

THE AUSTRALIAN

# Christian



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"Thou hast formed

us for thyself

and our hearts are

**SPIRITUALITY**

restless 'till

they find their

rest in thee."

Augustine *The Confessions*



# Letters to the Editor

## Postmodernity and the Bible

To the Editor,

One wonders why the Christian church is so ineffective in the community and why she has to seek to adopt the world's standards and ways to be effective. Simply, the church has lost its power. The authority of the church has gone when she is unable to say with conviction and clarity, "This is what the Lord says."

If the foundations of the scriptures are removed, then we have nothing. The article by Graham Long ("AC" 19.7.97) does nothing to encourage people to accept God's word as such with directions as to how the church and Christians should conduct themselves.

When statements like (I quote), "In the postmodern age salvation will be communal rather than personal," and, "The Bible will no longer be thought of as a kind of recipe book for Christian living," appear in your magazine, penned by those who are supposed to be leaders of today, one wonders where tomorrow's Christians will end up.

Is this acceptable teaching? If we do not see the Bible as giving clear directives for Christian living, where will we go?

If this is where scholarship leads us, then we need to question it. We need to resurrect the authority of scripture to its rightful place, and the church to align herself with it in all we do.

—Graeme Ellingsen  
(Gympie, Qld)

## Homosexual Bashing

To the Editor,

The letters published in your pages ("AC" 2.8.97) about homosexuality do not add new information to the discussion. Rather, they ensure that many Churches of Christ members remain hidden

deep within their closets on this and, indeed, other personal matters.

The "facts" being used by your correspondents ought to be challenged. For it is the authority with which they are delivered that must be personally crushing many readers.

Research papers and studies can say all they like. Nothing can alter one's genetic make-up.

Indeed, the medical profession the world over long ago removed homosexuality from its lists of psychological illnesses. They know that it is not a condition to be treated.

Continued homosexual bashing-type comments will only add to the fear, pain, depression, self-loathing and confusion of those "in the closet". Every day they remain in the closet is another day without peace and another day the world does not get to appreciate the real person. For some, the consequences of a closeted life are tragic.

It is time for Churches of Christ as a movement to educate its community and stop this condemnation of innocent people.

—Mark Fletcher  
(St Kilda, Vic)

## True Christians

To the Editor,

J.H. Luxton ("AC" 2.8.97) implies that those who don't have a literal understanding of the Bible aren't truly Christians. However, the New Testament makes it very clear that faith in Jesus Christ (as the living Word of God) is what makes a person a Christian. The Good News of Jesus Christ does not require a literal reading of the scriptures. On the contrary, Jesus often challenged his opponents' literal readings of the Law.

I believe that the letter writers named (and those guilty by association) would certainly accept

## Update

Dear readers,

New subscriptions are beginning to come in from our nationwide promotion. In the coming weeks we look forward to receiving many more. Information and copies of 1997 issues were sent to every church. We invite readers and, especially, leaders to give strong endorsement to the paper. Our planning and vision is only limited by our financial capacity to undergird the development program. Requests for additional copies have also been received. We can supply copies of the most recent issues, so please contact us. We also appreciate the steady flow of advertising. Wherever possible we recommend your support for our advertisers.

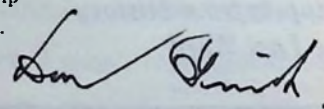
These last two issues have been prepared by Geoff Alves, who has stood in for Nigel Pegram while he is on annual leave. Thanks for your help Geoff, it is really appreciated. Geoff has worked with the paper for a number of years.

Sometimes we think we shall catch up with all the news and features sent to us but it never seems to happen. I hope readers will be patient as we juggle the factors in presenting a wide and representative range of items.

Our next issue is three weeks away, instead of the normal two. This is the final three-week break for the year.

Our planning for forthcoming issues is well advanced. Planning for the Christmas issues is about to begin! It seems a bit much to be confronting potential feature writers for Christmas contributions.

Thanks for all the positive comments that you continue to make. By the very nature of the size of our country we are never likely to meet personally all of our subscribers, so it is good to hear from you!



that God speaks his truth to us in the Old Testament scriptures. Their letters challenge the insistence on literal approaches which blind us to truth beneath the surface. The CSF does us a great disservice in this regard.

Those who recognise a difference between belief in what the Bible

says and belief in what science says believe that the CSF works against the Good News.

We see it as an organisation characterised by rigid thought, exclusive message and double standards.

—Phil Perry  
(Wandin North, Vic)

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## Warwick's New Minister

### Symbols of hope

A feature of the induction service for Jim Longbottom as Senior Minister of the Warwick, WA, church was the exchange of commitments by Jim and the congregation. The congregation's "vows" had been prepared through an open forum in which members thought through their responsibilities.

Barry Ryall, Ministers' Pastor for WA, led the induction segment and Max Rivett, chairman of the elders, offered the induction prayer.

Symbols were presented to Jim by people representing various segments of the congregation. One of Jim's much-used Bibles indicated a desire to base all of life on God's revelation. Directories (street and church fellowship) expressed concern for people, including those in the community still to be reached for Christ. A basketball (flat and needing oomph, not hot

air) linked with the church's strategy to use sport and leisure for a virile outreach ministry. Intertwined footy scarves from different family members (including the Eagles and the Dockers) suggested that one of the family's strengths is their affirmation of individuality and that the congregation wants Jim to arrange time to enjoy his family life.

A kangaroo paw plant for their garden, presented by two children, symbolised the desire for faith to be linked to everyday Aussie life and for future growth. One of the first tasks Jim Longbottom has set himself is meeting around 400 people in a series of home meetings.

Following the 24-year ministry of the only previous senior minister is not an easy task but there is a sense of vitality and expectancy as the church enters its next chapter.

## "AC" Restoration

### Historic volume repaired



Frank Corvina and Don Smith with the rebound Volume 1

The first volume of *The Australian Christian* has been rebound in handsome maroon and yellow leather by bookbinder Frank Corvina. For over 20 years Frank has bound the annual volumes of the paper for the office and Churches of Christ historical societies and libraries. When Don Smith showed him the battered volume of 1898 with its detached cover, broken spine and loose pages, Frank could not resist the challenge to return it to its former

condition. This historic volume has now rejoined its 99 companions in the office archive. The volume is a fine tribute to the bookbinder's art. Frank Corvina emigrated to Australia from Hungary in 1957. He has been a bookbinder for over 40 years and does specialist work for universities, major libraries, companies and private clients. Seven other early volumes in need of repairs await funds to become available before a visit to Frank Corvina.



The elders and ministry team pray for Jim Longbottom

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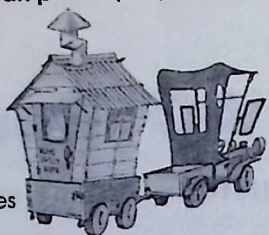


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### Position Vacant Secretary

Southport Church of Christ

is seeking an experienced, highly organised, full-time confidential secretary to join their growing team. The suitable person would be a mature Christian, capable of working as part of a busy team and comfortable working in a large-church context. The duties would vary enormously, but the following characteristics are essential:

- Loyalty and commitment to the church, its staff and its leadership
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- Experience with a broad range of typical secretarial duties (eg computers, finances, filing, dictation, executive support etc.)
- A willingness to be flexible, to think creatively and to treat the job as a ministry

For further information, write, giving full details and experience, to Gary Williams, Southport Church of Christ, PO Box 2472, Southport Qld 4215. Applications close 31 August 1997.

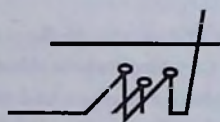
## MINISTRY TEAM LEADER

A Ministry Team Leader, who is committed to growth through evangelism and who can further develop the gifts and abilities of the church for its ministry to the wider community, is required from 1998 by the Churches of Christ, Modbury, in South Australia.

Gifts in ministry will be evident in a vital faith that communicates itself in all aspects of life, and will include:

- visionary leadership
- dynamic Bible-based preaching
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- ability to work in a team

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## MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY OFFICE MANAGER

Celebrate Messiah Australia is an evangelistic ministry dedicated to sharing the Gospel with Jewish people in Melbourne.

We are looking for a competent, reliable and enthusiastic office manager. Applicants must have general computer skills (pref. W4W, Excel, Access, and Quicken); be well-spoken and confident; be gifted in administration; and be looking for a ministry opportunity rather than just a job.

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## Building Bridges

### Hostel for Jewish People in Queensland

"Could you help our people?" Thus began a new chapter in the life of Churches of Christ Care in Queensland. The request was made by a resident of our Golden Age Retirement Village on the Gold Coast. She was Jewish, and her frail-aged people needed a place to call "home".

So we opened Beit Shalom on 20 February 1994 at Marana Gardens, a 10-bed hostel designed to kosher requirements with two kitchens (one meat, one dairy). Every Friday night the residents observe Shabbat dinner in the formal dining room, and all Jewish holy days are observed throughout the year.

This is an unusual and historic bridge-building exercise. Chris-

tians caring for Jews may seem like a new concept, especially with conflicts so visible between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East. There was a time in New Testament Christianity when there was no conflict between being a Christian and being a Jew. Oh, yes—there were conflicts with Jewish leadership. But Jesus was a Jew who never repudiated his Jewishness. And the apostle Paul was proud of his Jewishness.

We've had centuries of prejudiced history. Where should we stand in these relationships today?

Churches of Christ Care has made a decision to build bridges. We have decided to love these people, and care for them. We believe that the important thing for



*Israeli dancing at "Sunday in the Country"*

us today is the development of respect for each other, and an understanding of our differing religious perspectives.

Care has faced many dilemmas as a Christian people seeking to deliver care to Jewish people. These dilemmas originate out of a wide spectrum of varying doctrinal opinions, cultural practice, levels of prejudice and mistrust from among Christian and Jewish people alike. The resolution of each dilemma has brought us into a greater acceptance of people (Jews and Christians, believers and nonbelievers) as we all continue to communicate through our own bias and frames of reference.

Beit Shalom is the home of WIZO's (Women's International

Zionist Organisation) Gold Coast Chapter. Earlier this year, Churches of Christ Care cooperated with WIZO in hosting "Sunday in the Country", a fun day at Paradise Country. The two organisations wanted to foster in the State of Queensland a greater "tolerance, understanding and friendship" among the members of all different communities, both Jewish and non-Jewish, Christian and non-Christian. In a world that seems to be increasingly polarised on the issue of race, this experiment in tolerance and understanding challenges us to commit to a mutual respect.

We have discovered that we need an openness to let the Lord lead us together where he will in this enterprise.

### Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre Clinical Pastoral Education

#### Pastoral Care Intern Chaplains 1998

Intern positions for nine months are available at the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre, Heidelberg West, Vic. Duty and on-call allowances up to \$5000 are available for each position, commencing 16 February 1998. Applicants are expected to have had previous pastoral experience. Vacancies also exist for three months training in Autumn CPE Unit. On-call allowance may be available for this unit.

**Applications close 31 October 1997.**

Enquiries and requests for applications to: Ms Allison M. Whitby, telephone (03) 9496 2895 or Rev. Dr Graeme Gibbons, telephone (03) 9496 5289.

#### Summer School for Theological Students 1997-98

Up to ten positions for eleven weeks, commencing 18 November 1997. On-call allowances available. Applications close 12 September 1997.

Enquiries and requests for applications to the above.

### Visiting Canberra? Stay with a Church Family

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*Advance bookings appreciated*



## With No Sermons

**Pastors' prayer summit changes lives**

Ministers around Australia were invited by Prayer Summits Australia to spend four days together praying for a move of God's Spirit in our cities. Summits were held in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Newcastle, Sydney, Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne and Adelaide. Two youth pastors summits were also held. Well over 500 ministers responded to the opportunity.

It was my privilege to attend the Melbourne summit with 140 ministers from nineteen different denominations or affiliates.

Churches of Christ were extremely well represented. Nineteen of our ministers participated and what a breath-taking spiritual experience it was! We came feeling somewhat fragmented strangers: evangelicals, mainstream church ministers, charismatics and Pentecostals. We left feeling a deep oneness in Christ. It was a powerful demonstration of our true unity in the Spirit.

At times we sensed the pain and hurt of pastors wounded in kingdom work. We prayed for one another and rejoiced as we saw inner healing occur. On occasions it was as though the Lord laid on us an intense compassion for the lost and the suffering.

Repentance with tears often flowed over sin, hurt, and our lack of compassion for those who don't know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Some spoke of sensing a renewed passion to preach the gospel of grace. Others were moved pastorally with a great compassion for the suffering of people in their congregations, and our city.

Moving reconciliation occurred between Koori and white ministers, evangelicals and Pentecostals, and even Pentecostals



and other Pentecostals. We experienced God setting ministers free from the past to operate in greater power. Many sensed an increase in their compassion for hurting people and an intensifying of their passion for the lost. All this with no sermons—only prayer and a great sense of the presence of God's Spirit.

I've heard of ministers who came home and shared with their congregations what God did in their lives and many of their people responded to God just as they had. I'm convinced that only good can come out of this move to get ministers together to pray. Numerous prayer networks have been set up around the metropolitan area to facilitate this.

Personally, I came home feeling inwardly cleansed. I have an intensified hunger to know Christ more intimately. My prayer life has improved out of sight, both in the amount of time spent in prayer, and the new "heart" that's present in my praying. I have a renewed desire to see more of the power of God when ministering to others.

I guess we're never too old to learn, or to receive a special touch from God. How I praise him! And, just as you might have expected ... I can hardly wait for the next one!

—Brian White

## What a Ministry Opportunity!

We at Ringwood Church of Christ Community Ministries wish to enter into a mutually rewarding ministry partnership. If your desire is to provide a Christian role model and live-in support for two female VCE students in Ringwood, Vic, please contact us. Ideally we are looking for either an assertive married couple or two single women with good communication and independent living skills. Training and support, tailored to your needs, will be provided as required by our Welfare Worker. Your rental, gas and electricity usage will be subsidised in appreciation of your role in this special ministry. Please feel free to contact Roger Woodlock on (03) 9840 9436 (BII) or (03) 9870 1244 (AII) if you require further information.

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Applications close 30 September 1997.

Expressions of interest or inquiries should be directed to:

David Markham  
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## Executive Secretary

An exciting opportunity exists to join the team providing executive services to Melbourne Citymission. If you are looking for a challenging and stimulating position, have great computer/dictaphone skills, are able to work independently and maintain your sense of humour under pressure then this is the position for you. Full or part time—hours negotiable. Please obtain position description by telephoning Ms Sue Williams on (03) 9489 9666. Written applications, which close on 15 September, should be addressed to: The Human Resources Manager, Melbourne Citymission, PO Box 1200, North Fitzroy Vic 3068.



## A World View

(Information courtesy WCCC.)



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# Psalms—A Discovery in Spirituality

RUTH MAY

**W**alter Brueggemann, an Old Testament scholar, claims that just as human life consists of seasons of wellbeing, times of anguish and hurt and moments of wonderful surprises when "we are overwhelmed with the new gifts of God, when joy breaks through despair", so too the Psalms fall into these categories. I have come to understand that we can only respond fully to the new gifts of God in our lives when we allow our bodies, our senses and our total beings to respond to him. \*

## *Allowing our senses to respond to him*

Our culture does not like us to face times of pain and disappointment in our lives. Instead we are committed to needing to feel successful and positive. However, in the Psalms of lament we find an articulation that is honest and open that does allow us to express those feelings of deepest hurt and anger, and to understand that those feelings are part of living. \*

But there are also wonderful hymnic psalms that celebrate the times when we move from despair into new possibilities of God's blessings upon us. I believe that the doctrine of original sin that the Christian Church has preached has prevented God's children from truly enjoying and entering into the blessings that God promised to his creation from the beginning of time. Genesis tells us how pleased God was with all of his creation. His blessings are promises of good things, of a fruitful land, healthy children and wholesome living (Deuteronomy 8:7-10).

These blessings have always been concerned with the social, political and material welfare of all of God's people and they have always been available to them. \*

Savour or **taste** the blessings of God in your inner being as you read them in Psalm 104:31-34. There the writer celebrates the joy he experiences as he praises God in his daily life. The Psalmist knows that his praise and worship will bring pleasure to God. Savour the reliability of God's goodness toward you in the provision of your daily necessities for life itself in this extraordinary creation. \*

Be intentional and **hear** God in silence, a silence that allows outside distracting images to recede and a quietness to take over, a quietness deep and not dominated by busy thoughts, a quietness that will bring calmness and true renewal in stressful times (Psalm 34:4-12). Breathe in and out quietly and relax with the rhythm of that life-giving movement in your body. \*

Feel God as you respond to the rhythm of your body, your heartbeat, the throb of life that is a unique blessing from God. Perhaps our bodies will want to respond and dance as we experience him. Dancing before God was always a very natural activity in the Old Testament, but the influence of the Victorian era gave it a feeling of impiety and even sexual overtones. As a consequence the joy of worship had to be expressed quietly or at most with singing, but the rhythmic sensation and response of joy with dance, drums and music is a powerful path to worship (Psalm 150). The rhythm of life, like the trees, needs to pulse, to clap and celebrate God. \*



Our response to God should be like a fragrant **smell** (Psalm 141:1-2), which permeates into every corner of the place where we are, which brings a special beauty to places and people, particularly after distressful happenings. \* Come and (really) see what God has done (Psalm 66:4-5) in his creation! See his work in your daily experience, in your own garden, in your life. \*

It may be possible to attend worship with a cold heart, but it is impossible to truly worship God unless our whole being is totally involved. The Psalms have introduced me to a special worship, a path to feel God's presence within my body, my senses in my daily experience. They vibrate and pulsate with life and vigour and respond to my inner being in an irresistible manner. \*

### *References*

- Brueggemann, W., *The Message of the Psalms*, Minneapolis, Augsburg, 1984
- Brueggemann, W., *Praying the Psalms*, Minnesota, Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 1989
- Fox, Matthew, *Original Blessing*, Sante Fe, New Mexico, Bear Books, 1983
- Ruth May is the minister at the Prospect, SA, church.



# Spirituality

## A Long Spiritual Journey

JEAN MILNE

**T**here's a popular phrase around our church: "We are spiritual beings having a human experience!" When our minister Paul used this Teilhard de Chardin quote in a memorable sermon, it evoked an excited response in many. It certainly grabbed me—"Yes, that's it!"—a simple phrase that encapsulated my learning from a multitude of people approaching the end of this life. With or without "religion", the spiritual nature of their being was so often apparent. \*

I remember my first comprehension of this as I talked with a lady who, even through treatment, had always looked beautiful and was now physically so diminished. But, as she eagerly explored her spirit need, reformulating a long-discarded faith, a new, special beauty shone from her. What I saw was a beautiful picture shining from a tatty, disintegrating frame, a once ornate frame that had tended to overshadow the painting. \*

### *Why else is this journey one of continuing discovery and delight?*

It seems that while the body and mind are in good form, the spirit is often neglected. But then as the body diminishes the spirit has the potential to flourish. It flourishes in this time of necessarily letting go of control. That is a situation we fear, yet vulnerability and helplessness can be a powerful force with God in the equation. My first experience of the extra dimension of God in control was life-changing! What I was trying to do felt beyond me, but I knew people were praying for me and I learnt about "letting go and letting God". \*

Now, in these advancing years, I have a long spiritual journey to reflect on, and although the physical aspect of the human experience is making itself felt, the continuing spiritual discovery is invigorating. Every part of the journey has been important—the life happenings, the varying degrees of commitment, the "highs" when it felt like I was hitching a ride and the "lows" when I chose to sidetrack into various culs-de-sac (attractive, but ultimately deadening). The numerous times of emotional pain usually resulted in real awareness of the presence of Jesus (almost like being transported by angels' wings). Probably the most hazardous times have been when the feeling is "things are going well"! \*

Apart from the grace of Jesus, why else is this journey one of continuing discovery and delight? A lifetime of Christian learning, of being part of the church, the Body of Christ, is a basic reason. I believe the call to be Christian encompasses growing through the Word, prayer and worship, living as redeemed, spirit-filled people and being active in mission. The sure ground from which I live and work is the revelation of God and his love in the life of Jesus, the experience of Christ alive as Lord of my life and the certainty of the direction of the Holy Spirit. \*

This is stable, solid ground, but the living experience is not static but dynamic! For me, from this base, there is vitality in openness—to new expressions, to the wonder of individuality, to a new appreciation of the awesome mystery of God instead of the limiting human understanding, to setting aside the man-made trappings of our faith, to expecting God's continuing revelation. Pushing the boundaries can feel risky, like stepping off a cliff, but holding on



too tightly means never to fly. But this spiritual experience is only the beginning. Unlike in some cultures, for the Christian the goal transcends personal wholeness. Relating to others, with an emphasis on listening, is paramount. The vertical relationship must, of course, be pre-eminent. Relating within the church community serves to nourish, encourage and equip each other as we relate to the wider community, meeting, listening and walking with them for a time. \*

I'm grateful for the diversity of spiritual expression in our congregation, for the opportunity of growing through small groups, for mutual sharing with young people and for a wide spectrum of worship expression. Reflecting on a recent worship service I felt it encompassed the whole of my journey. Within the contemporary worship with modern songs and drama, John and I sang "My Jesus I Love Thee", a hymn precious to my mother and therefore known to me from childhood. Despite the outdated language it was meaningful. \*

In being open to change and moving on, I find the past is part of the present. God builds on every faith experience, and anything that is truly of him is never lost. So the journey continues! \*

Jean Milne is an elder at the Doncaster, Vic, church.



# Spirituality

## To Shudder Properly

MICHAEL FROST

**T**hese days it seems, in church at least, that we have largely lost our capacity for reverence—we rarely feel our breath snapped off by something that demands a response of sheer awe. And yet the need to encounter the holy, to be overwhelmed by reverence and awe seems to be an abiding human need. We keep searching out experiences that take our breath away, that bring us face to face with a reality greater than ourselves. Sadly, in these seeker-sensitive days, church appears to be increasingly unlikely a place to find such an experience. \*

### *To encounter the holy seems to be an abiding human need*

When people met for worship in cathedrals with grand high ceilings and breathtaking stained glass, wonderful architecture and sculpture, there was a clear experience being sought. It went like this: God is awesome and majestic, huge and overwhelming and you—you Christians—are small and inconsequential. The cathedral experience tended to put things in perspective. It reminded us that there are realities greater than us, that God is awful and worthy of our worship. \*

From the 1970s the church began to change dramatically in this respect. By this stage the Baby Boomers started to make their presence felt. As an enormous generation, the Boomers suffered from a sense that they never really mattered as individuals. Their schools were packed, their streets were teeming with kids their age and popular culture used them to turn the advertising dollar. This massive generation yearned for experiences that made

the individual feel important in this sea of teenaged humanity. \*

The churches recognised this spiritual longing in young people of the seventies to be told they mattered, that their presence or absence made a difference to somebody, and they shifted their emphasis from the majesty of God to the sacredness and importance of the individual. Emphasis on person-to-person relationships, on the difference one person can make, became important precisely because it was so rare elsewhere in society. \*

So, as a result, the churches lowered their ceilings and threw out their pews. They moved out of the cathedrals and developed the "boutique church", emphasising the "meeting of your needs" and catering for the every whim of each family. All this might seem reasonable at one level, but at another there was a cost to individualising the worship experience. In the process of celebrating the individual, the yearning for an awe experience that made you feel small was lost. \*

I am not meaning to suggest that we should all build cathedral-style buildings. We can have awe experiences in less than awesome spaces. It's just that too many church services don't inspire awe or reverence. And so we turn elsewhere to meet our need for a spirituality that puts things in perspective. Too often church makes us feel like the centre of the universe, but deep within our spirits we know it's not true and we desire an encounter with otherness to confirm it for us. I agree with American author Garrison Keilor when he says, "If you can't go to church and, for at least a moment be given transcendence, if you can't go to church and pass briefly from this life into the next—then I can't see why anyone would go. Just a



brief moment of transcendence causes you to come out of church a changed person." \*

Rudolph Otto, a German theologian, writing in 1917, listed a number of responses normally associated with an awe-encounter with God. They include a sense of majesty, its inapproachability and a feeling of fascination, including both fear and attraction. He also speaks of a feeling that can never be adequately described, only experienced, the feeling that we are important enough to be invited to encounter the Holy, but in its presence we are overwhelmed and made aware of our smallness. Such experiences of the transcendent are not only frightening, they are strangely comforting. We need them. Sadly, Otto concluded, "Modern man cannot even shudder properly." \*

If we only knew what it is we are yearning. We could see that our search is for God's comforting, yet frightening presence. The New Age movement continues to call its adherents to a daring, dis-comforting, risky encounter with an unknown god (or gods). We should, in response, reclaim our call to a Christian spirituality that teaches us to shudder properly. \*

Michael Frost is a lecturer at Morling College, the Baptist theological college of NSW.



# Spirituality

## Who We Are Is How We Pray

TED KEATING

**A** colleague of mine spends a whole week at a retreat in silence. Others tell me of sitting on a beach all day praying and contemplating. Others go for long walks in the bush talking and listening to God for the duration of the stroll. Why doesn't such an approach to prayer and meditation come as easily to me? \* Is there something inadequate about my spirituality? Should I book in for the next retreat run by the Trappist monks to get myself sorted out? \*

*The dreamers, the action types, the extroverts and introverts all need to appreciate that what is helpful for one person's spiritual development may not be as helpful to others*

I started to feel a little more relaxed about my inadequacies when I read a book by my namesake, Dr Charles Keating, *Who We Are Is How We Pray*. He comforted me by telling me that I shouldn't expect my approach to contemplation to be the same as others who are of differing personality types. I, according to the Myers Briggs classification, would be an INTJ. For those uninitiated into Myers Briggs personality types, an INTJ "handles reality with decisiveness based on reason and logic. Their decisions in their inner

lives are also made with reason and logic rather than with feeling." Therefore my prayer approach may be more focused than others. A week with the Trappist monks may produce more frustration than spiritual blessing for a personality type like me. \*

Dr Keating told me not to pursue an approach to prayer and contemplation more suited to "poets or dreamers". He urged me to pray "in action", to deal with the "here and now". He told me that I would probably be a non-conformist as far as spiritual disciplines were concerned and that my Christian friends would probably be surprised by my approach. (Introverts often surprise their friends because of their "hiddenness".) \*

By implication he told me to buy the writings of Saint Thomas More, who was a political being and an activist. Other personality types may find his approach to be inadequate. An extrovert who makes decisions in the light of feelings and emotions might need to look elsewhere, but More would be ideal for the INTJ type. \*

But just say things were different! If I had been born to different parents, or was the first or last to arrive in my family, or grew up in a different environment, I could be classified as an extroverted person who makes decisions based on my sensitivity to other people's feelings. I could be completely disinterested in schedules, timetables or order. I could have a wonderful eye for detail—a classic ESFP (an extroverted, sensing, feeling perceiving type)! Would Dr Keating expect me to appreciate the same approaches to prayer and meditation? \*



No! The writings of Paul and John, particularly the teaching about love being a commitment of the whole person, would have greater appeal to such a personality. Love would be a spontaneous response rather than an act of will. This personality type would be very much at home with many of the prayers in the Psalms with their response to the immediate human need. Such people would be more open to the suggestions of spiritual direction and "defined steps leading to holiness" (p. 64) whereas my personality type would be more inclined to ask, "Is there a better way of doing this?" \*

So, the dreamers, the action types, the extroverts and introverts all need to appreciate that what is helpful for one person's spiritual development may not be as helpful to others. \*

Thank you Dr Keating. You have helped me to relax in my prayer and contemplative life, for you reminded me that "Who we are is how we pray". \*

C.J. Keating, *Who We Are Is How We Pray (Matching Personality and Spirituality)*, Twenty Third Publications, Mystic, Connecticut, 1987.

Ted Keating is the senior minister at the Wollongong, NSW, church



# Spirituality

## Finding God in the Silence

ROGER RYALL

**S**everal years ago I went away to my first silent "retreat". Until then, I had unconsciously accepted the idea that when Christians worshipped God nothing is "happening" unless someone is speaking words—whether in a sermon or in verbal prayer. Until that time, silence (especially large "chunks" of it) was unfriendly. \*

We had a wise leader. Before he led us in prayer (yes, verbal prayer!), he said, "We are about to begin two days of silence together. During this time, the fact that nothing special has to happen for you is probably the very reason why it will." How right he was! Those introductory words helped me to relax, and to find that the silence of the next 48 hours (in community) was not something that had to be endured, but could be enjoyed! God was in it, and spoke to me—through prayer, silent reading and even through play (romping in a paddock like a five-year-old). \*

*I had the idea that when Christians worshipped God nothing is "happening" unless someone is speaking words*

During the past two years in WA, Betty and I have been in a Churches of Christ group that has been learning more about the many forms of contemplative prayer. This has been a very liberating experience for us. One of these methods is *lectio divina*—divine reading of the Bible. \*

For any given passage of scripture, we each silently read the passage through.

We then come back to the start and re-read—stopping wherever our attention is "arrested" by a word or a phrase. You take it that, wherever you stop, God wants to speak his word to you through that word or phrase. You allow your mind to focus on that single word, and to think of other Bible passages where it occurs. (No, you don't reach for a concordance!) \*

We don't get fussed if God has "arrested" our attention by a word in the middle of (say) verse one! We are freed from any sense of having to "finish" the whole passage. We are not so much reading God's word in the Christian scriptures as allowing God's word to "read" us and to clarify our need to hear his voice (of challenge, of forgiveness or of direction). \*

This dialogue with the text moves you to ask, "What does the text lead me to say to God?" So, this is the moment of prayer that normally leads on to the step of contemplation. You begin to see the world and life through the eyes of God and the eyes of the poor. As the hymn-writer put it, "Nothing in my hands I bring." \*

When you do a *lectio divina* your focus is not to interpret the texts, not to increase your knowledge of its contents nor to experience extraordinary things, but to discover the relevant word that God wants to speak to you today in your current situation. \*

Another type of meditative prayer is what we owe to Ignatius, a sixteenth-century Christian leader. The Ignatian method is one that encourages our spiritual imagination. There is a great freedom in this method but, like any other valuable means of communion with God, a real discipline is involved. \*

For example, take the story of Jesus' transfiguration. It is very tempting al-



ways to concentrate on the light that Luke 9:28–43 sheds on the ministry of Christ. But there is considerable value in imagining separately that we are one of his chosen disciples—Peter, James or John. Alternatively, can you identify with one of the twelve who was not invited to the mountain of transfiguration? \*

What is God saying to us, as we identify with a particular person in the Biblical record? What kind of attitude or feelings does this "identification" disclose to us? Are we willing to let God address these things in our inner life? (Healing? Forgiveness? Renewal of faith? A feeling of alienation?) \*

Authors whose books provide valuable insights include Richard Foster, William Johnston, Sheila Cassidy, Henri Nouwen, Joyce Huggett and J. Neville Ward. \*

In a new experience of Christian community, Betty and I have started on a significant journey of contemplative prayer. Keeping a spiritual journal helps to "chart" this journey. We are learning to value God, not just for what he does and gives, but for who he is. \*

Roger Ryall is ministering to two of the Churches of Christ homes in WA and is State President of the Association of Health and Welfare Chaplains of Australia (WA Chapter).



## Classifieds

### GOLDEN WEDDING

**SMITH, Lindsay and Ruth**, celebrating 50th wedding anniversary with relatives and friends at a luncheon, Wattle Park Chalet, Sunday, 31 August 1997. Details (03) 9580 6774.

### DEATHS

**BISCHOFF, Muriel Olive**, on 23 July 1997 at Caulfield Medical Centre. Loved wife of Harold (deceased), special auntie and loving mentor of Gwenda Rogers and Eunice Reidy.

**OLDFIELD, William McCance** On 21 July, from his home, Bill left us. We miss him and remember him with love and gratitude for his life: StClair, Iain, Zaita and Richard and families. Eldest son of (Dr) Bert and Jessie Oldfield (both deceased), late of Dhond Hospital, India.

### HOLIDAYS

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## Coffee Break Sinking or Swimming?

CAROL PRESTON

**D**oes it seem to you that we are forever going through changes of one kind or another? Learning to negotiate life's transitions is one of the skills of living that we most need in our times. Have you thought recently about the number of changes that have occurred in your life over the past few years? Often these are natural and inevitable changes: children getting to school age or growing up and moving out of home, moving to a new place for employment, retirement, physical changes such as menopause, or other adjustments to the "maturing" process. Some of the changes are more unexpected, such as illnesses, accidents, retrenchments or relationship breakdowns. \*

### *The challenge of facing transitions*

We hear the term "mid-life crisis" often these days, and though we might resist the idea, it is not unusual to find people seriously evaluating life around their late thirties and forties, wondering if it's not too late to begin some things they have not yet had the opportunity to experience, wanting to find greater fulfilment. With life expectancy increasing there are many new experiences available in the second half of life, and it's worth pondering what God might lead us into as we approach those years when some of the tasks of earlier life are completed. \*

However, what it all requires of us is a great deal of flexibility, a capacity to risk, a willingness to move on from what is comfortable and familiar, to let go of



those ways of being that were appropriate before these transitions confront us. Moving from one phase of life to another almost always means going through a space between familiar places, where we feel really wobbly and insecure, where we are no longer sure of anything much. It's a bit like I imagine Peter felt after he had stepped out of the boat and was walking toward Jesus on the water, or like the Israelites felt after leaving Egypt and finding themselves in the wilderness. You see, even positive and sought-after changes challenge us to consider who we are, what strengths and weaknesses we have, what resources we have for moving on and making adjustments, and what new things we need to learn. Sometimes the temptation to go back is great, and the risk of being in the wilderness seems overwhelming. \*

I believe the challenge of facing transitions is one of our greatest learning experiences, a time for growth in faith, and opening ourselves to new potential within ourselves, a time for God to do a new work within us. Join me next month. I'd like to share some things I feel are helpful about going through the wilderness space. \*

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Sponsored and organised by  
Leadership Towards the 21st Century Committee



# Media Matters

## Vienna Remembers (Part 2)

VINEY LONGTHORP

**T**he study of personalities aside, it is in the "inwardness" of the music of Schubert and Brahms that the real interest lies. It has been said that, "If Mozart was music then Schubert was song." The early nineteenth century was a propitious time for the emergence of a great songwriter. Piano technology meant an affordable consumer durable so there was a demand by the emerging middle classes for songs for home entertainment. Schubert himself had excellent models to work from in the songs of Haydn and Scarlatti. In addition, German literature had undergone massive reform in the hands of Schiller and others. Thus the stage was set for the appearance of the lied as an art form and Schubert was on hand to bring it to perfection. \*

However, technical and social trends do not a genius make. From within Schubert's creative brain the song came alive as never before—he made it possible for both singer and accompaniment to perform as equal partners. His songs possessed deep emotional expressiveness yet followed coherent musical

forms. Thus in his "Pigeon Post" we are at one with both the delight and the anticipation of the swain as he waits for a letter from his beloved. Then we rage in frustration with the sad wanderer in "Impatience". \*

### *The divine harmonies of Schubert and Brahms*

To get an inkling of Schubert's achievement in song one should listen, say, to "Hark, Hark the Lark", said to have been written at one sitting after he had glanced through a volume of Shakespeare, and then listen to his "Ave Maria", set to the words from Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake". These and some 600 others have become the greater part of the world's heritage of song. In these songs, every setting seems so right, teasing out the feelings in every poem. Schubert is one of very few composers who are for all moods and all seasons. \*

And the same could be said about Brahms. The great

Neville Cardus said of him, "If I was compelled to go and live for years on a desert island, and if I were allowed to take with me only one composer, I think it would be Brahms. He might not satisfy all my moods but he would attend to most of them." \*

He came at a time in European artistic development expressing "the nature of reality" of the time as only great artists and prophets can. Brahms retained the earlier classical forms of music but instead of infusing them with the earlier feelings of the heroism of the Napoleonic age, he filled his music with the lyric romanticism that was expressive of the new sense of nationalism. He did this using the folk tunes and folk idioms of the day. Brahms was a deeply spiritual person but as with all other feelings he did his best to hide it, such was his reticence. But he could not hide his feelings when he wrote his music. His *German Requiem* established his reputation, and in it "he touched a point of sublimity that had not been reached since Beethoven." I agree with Kay McLennan of the ABC's "For the God Who Sings" that the chorus based on Psalm 84, "How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings", addresses the deep spiritual yearnings in all people. \*

As Alec Robertson wrote: "No wonder that there attaches to [the artist] a special dignity. He creates as an associate of God



making use of created matter ... Furthermore he has seen more deeply than other people, and has discovered, in reality, spiritual radiations which others are unable to discern." \*

And as Keats saw, it is a priest-like task. The artist, whether he knows it or not, is consulting God when he looks at things" and, "Every spiritual splendour is a promise and a symbol of the divine harmonies of the Gospel." \*

This year concerts and recitals in many parts of Australia are giving prominence to the music of Schubert and Brahms. Consult your radio guides for broadcasts by the ABC and those FM stations that specialise in classical music. Recorded music of Schubert and Brahms is as near as your local CD shops. The more accessible works are: Schubert—the song cycle "Fair Maid of the Mill", the Trout Quintet and the Moment Musical—and Brahms—Violin Concerto in D, the Clarinet Quintet and Variations on the St Anthony Choral.



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## DEATHS

• Gladys Thelma McFarlane, **Kaniva, Vic** • Sylvia Merry, Robert Merry, Trixie Maiden, **Taree, NSW** • Phyllis Kelly, **Carnarvon, WA** • Myrtle Gray, **Knoxfield, Vic** • Ross Clifford, **Hobart, Tas** • Frank Bell, Eileen Blackeby, Dell Hill, **Grote St, Adelaide**

## BAPTISMS

• Verity Gilbertson, **Hillside Christian Fellowship, Bathurst, NSW** • John Whittle, **Springvale, Vic** • Katherine McBride, **Prospect, SA** • Matthew Van Der Ende, Andrew Gleeson, **Knoxfield, Vic** • Naomi Parker, **Boronia, Vic** • Jonathan Taylor, **Alexander Heights, WA** • Jana Pastikova, Nathan Lane, **Tweed Heads-Coolangatta, NSW** • Dave Kaehne, **Hobart City, Tas**

## OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words  
**BELL, Frank Reginald**

Born to Harold and Mary Bell (13.4.21), baptised at 16 years of age by G.T. Train at Forestville (now Black Forest) Church of Christ. He served in the army and trained as a motor mechanic. He was in Darwin at the time of the bombing during World War II. He married Heather. They had one son, Graham. Frank had many interests including orchids and china painting. He was strong in his faith and was a lay preacher. Frank was known as the lolly man at church. He died after a long illness. Frank is missed by all, especially his wife and son.

—PJA

**BLACKEBY, Eileen Maude**

Born to Arthur and Maude Downs (31.7.12) she was baptised in her early teens and married Bill Blackeby at Grote St, Adelaide, on 22.1.35. This began a partnership that lasted 62 years. They celebrated their silver, golden and diamond wedding anniversaries. Eileen had a very active church life, participating in CWF and Dorcas

auxiliaries. She was methodical and economical and a most gracious and gentle lady. Now safe in the arms of her Lord. A life devoted to her large family (children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren) and God.

—PJA

**HILL, Adella (Del) Beatrice**

Born Salisbury (8.3.02). Nursing became her vocation. She was children's night nurse at RAH 1936-50. She trained as a Salvation Army officer and relinquished role to look after her ailing sister. Married Ernest Hill (same as her maiden name) on 29.1.52. He died in 1961 so she was widowed for over 30 years. Del was faithful in her Christian life and through her nursing many lives benefited from her ministry. She was loyal member of the Grote St, Adelaide, church.

—PJA

## WA

**CARNARVON (Gavin Law Davis)** Les Nixon of Outback Patrol held meeting at church & Christian School ... Team from Adelaide College of Ministries appreciated, Tom Golding preaching & Hillery Keane addressing ladies meeting sharing her testimony ... Two families travelled 900 km to Hedland for celebration of new facilities ... Elders' Board planning outreach program for isolated settlement of Gascoyne Junction in December.

**ALEXANDER HEIGHTS (K. Laffer)** Mike Birch led baptismal service, 27 July ... Leadership team developing strategy for events leading up to start

of Keith Wiggins's ministry in January ... Meanwhile K. Laffer (interim) has been appointed to H. S. teaching post ... 6 members attended Rick Warren Seminar 18 July ... Excellent attendance (76) Seeker Service 3 August. K. Laffer brought fitting message ... Second-hand photocopier helping efficiency of communication in district.

## SA

**GOOLWA (Chris Ambrose)** Sunday forum on multiculturalism well received ... CWF 20 cent family fun night raised \$250 & was enjoyed by all ... "Music Intensive" weekend has helped church musicians ... June camp well attended ... Congregation numbers down due to sickness & folk on holidays, including Ambrose family ... Friendship Centre continues to thrive ... Working bee held to clean up church & grounds.

**PROSPECT (Ruth May)** Congregation & Friendship Group shared a valuable time of worship, items, singing & fellowship with meal together on Sunday afternoon ... During July First Sunday Focus service Katherine McBride baptised. Our young musicians led the service & many of Katherine's friends attended ... Later in July at Hymnfest we sang some of the great old hymns from our hymn book. Musicians from Magill led the singing.

**STRATHALBYN (Grant & Julie Simpson)** Church rejoicing. New minister Paul & Elizabeth Smalley & family arriving from WA. House available, induction service & tea, Milang 31 August ... Grant, Julie, Bronwyn &

Shannon Simpson farewell 24 August ... Very successful night, soup, savouries, slices & singalong at Garwood home raised \$203 for Community Care ... AGM 17 August ... Julie recovering from illness necessitating hospitalisation ... Baby Esther Lewis dedicated.

## VIC

**KANIVA (Paul Bauer)** Church members enjoyed fellowship & luncheon at Bordertown church to hear FAB speaker, Max Wright ... Minister attended seminars addressed by Ched Myers ... Congregation combined with Uniting Church for Bible Sunday. Address by Bible Society representatives John & Maisie Hartwich ... Several members on holidays in Queensland ... A special poem was written by Bess Crouch to mark the 70th anniversary of the CWF.

**SPRINGVALE (John Carmichael)** Night services discontinued to allow Spanish group to consolidate Saturday & Sunday night services ... Home fellowship groups held on 1st & 3rd Sundays at 7pm ... John Whittle baptised on birthday with birthday morning tea party after service ... Singing group "Praise Team" helping with worship singing at morning services ... Play group attracting 30-40 children each week.

**BORONIA (Keith Milne, Bruce Moore, Simon Risson)** CCTC Forum conducted by Stephen Curkpatrick & panel ... Keith & Laurel Milne both been unwell ... Elders examining results of National Church Life Survey ... Good Companions & Explorers showing growth ... Glen Wegner addressed Pastoral Care group ... Increasing demand for welfare from community a concern ... Workshop on evangelism conducted by Mark Riches ... Recent morning service addressed by four members on "The Future Direction of Our Church" **KNOXFIELD (Malcolm Gray, Elaine McLeod, Jason McChayne)** A presentation made to Malcolm & Jill Gray thanking them for six months' interim ministry. Then the church invited

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# Church News

Malcolm to be our new senior minister, and he was inducted by John Gilmore ... Elaine McLeod has been preaching at Gardiner while their minister is on holidays ... Jason McCheyne preached sermon on gambling prior to a seminar sponsored by our Hodos group.

**TOOTGAROOK (M. Giezendanner)** Attendance good, despite much sickness & many away on holiday ... Ministry of Mal & Eleanor deeply appreciated ... Australian Church Women Fellowship Day held at church, speaker Nola Baker ... CWF gave \$100 to Wongabeena working with intellectually disabled people in the Peninsula ... Doug Reed back at church recovering well after stroke ... Izzy Brandsma in Coleman Park Nursing Home.

**HARCOURT (Roy Armitage)** Forty attended ministers dinner. Thanks to ladies for their help ... Youth club growing with over 30 on roll. 45 members & parents attended footy at MCG ... Sad to grieve with Stan & Betty Leversha after the death of their son through cancer ... Church looking to buy a sound system as organists non-existent at present.. Church to hold its first youth service with Castlemaine, followed by barbecue.

## NSW

**HILLSIDE FELLOWSHIP, BATHURST** (Glenn Cumbers) Minister, elders & deacons attended Rick Warren conference in Sydney ... A number of our youth attended youth camp at Stanwell Tops ... Church held very successful "Christmas in July" on 26 July with 90 attending ... 27 July youth service held, Gordon Barr, Youth Coordinator for NSW, guest speaker, Verity Gilbert baptised at this service ... All home groups commenced common Bible Study by John Bond.

**TAREE (R. Fulton, R.P. Reyes)** Anniversary meetings 29 June well attended, speaker Denis Sweeny. Dinner on Saturday night well catered for by ladies. Items brought by Ruth Crossman & the young people ... New

pastor Rick Fulton welcomed 20 July. His wife will follow after finalising business in USA ... Deepest sympathy extended to the Merry family following the passing of Sylvia on 27 June & Bob 4 July, also to family of Trixie Maiden, who died on 15 July.

**METRO NORTH CENTRE (Franklyn Elliott)** Recent happenings include combined service with Cherrybrook Baptist. Speakers Narelle Cabtree & Gordon Barr ... Guest speaker in July

was Pastor Hal Oxley of Life Ministry, Melbourne ... Special men's breakfast & ladies' coffee & dessert evening at which future plans for church life were presented ... Five from the church attended a leadership conference at Spreydon Baptist Church in New Zealand ... Local speakers on 20 July were Neville Cox & Suellen Lawrence.

**TWEED HEADS-COOLANGATTA** (Bruce Warwick) Mission Month included Jan Christensen bringing

morning message, "Break the Night", challenging program to missionary commitment, curry dinner promoting project to help build church "on the rocks" in Bombay slums, with gold coin offering on this day giving over \$600 for mission projects ... Church concert revealed much hidden talent ... T'n'T organised by CWF raised over \$3000 mainly for missions ... Attendances increasing ... 2 young people baptised.

## COCOA brings HOPE



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

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

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

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

Name: .....

Address: ..... Postcode .....

Amount: \$ .....

Please charge my: ☐ Bankcard ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Expiry Date: .....

Signature .....

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



# Snippets from History Beginning at Jerusalem

GORDON STIRLING

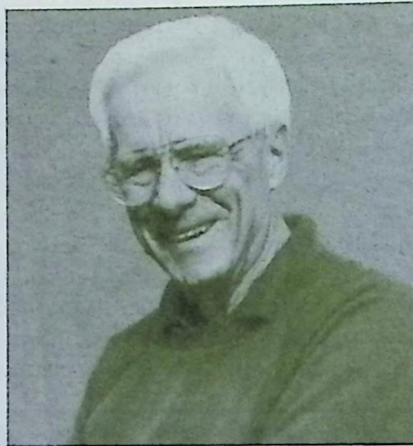
**"G**od's Acre" is over the road from "the Campbell Mansion" in Bethany (West Virginia). It was the burial ground for the families and the descendants of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and latterly for staff members of Bethany College. To enter the cemetery you climb over the stone wall by way of a stile. The first graves you see are those of James and Julia Ann Barclay, with marble headstones, each in the shape of an open Bible. Their son married a daughter of Alexander Campbell. James and Julia Ann were the first missionaries sent out by our American churches. \*

The churches had set up the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849. At 43, James Barclay was a successful doctor. He wrote to the newly established society, "If it is deemed expedient to engage in the cause of foreign missions, cheerfully I will say, 'Here am I, send me!'" \*

His offer was accepted and the couple were sent to Jerusalem. \*

Alexander Campbell wrote at the time, "It is worthy for the cause we plead, to establish our first foreign mission in the identical city where our Lord was crucified and where the gospel was first preached." \*

In their attempt at literalism, the churches failed to see the real meaning of the Great Commission in Acts 1:8, which was saying in effect, "Start witnessing where you are and then spread out from there, world wide." The Jerusalem mission failed because there were so many missionary



causes already there, all fiercely competitive. \*

The next missionary effort was in Africa. Alexander Cross was a Disciple and a slave. He was greatly gifted. The Missionary Society bought him for \$530. They freed him, trained him and sent him to Liberia. He worked there for two years before succumbing to tropical fever. There was another abortive effort in Jamaica. Nothing much could be done during the Civil War and missionary enthusiasm and support died. \*

It only came alive again when the women of the churches saw an opportunity to become significant in a rather male-dominated movement. Stimulated by Julia Ann Barclay and Mary Burnet they eventually set up in 1874 "The Christian Women's Board of Missions". So the shame-faced male membership had to get it all going again, this time successfully. \*

## Introduce Your Friends to an Australian Christian



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

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Address .....

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## The Last Word

When you set out on your spiritual quest, take your body too.

—Jean H. Vandergrift

Sybil: "Yes, she's engaged to an Irishman."

Joan: "Oh, really?"

Sybil: "Yes, but I think he pronounces it O'Reilly."

"Answer the phone!"

"It's not ringing."

"Why leave everything to the last minute?"

First boy (riding along the road on his bicycle): "Is my tyre flat, Wayne?"

Second boy (riding alongside): "It's quite OK, except a little bit at the bottom where it's flat."

The preacher came to call the other day. He said that at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him, "Oh I do, all the time! No matter where I am, if I'm in the parlour, upstairs, in the kitchen or down in the basement, I ask myself, 'Now what am I here after?'"

"Give me a shovel, quick. Bert is stuck in the mud up to his shoetops".

"Why doesn't he walk out?"

"He's in head first."



Years after leaving the circus, Kip the clown still didn't feel fully accepted by his local congregation.