climax about 1968. Among the causes of division were these: **One**, the different positions adopted by second-generation editors. (The movement had

editors rather than bishops.) Isaac Errett was the first editor of the *Christian Standard* (1866-1888). More than any other editor he emphasised equally all four of the movement's classical ideals: restoration, unity, evangelism and liberty. James H. Garrison was the editor of the *Christian Evangelist* (1866-1912), the forerunner of the *Disciple*. With him, the emphasis began to shift to unity and evangelism. \*

These two were the leaders in their generation of what became the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). \*

Errett is a hero also to writers in the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. \* David Lipscomb was the editor of the *Gospel Advocate* (1866-1917). He virtually defined primitive Christianity for the a cappella Churches of Christ. He severely circumscribed the ideals of liberty, which he was convinced tended to license; unity, from which he excluded the historic denominations; and mission, which he confined to the local church. John W. McGarvey wrote a "Biblical Criticism" page for the *Christian Standard* 1893-1911. He embodied most of the issues involved in the second schism. \*

**Two**, historical criticism of the Bible. The movement's plea, based on the "Bible alone" and unsupported by a systematic theological structure, was vulnerable to any approach that raised questions about the historicity and authority of the Bible. Many of the best-educated ministers studied at the ecumenical universities of Chicago and Yale and returned with different understandings of the Bible, the movement's mission,

and baptism. (On the eve of my leaving for America, a leading Victorian layman said to me, "I hope you are not going to Chicago. You will lose your faith there.") McGarvey wrote popularly and influentially. \*

**Three**, the formation of the Federal Council of Churches. The Stone-Campbell movement began by assuming that individuals would accept "simple New Testament Christianity", come out of the denominations, and form one church. Federation confronted the movement with a different formula for achieving unity. Without demanding unity in faith, it called for denominations to cooperate in those areas of service about which there was no disagreement, in the hope that working together would eventually lead to their differences fading into insignificance. \*

**Four**, open membership, or the practice of admitting unimmersed believers into membership in the church. Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address" (1809) presumed that there were Christians in the denominations. Edward S. Ames wrote in 1908, "If they are Christians, then [we] should unite with them in every possi-



ble way. If they are not then the plea for union is absurd." \*

The issue came to a head in 1919-1920 when it was charged that some missionaries in China surreptitiously practised open membership with the connivance of the United Christian Missionary Society. What was hotly debated were the facts of the case. What was not dealt with were two issues: one, the tension between the New Testament's "pattern" of believer's baptism and the acknowledgment of the Christianity of the "pious unimmersed", and two, the need for Chinese Christians to cooperate fully in a country in which the Christian community was an exceedingly small minority. \*

Ron Graham is a retired lecturer from Lexington Theological Seminary, USA, and a Churches of Christ minister who trained at the College of the Bible, Vic.

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# A Lot of Living by Faith

GEORGE NEWMAN

I gave my life to Christ in February 1955 and married Dawn Prossor in 1956. Three years later I took up full-time fishing in Port Phillip Bay. While fishing I rely on my faith to get me through many challenging times. \* Travelling the Bass Strait in a 11.6 m (38 ft) boat became increasingly hazardous as there were not the boats we have today, so I took my wife and five children to live on King Island. \*

*My life as a fisherman is the sea, which God provided and which is a constant challenge*

Time spent away from family at sea—when Dawn had to be both mother and father—was often nine months of the year. Our faith grew because we had to

rely on God to watch over us while we were apart. \*

I think our move to Currie, King Island in 1969 was guided by God. I did more day trips and so spent more time at home. It was also a special time of fellowship with other Christians. \*

King Island is known for changeable weather and has been the site of many shipwrecks. Once on a return trip from slipping boat at Smithton, Tas, I had an oil pipe break on the motor. I asked God for help to get me home safely and he showed me the way to join oil pipes and get the motor going again. \*

On a return trip from Tasmanian waters to King Island I was sleeping and was woken by a voice saying that it was time to move to Tasmania. I explained to my son that Tasmania would have better weather and better shelter for the boat. \*

We moved to Devonport in 1979. I'm still at sea for ten to sixteen days at a time. We worship at Ulverstone Church of Christ, where we find warmth, fellowship and interest in my livelihood. \*



George Newman sets out on another trip

My life as a fisherman is the sea, which God provided and which is a constant challenge. There are many trips where I have to ask the Lord for guidance and safety as the weather often changes. The land also creates and moulds the sea to a beauty that is very hard to explain in words. \*

The sea has different moods, which can never be trusted. We work mostly in two- to three-metre-high seas. Above three metres is dangerous. Once I experienced a high wave that took the boat to tipping point. The boat was on the crest of a wave and should have tipped backwards, but God's hand was upon the boat and me. \*

As I leave home on a trip the hardest part is saying goodbye. As we pray together the feeling carries me through with the knowledge I can look forward to returning home. \*

If things are upset at home I get a strong feeling that something is wrong. For example, one morning about 4:30 am my brother died and I told my deckhand that it had happened. At the next scheduled radio time I received a message from my wife about my brother's death. My deckhand could not

believe in such a bond between husband and wife. \*

I only know of one other professing Christian fisherman. This is a challenge to me as I hire many deckhands and they see something different in me. Some ask me questions that they aren't able to ask their own fathers. At times they discuss their family problems openly with me, which is an opportunity to tell them of my faith. \* Our income is a lot of living by faith because of weather conditions. Belief in a fisherman's saying, "Whatever you catch, God provides," carries us through. God provides all our needs, leads me to sheltered waters and gives me guidance and safety. \*

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## Does God Heal Today?

DENISE BATCHLER

**O**n 26 September 1996 my husband John took a phone call from my doctor that turned our lives upside down. Tests from a minor operation two days before revealed that I had cervical cancer. \*

Although it was of a slow-growing type the pathology tests indicated however that it was quite advanced and had extended into numerous glands. \*

*My experience tells me that strength can only come from the faith and hope that we have in our Lord*

A visit the next day to a surgeon revealed some hard-hitting facts. I had to have a radical hysterectomy with lymph node dissection and the prognosis was for an 80-85 per cent full recovery—maybe! I now had to endure a six-week wait before the operation. The wait was to ensure no infections were present from the previous operation. \* News travels fast and within minutes of the doctor's call prayers were being offered. The prayer support John and I received was enormous. It was not just from around Tasmania, but Australia wide, and had extended to various countries overseas through a prayer chain. People I did not even know were praying for us. I even had a Catholic mass said for me arranged by some friends. I could feel the cover of protection surrounding me and I knew

that whatever was going to happen I was going to be OK, no matter what. I had come to a realisation that sometimes God's perfect healing is in death itself. I was preparing myself for the worst, but hoping for the best. \*

In James 5:14-15 it says, "If you are sick, ask the church leaders to come and pray for you. Ask them to put olive oil on you in the name of the Lord. If you have faith when you pray for sick people, they will get well. The Lord will heal them, and if they have sinned, he will forgive them." (CEV) \*

In obedience to God's word I asked the elders of Hobart City Church to anoint me with oil and pray for my healing. People commented on how "calm and accepting" I appeared to be. Looking back I believe this was because of my faith in God, and I also think positive thinking played a part. \*

After the four-hour operation I remember being wheeled back to the critical care unit and thinking, "Well I got over that hurdle—let's tackle the next one." The doctor explained he had performed a radical hysterectomy and had removed forty pelvic lymph nodes to see if the cancer had spread. He sounded positive, but was noncommittal. I would have to wait for six days before I got the results from pathology. \*

The doctor finally delivered the news we had all been waiting for. The cancer had been removed. It had not spread to the lymph nodes. Tears were shed, prayers were offered and many phone calls were made. My prognosis had now risen to a 90-95 per cent full recovery rate. No chemotherapy or radiation treatment was required. \*

I am now having checkups every two months and God willing everything is going to be OK. At the time of writing I have now had four checkups and praise God I am still free of cancer. \*

My experience tells me that this strength can only come from the faith and hope that we have in our Lord. Faith that says go on when people who I thought I knew really well avoided me and therefore avoided having to discuss this fearsome issue of cancer. I recall that it did hurt at that time to be avoided, but I have now come to an understanding that this can be a normal human reaction. I have also learnt that cancer is a word, not a sentence, and I still need people to talk to me about it. I am not afraid. It has been hard for me to share my experience, but I believe God has honoured me with his grace and love and that I need to honour him by sharing my story of faith, hope and healing so that others will be



encouraged, regardless of the situation that they may find themselves in, to never let go of their faith in God. I have drawn great strength and encouragement from the chorus, "Have faith in God, let your hope rest on the faith he has placed in your heart. Never give up, never let go of the faith he has placed in your heart ..." \*

I also know that "God didn't give me a spirit of fear, but he gave me a spirit of power, love and a sound mind ..." \*

Denise and her husband John are members of the Hobart City Church.



### Situations Vacant

#### Horse Person Program Coordinator

Shiloh Ranch is an interdenominational Christian camping centre catering for around 4000 campers each year in cabin-style accommodation, set on 50 delightful hectares of undulating pastures and bushland overlooking Westernport Bay, at Grantville, Victoria.

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Applications in writing to: Camp Manager, Don Wesley, Shiloh Ranch, Almurta Road, Grantville Vic 3984. Telephone (03) 5678 8370.



# Vienna Remembers (Part 1)

VINEY LONGTHORP

**T**his year, all roads in musical mode lead to Vienna. It has become the city of anniversaries because it is currently celebrating the life and work of two of its greatest sons, who mightily reinforced its reputation as the musical capital of Europe. Franz Peter Schubert was born in Vienna two hundred years ago and Johannes Brahms's life ended there just one hundred years ago. \*



Schubert

Schubert and Brahms are composers of some of the world's greatest and most enduring music. Their works have come to possess a universal musical currency. Who has not heard of Schubert's "Serenade" or Brahms's "Lullaby"? Few concert series are considered complete without a performance of at least one of Brahms's four sublime symphonies. No concert singer can be assured of a true reputation who has not

mastered some of the song cycles of Schubert. \*

It is both interesting and enlightening to "compare and contrast" these two masters, but to do so is not to place one before the other in excellence. That is a pointless exercise. We do so in order to enrich and deepen our appreciation of each. \*

Though separated by almost two generations their personalities had much in common. They both loved people and, in turn, were deeply appreciated. But both were exceptionally shy. Schubert would sit for hours with his friends in a coffee house never uttering a word. Also he was in awe of his great contemporary, Beethoven, and felt unworthy of seeking an introduction. Brahms too was a bit of a loner. Though he mixed quite a deal with fellow musicians and professional people, he kept them at arms-length and hid behind a gruff manner and a cutting brand of sardonic humour. Like Schubert he was on the timid side. He once preferred not to face a crossing of the English Channel when invited to accept an honorary Doctor of Music degree from Cambridge University. \*

Contrary to a popular stereotype about artists, the music of each was greatly appreciated in their day, though in Schubert's case this did not translate into

much money. When Schubert died, aged 31, his friend, the poet Grillparzer, wrote the epitaph: "The art of music here entombed a fair possession but even more fairer hopes." And when the 17-year-old Robert Schumann heard the news he wept through the whole night. In Hamburg, where Brahms was born, the ships in the harbour lowered their flags to half-mast when they heard of his death. \*

However, when it came to the processes of music-making there were marked differences. Brahms was a slow and laborious worker, immensely self-critical. He destroyed nearly as much music as he published. He was also a comparatively late starter. Had he died at the same age as Schubert he would certainly be remembered for his wonderful D minor piano concerto, some very competent chamber works and a couple of engaging serenades for orchestra. But he would not have occupied the position of eminence he did at the time of his death—at 63. Brahms did not publish his first symphony until he was past 40. When asked about his tardiness he explained: "It's no joke trying to write a symphony when hearing the footsteps of that giant [Beethoven] behind you." Timidity again! \*

By contrast Schubert plunged into composition—he simply couldn't help himself. His facility was such that he wrote the music to some poems even as he was reading them. Someone said of him that he could have set a restaurant menu to music! Schubert was but 18 when he made into a song Goethe's poem, "The Erlking". In this one piece he transformed the art of the song. This amazing composition is operatic in scope—four



*This year all roads in musical mode lead to Vienna*

contrasting "voices" each with a different role present a spine-chilling story. Then there is the so-called "Unfinished Symphony". Many think he died before completing it. Not so—Schubert wrote so rapidly that in all probability he put aside



Brahms

the two completed movements in order to press on with other work and forgot all about it. He left behind hundreds of unfinished fragments. As Daniel Boorstin remarked: "You cannot stereotype genius—to our everlasting fascination." \*

*(To be continued)*

Illustrations by Amanda Tuohy, Hartwell, Vic, church.

## Supervised Urban Ministry Program

Applications are invited for this new program commencing 23 February to 8 June 1998. This course requires a commitment of twenty hours per week. The focus of the program is on ministerial formation within the urban ministry context. It is available to all in pastoral ministry. Academic credit is available.

**Enquiries and requests for application to:**

Rev. Dr John Paver or Rev. Paul Mayfield,  
S.U.M.P. Theological Hall, Ormond College,  
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Telephone (03) 9347 7199 or (03) 9372 2151.



## Classifieds

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## Pastoral Care Children and Grief

GLEN WEGNER

**A** dults naturally become concerned as to how children may respond to a death in the family. As a result of such concerns, children are sometimes over-protected from grief or death. Such overprotection is more symptomatic of inability to cope by adults rather than by the children. When it comes to death and grief children are more resilient than their adults anticipated, and when provided with support and encouragement usually resolve their grief in a satisfactory manner. \*

### Children should not be excluded

Unless there are very special reasons, children should not be isolated or excluded from the funeral, nor should they be removed from seeing grief in others, especially their parents. \* With children (and others) it is best to normalise grief, and therefore see death as a normal part of life. Often the problem of dealing with the grief of children is not so much with them but with adults who are afraid children won't cope and therefore take a variety of measures to protect them. \*

It is best to be open and honest with children when conveying news of a family death. It is dangerous to use euphemisms in explaining death to a child. For example I have heard parents explain to a child that a deceased grandparent has gone on a long holiday, or grandfather has gone for a long sleep. Frequently children are more intuitive than we anticipate. A child who is advised that a deceased grandparent has gone for a long



sleep may well fear going to sleep because of fearful associations with the so called "long sleep". Because of their inexperience with life, children usually don't know how to respond to death and grief, and therefore tend to model their immediate adults. What children don't need is a complete emotional or functional collapse from those they depend on. The worst response from adults is to refuse to acknowledge the death or communicate about it. The best response comes from an attitude that accepts death as normal and permits tears as a natural response and not a behaviour of which to be ashamed. \*

## Pastor

Mount Druitt Community Church (a Church of Christ) is a small congregation that seeks to grow both spiritually and through fulfilling Jesus' great commission. We are seeking an energetic, spiritually mature person to fulfil the full-time position of pastor. The person we require will need to fulfil the following criteria:

- Over 40 years of age, married and possessing spiritual wisdom
- Ability to relate to a diverse range of people and ages
- Bible college graduate and
- Teaching and teamwork skills.

This person will need to:

- have pastoral care skills
- be compassionate
- have experience with people from a low socio-economic background
- have a creative approach to problem solving and
- be committed to leading the church and making all decisions based on the Word of God.

**Applications close 15 August 1997.**

Please send your application to:  
The Selection Committee, Mount Druitt Community Church,  
c/o 100a Callagher Street, Mount Druitt NSW 2770.

Current applicants are still being considered and need not reapply.



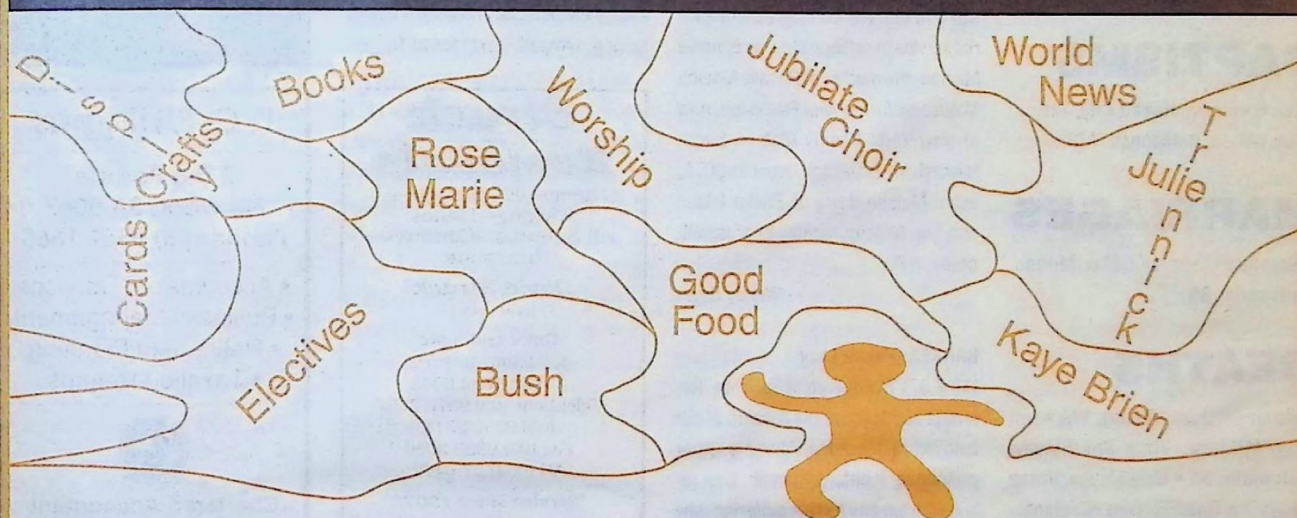
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370 Brooker Avenue  
Moonah Tas 7009

South Australia  
Marj Dredge  
2 Gannet Avenue  
Glenalta SA 5052

Northern Territory  
Narelle Jones  
PO Box 83  
Sanderson NT 0812

New South Wales  
Beverly Beaman  
6 Comber Crescent  
Pendle Hill NSW 2145

Queensland  
Deborah Friend  
Sweetgum Street  
Hillcrest Qld 4118

Western Australia  
Lynette Armstrong  
3 Waverly Place  
Dianella WA 6059



## CHANGES

**MAITLAND, NSW**—New Secretary K. Mitchell, PO Box 88, East Maitland NSW 2323.

**STAWELL, Vic**—New Secretary Philip Griffin, PO Box 452, Stawell Vic 3380

## BAPTISMS

- Ben Freedman, Hobart City, Tas
- Sue Wilson, Belconnen, ACT

## MARRIAGES

- Brenda Francis and Max Mutton, Nailsworth, SA

## DEATHS

- Mercia McQuire, Albany, WA • Lyn Gray, Mildura, Vic • Rex Stacey, Nailsworth, SA • Elsie Mayne, Valma Barnes, La Trobe Terrace, Geelong

## OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

### MATSON, Annie

(6.6.97) On 13 July at the Frankston Church of Christ Charles Bayer of CCTC, Mulgrave, conducted a memorial service to celebrate the life of Annie Matson, the mother of Rosalie Matson Matusoka, formerly of Frankston, now of New York, Wendy Matson Bayer, formerly of Frankston, now at CCTC, Jenni Matson Boyle of Phillip Island and Sue Matson Nichols of Muswellbrook, NSW.

—Wendy Bayer

### BARNES, Valma Lucy

(10.7.97) The church at La Trobe Terrace is saddened at the passing of our beloved sister, aged 74 years. After prolonged, indifferent health, now released from any further suffering, she

is at home with her Lord. Capacity congregation paid fitting tribute to one whose life had touched so many. She was involved with community groups, as well as Girls' Brigade, Sunday school, and church rosters. Despite frequent discomfort and disability, she always encouraged and helped others. Loving sympathy expressed to hus-

band Tom, son Ross and family. Missed, but with gratitude to God for her life, quiet inner strength, perseverance and faithfulness.

—David L. Jones

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Jim Ashley  
Secretary

Nicole McGing  
Office Manager

PUBLIC LIABILITY PRODUCTS LIABILITY VOLUNTARY WORKERS COVER BURGLARY MONEY LOSS



# Church News

## NSW

**LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS (Stephen Templeton)** Church applying for change of use for house next to chapel, plans to use it for ministries in administration, children & youth ... 5 "Christianity Explained" classes begun in July ... 3 baby dedications & 3 50th wedding anniversaries ... 34 new regular attenders since beginning of year ... Attendances up by 40% for month of June over same period last year ... Offerings also up, averaging \$1,300 pw.

**WOLLONGONG (E. Keating & B. Bruce)** Second men's breakfast successful ... Mid-week spiritual renewal with Brian Willersdorf ... Visiting group "Iron & Clay" ... "Separation & Recovery" workshops held ... Over \$1,200 raised for 40 Hour Famine ... Michael Frost guest speaker ... "Sharing the Vision" breakfasts for church leaders & volunteers ... CWF mid-year Christmas dinner ... Family concert fundraiser for Thailand mission ... Sunday series "Gifts of Leadership" & "Men of Fame" ... Over 40 mothers attending MQPS.

**MAITLAND (R.N. Hawkins)** Mr & Mrs Hawkins on mission study tour to Africa & England ... Max Hall preaching in their absence in morning services, John Thompson at night services ... Bob & Sylvia MacGregor-Skinner shared expectations on work with Russian youth in camps ... Barry & Evelyn Sansome told of their work with Mobile Mission Maintenance.

## QLD

**REDCLIFFE (Adrian Risson)** Successful autumn fair held ... Choir presents items on regular basis at am & pm services & special events ... 4 Life & Friendship Groups (covering all ages from youth to seniors) continue to encourage social interaction among different age groups ... Kidz Klub attendances at steady 40-45 each week, providing activities for primary age schoolchildren ... Church

looking forward to Good News Festival, culminating in 41st church anniversary with evangelists George & Rita Galieh.

## SA

**NAILSWORTH (Andrew Evans)** Former minister David Althorp speaker at church anniversary. Special offering towards planned extensions & improvements ... Winter evening services start at 5 pm with monthly soup & savoury teas ... Junior youth club "Glory" entertained board members at dinner ... Lauren Wilson won bronze medal in Duke of Edinburgh Award ... "Walk for Bibles" organised by Sunday School raised over \$800.

## TAS

**NUBEENA** 35 attended combined churches luncheon on 15 June ... 3 prayer groups commenced ... "Kids Own Club" commenced for children from kindergarten to Grade 6 ... Church purchased TV & video recorder for general use ... Carers' Group established ... Luke Williams performed in a musical production held at Wrest Point Casino ... Ladies Fellowship group established to help with church work in the community.

**LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison)** Ched Myers speaker at "Breaking Free" Conference & at 10 am on 6 July ... Kingdom Cafe held following evening service 13 July ... David Elvery speaker 10 am 20 July ... C. Spaulding on holidays ... Talent Endeavour program raised \$6760 for "giving to others".

## VIC

**BURWOOD-MOUNT WAVERLEY (Peter Wing Tang)** Much activity since last report, fund-raising programs, old-time film night, the Great Aussie Experience & car rally were most successful ... Inspiring messages from Lindsay Dewberry & Peter Little ...

Church blessed by visit from Barry Ward, missionary in Nakasi, Fiji, to Indian Fijians ... Sunbeamers Children's Play Group flourishing with many new members ... Half day of prayer held June was most encouraging.

**MILDURA (Tom & Ruth Edge)** Sunraysia Conference, 20-22 June, was an intensive time with input from team of 6 from CCTC, Mulgrave ... Country gospel music emphasis with Sherrah Family (Adelaide) 12-13 July ... Men's breakfast 12 July addressed by Hon. Russell Savage, local MLA ... Search for minister concluded with the church accepting Simon & Andrea Risson to commence early '98.

**ARARAT (Michael Thurlow)** Church hosted "Endless Praise" concert 18 July ... Good support for mid-week prayer & Bible study series "Meeting Jesus" ... Sunday sermon series has been on developing Christian character ... Church honoured Will Erwin, who retired as organist after 62 years of service. Will has played for services, church functions, weddings & funerals during that time. A presentation was made by Les Gason on behalf of the church.

**ASHBURTON (K. Wiggins)** Church planting at Ashburton by Troy Waller & "Christ's Community" group ... Group introduced to members at morning service & explained aim to reach young people. Prayer session held & barbecue lunch concluded a great morning ... Prue Gashumba visited telling plight of Rwandan children. Members interested in adoption plan ... Minister announced appointment to Alexander Heights, WA, in 1998. Church sad, but glad for Keith.

**ESSENDON (K. Stothard)** Cool Yule Dinner had 4 churches participating: Essendon, North Essendon, East Keilor & Strathmore. \$1000 presented to Barry Jenkins for Ward family in Fiji ... Church saddened on the passing of Col Ferguson, oldest male member, on 18 July.

**SWAN HILL** Church luncheon held following combined 10 am service on 20

June. Opportunity taken to farewell the Edwards family prior to their departure for Keysborough where Larry will take up ministry. Presentations made to family on behalf of the church ... Men's Bible study commenced with an average of 17 over first 4 weeks. ... Jason Potter (Frankston) guest speaker on 3 August.

**LA TROBE TERRACE (David Jones)** Church saddened at passing of Elsie Mayne & Valma Barnes ... Karley Boram & Catherine Paddle spending 12 months in America ... Jones family raised nearly \$1800 for World Vision ... Bootees & tracts gratefully received by new mums at Baxter House ... Schenk family safely home from Cambodia ... New youth group Bible study commenced at manse ... Young man made decision ... Commencing at Genesis, minister giving messages from each book of the Bible.

**CHADSTONE (Malcolm & Yvonne Lowe)** 9 members involved in Refocusing Seminars with Alan Hirsch ... 3 home groups holding regular meetings ... Church celebrated 42nd anniversary on 25 May ... Children's name badges made by Jan & Chip Farmer for "Prime Time" children's ministry ... Dot & Ray Salmon returned from Central Australia tour ... Liz Tilson, Women's Ministry President, guest speaker 20 July, also gave great musical item. 15 visitors from Ashburton church attended service & luncheon.

## WA

**ALBANY (John Spencer)** Church saddened by passing of Mercia McQuire & Fred Pellican's mother ... Congratulations to Fred & Kay Pellican on the birth of their first grand-daughter to Gavin & Penny ... Helen Hickling & Kay Pellican received certificates for 10 years teaching SRE ... John & Heather Spencer spent one-week holiday in Busselton ... Speakers in John's absence were Ken Verge & Jenny Marshall, talking about work of Overseas Mission.



# Accumulating Wealth

JANET THOMPSON

A letter arrived on my desk this week, offering me \$7 million (US) if I would allow my bank account to be used for a top-secret funds transfer. I laughed, and wondered whether anyone would actually fall for the confidence trick. A windfall of that size would be handy (although I didn't spend much time thinking about what I could do with the money!), but I think it would generate more problems than it would solve. \*

I have wondered what it would be like to be rich, but if this is the only way to accumulate wealth, I'll give it a miss. \*

There are many ways of making money, and they all seem to involve hard work, or rich relatives. \*

I have yet to find a rich relative. My current circumstances make me quite well-off in world terms. There is a roof over my head, I own my car and I can pay the bills—perhaps not as soon as they come in, but I certainly haven't reach the debt-collector stage yet. \*

I was discussing cell groups with a friend recently, and she said the thing she appreciates about group Bible study is the opportunity to hear what the rich people think about different issues. \*

For a split second I wondered why she would value the perspective of someone with a lot of money! Who in her group would fall into that category? \*

But when she specified two people, I realised that "rich" has an entirely different meaning for her. Both the people have ac-



cumulated a wealth of experience, warmth and wisdom, and what they give, in discussion and in living, is of great value. \*

I was highly amused by the contrast. This sort of wealth also comes from hard work and rich relatives, but it would be a bit difficult to acquire it by trickery. \*

I looked up "rich" in my dictionary. (I love exploring words!) There are many meanings, but the one that delighted me was "abundantly furnished". \*

My old teachers' college motto was *Animus cultum parabo* ... I lay the foundations of a well-furnished mind. There's some food for thought! \*

Growing older means growing richer—if I keep working at it. \*

I think it's called *laying up treasure in Heaven!* \*

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## The Last Word

Does Jesus Christ have faith in you?

### Bumper Stickers

- Sometimes I wake up grumpy. Other times I let him sleep.
- I took an IQ test and the results came up negative.
- We are born naked, wet and hungry. Then things get worse.
- i support publik edekasion.
- Be nice to your kids. They'll choose your nursing home.
- There are three kinds of people: those who can count and those who can't.
- Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else.
- I didn't fight my way to the top of the food chain to be a vegetarian.
- If we aren't supposed to eat animals, why are they made of meat?
- Diplomacy is the art of saying "Nice doggie!" ... till you can find a rock.

"What's that peculiar odour I smell around this post office?"  
"Probably the dead letters."



Ray hoped that the stroller would put an end to strangers referring to Jason as a "cute little girl".

From *The Silence of the Lamberts* by John McPherson (Zondervan, 1997)