

THE AUSTRALIAN



# Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 100 No. 4, 15 March 1997

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I simply argue  
that the cross  
be raised again  
at the centre of  
the market place  
as well as on  
the steeple of the  
church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified  
in a cathedral between two candles. But on a cross between  
two thieves, on the town garbage heap; on crossroads so  
cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and  
Latin and Greek;  
at the kind of place  
where cynics talk  
smut, and thieves  
curse, and soldiers  
gamble, because  
that is where he  
died and that is  
what he died  
about. And that is  
where Christians  
should be and  
what Christians  
should be about....

George MacLeod





# Editorial

## An Easter Faith

DON SMITH

If one is looking for a story about Easter, one can do little better than recount a story told by Gary Thomas in his book *Seeking the Face of God* and retold by the author in the US magazine *Christianity Today*. He tells how the US Vice President, George Bush represented his country at the funeral of Leonid Brezhnev, the former leader of the Soviet Union. Brezhnev's widow stood motionless by the coffin. As the soldiers touched the lid to close it, she reached down and made the sign of the cross on her husband's chest. Thomas observes that in this citadel of secular atheistic power, the wife of the man who



had run it all hoped that her husband was wrong. Bush was deeply moved by her silent protest. It was an act of both courage and hope. She hoped that there was another life. Her hope was best represented by Jesus who died and rose again. Her hope was that Jesus might have mercy on her husband. Her action, a silent statement, was a profound act of civil disobedience. \* Brezhnev's widow's sign of the cross over her husband was a personal expression of a far deeper issue concerning the cosmic forces abroad at the death and resurrection of Jesus. This was an event of cosmic significance, the great conflict of light and darkness. It is a conflict which has raged in every age. \* George MacLeod's statement on our cover is another expression of that Easter faith. George MacLeod was a Church of Scotland minister born in 1895. He served in the 1914-18 War in a Highland Regiment and won a Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre. In 1938 he led a group of young ministers and lay people to rebuild the Abbey Monastery on the island of Iona, to train leaders for mission. Iona had been the base in 563 for Columba's evangelisation of pagan Scotland. MacLeod's passion was for the evangelisation of men and women. The depression of the 1930s had also left him with a deep social concern. At an international level, he challenged Christians in the western world to link evangelism and social concern as two parts of the whole Gospel. Our extract from his writings carries a challenge for both church and disciple. Use his statement for your own Easter reflection. \*



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# Letters to the Editor

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

## Babel and Pentecost

To the Editor,

When godless men sought to build a tower at Babel that reached to the heavens (Gen 11:4) God confounded their language, preventing communication and concerted action. The Pentecost event was the antithesis of Babel. The presence of God in the Holy Spirit established the authority of the apostles and allowed Jewish listeners from every corner of the Mediterranean world to hear the apostles' words in their own languages (Acts 2:11). Responding to the question, "What does this mean?", Peter went on to explain the gospel and to call his listeners to repent and be baptised as a prerequisite to receiving the gift (not the baptism) of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38) These are foundation doctrines of the Christian Church.

Modern Pentecostalism is a travesty of this. Emphasising the Pentecostal experience rather than the Pentecostal message, Pentecostals misunderstand or ignore Peter's words on the role of baptism (immersion) and the work of the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation.

There are now 46 Pentecostal sects in Australia with a total adherence of around 200,000 (CRA figures). This does not include card-carrying and cultural charismatics. Some of these sects are single churches built around particular doctrines and personalities. So much for the intention

that all should hear and act on the same message!

Pentecostalism, which was quiescent in Australia for many years, owes its current success to its congruence with contemporary, post-modern ideology, with its emphasis on individualism, experience, immanence and "spirituality". New Ageism and Buddhism are growing for related reasons.

—H.E. Hayward  
(Pymble, NSW)

## Not so Gay TV

To the Editor,

I wish to point out that the ABC's televising of Sydney's Gay Mardi Gras gives legitimacy to values which undermine the values of mainstream Australia.

The average Australian demonstrated in the federal election that they are fed up with politicians, bureaucrats and the media pandering to minority groups. Most taxpayers object to their money financing the ABC's televising Sydney's Gay Mardi Gras and supporting activities which undermine mainstream values.

—Laurie Cusack  
(San Remo, Vic)

## A Cappella Singers

To the Editor,

I am a member of the Glen Waverley, Vic Uniting Church with an interest in Contemporary Christian Singing, with a special interest in the "a cappella" style.

I am endeavouring to find out how many of the types of groups are currently singing in Church services in Victoria, with a view to organising an a cappella concert in 1997.

If any of your readers are members, or know of any such groups (2 or more people qualify as a group), and are interested in displaying their musical wares and sharing ideas with people of a similar interest, could they con-

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# Letters to the Editor

tact me on (03) 9560 1576, or write to me c/o Uniting Church, cnr Kingsway & Bogong Avenue, Glen Waverley Vic 3150.

For those who may not have heard of a cappella singing, simply, it's unaccompanied singing in as many parts as you like.

—Alan Cook  
(Glen Waverley, Vic)

## Australian Hymn Book

To the Editor,

Six Australian churches are sponsoring a revision of *The Australian Hymn Book, With One Voice and Sing Alleluia*, to be published in 1999. Those churches are Anglican, Churches of Christ, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and Uniting Church.

Our current representatives on the editorial committee are Shirley Ludgater (Vic) and Warren Murray (NSW).

The second Report, which takes account of the responses to the first Report (1994) and is very comprehensive, is now available from Christian book stores and HarperCollins Religious for \$3.95. For one thing, the proposed hymn book will include hymns, songs, psalms, and (probably) six Communion settings. For another, the Committee is investigating ways of making available overhead transparencies and CD ROM; but the primary resource will still be hard cover.

We need such a hymn book for at least three reasons: one, our present one is so dated that many congregations have abandoned it; two, with all our differences we need such a medium to help bind us together as a people; and three, we need such a common, ecumenical expression of our adoration of God and confession of Christian faith, commitment, and witness.

—Ronald Graham  
(Johnston, Iowa, USA)

## Impressive Statistics

To the Editor,

I was impressed by Don Stewart's statistics in his article "2046 On My Mind" ("AC" 15.2.97).

He indicates that Churches of Christ Care in Queensland has a larger attendance at church each week than any of our other churches in Queensland. (Let's face it, no Churches of Christ in Australia can boast Sunday attendances in the thousands, no matter how many worship centres they may have!)

The only problem with this stunning statistic, as far as the future of Churches of Christ is concerned, is that the vast majority of the people to whom Don is referring will be praising God in Glory in less than 30 years! Meanwhile, those who will replace them in our various Aged Care facilities in Queensland (and other states) are currently the ones who make up about 60% of the attenders in our suburban and rural churches (according to the National Church Life Survey).

In many congregations of course the percentage is much higher. My question: "Without visionary leadership, imaginative church growth strategies and courageous decisions about existing structures, who will take their places 'in the pews'?" That was the whole point of my original article.

—Graham Agnew  
(Marion, SA)

## Update

Dear Reader,

I am sure you will appreciate the comment on our cover by the late George MacLeod. The quotation comes from his book *Only One Way Left* and is used by permission of the Iona Community. George MacLeod was an outstanding figure with an influence of international proportions.

Just this morning I met a Uniting Church minister at our local Post Office who hopes to visit Iona this year.

In June the Iona Community will observe the 1400th anniversary of the death of Columba.

In modern terms we would call him a great church planter. His is a story of great courage, vision and spiritual depth as he led his teams of evangelists and workers from their island base off the west coast of Scotland into what was often a hostile pagan environment.

We invite churches in all states to submit news items for consideration in our main news section. A good photograph also helps.

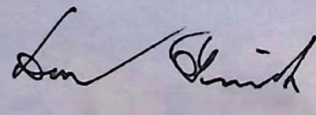
We are attempting to cover every state, but can only do this with your help. Please feel free to contact us by telephone to

discuss any ideas.

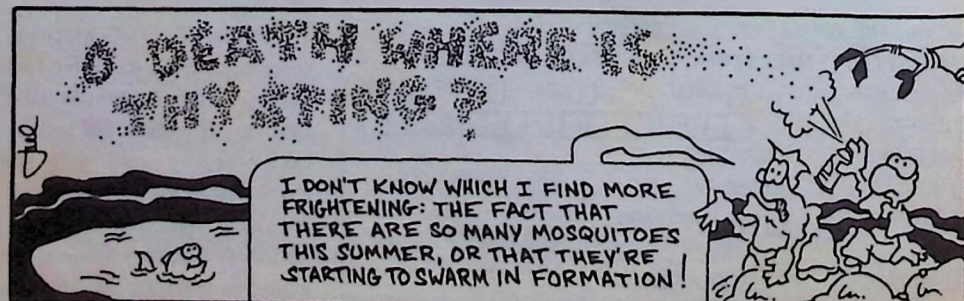
Special reporting forms are available upon request for the 60 word reports carried in the "Church News" section.

We are pleased to welcome Jackie Kelly as one of our regular volunteer proof readers. She joins Anthony Rees in this fortnightly task. Jackie is a member of the Thornbury ministry team. In this issue we also welcome new writers to our feature pages.

Rick Lewis of Telopea, Bruce Armstrong of Toowoomba and Richard Moore of the Baptist Theological College, Perth. Our WA Ministry Training Centre has links with the Baptist College. Readers will be interested to know that Bruce Armstrong is standing as a candidate in the Toowoomba City Council elections. Bruce is linked with a group of eight men and women standing as a group of independents along with another 29 candidates.



## Pontius' Puddle





## Des Nelson's Death

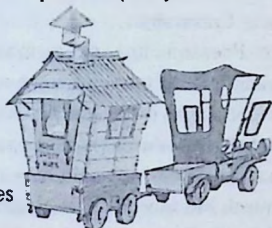
News is to hand that Des Nelson died at the Royal Perth Hospital on 3 March, 1997. A service of celebration and thanksgiving was held at the Kelmscott church on 7 March. Readers will recall our report on the recognition of his ministry in our last issue. —Ed

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### Want to Help Build a New Church?



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## Hundreds Celebrate 125 Years

### Hobart City Church of Christ 125th anniversary



People were racing up ladders and running around with buckets, but it was not an emergency as they'd had 125 years to anticipate. They were preparing for the Hobart City Church of Christ's 125th anniversary celebrations.

Over the weekend 28 February – 2 March, time was spent time reminiscing (photos and memorabilia brought back memories—and surprises!) and looking forward. Gordon Moyes spoke at a music-hall styled program on Saturday evening, and to approximately 300 on Sunday morning. A barbecue, feeding around 210, fol-

lowed with many staying for a hymnfest "From Then Till Now" in the afternoon. Donald Stewart, a previous minister, preached on Sunday evening. People came from inter- and intrastate for the weekend. The attendance of local folk whose association had lapsed was very pleasing. It was suggested they might return again! For many it was also their first visit to our new centre of four years, established when the facilities at Collins Street (after over 100 years) became too small. We look forward to the next 125 years witnessing in Hobart.



## A Decade Further On

**Wollongong's Institute of Contemporary Church Leadership after ten years**

Barry McMurtrie's dream for the Institute of Contemporary Church Leadership that began at the Wollongong Church of Christ, NSW, a decade ago was to train highly motivated people for ministry in the context of one of Australia's most dynamic churches. He felt that theological education had become remote from the local church and stifled the natural enthusiasm for ministry.

Naturally, there was a great deal of criticism, including, "Light Weight!", "Churches of Christ do not need another college right now.", "Where are all of these 'super' students to be found?", "It won't last".

Regardless, ten years further on, the Institute has had a large impact on theological education within Churches of Christ. It stimulated other colleges to rethink their teaching on evangelism and church growth, and to appreciate the importance of understanding larger churches. In 1992 the Carlingford, NSW, college linked with the Institute so that the Wollongong Church of Christ became the first part of a decentralised model of theological training that has now spread to Queensland and Western Australia. This link has also enabled the Institute to teach the degree course associated with the Sydney College of Divinity.

It has also had an impact on the local church. All of the church's team (ten in all), except for the Senior Minister, have studied or are studying at the Institute. The Wollongong Church has "owned" the Institute, and the students who have studied there found an instant community within the church congregation. The interaction has been mutually beneficial.

The Institute has also demonstrated that theological education can be managed economically. Dr Carol Preston, the Dean of the Institute since its inception, is the sole "local" employee, with teaching being supplied by local qualified lecturers as well as visiting staff from Carlingford. Resources, buildings and equipment are all shared with the local church.

The next decade? We will continue to provide a dynamic, church-based model of theological education. As a part of the New South Wales College we are

establishing a Graduate Diploma course for ministers in Church Leadership and Administration with the Sydney College of Divinity. We are examining links with the Arts Faculty of the Wollongong University.

Dr Preston has seen many changes in the ten years since she helped found the Institute. Carol probably had no idea of the impact that this initiative would have on church life as well as theological education in Australia.

—E.C. Keating

*Carol Preston (right)*



### *An exciting paid position now exists for a* **Children's Ministry Director**

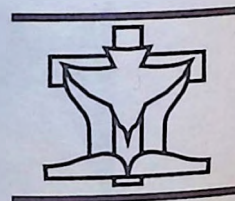
*in a large, growing, rural city church!*

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| <b>Proven</b>       | ◆ Children's ministry record.   |
| <b>Leader</b>       | ◆ Lead, inspire and train teams.  |
| <b>Gifted</b>       | ◆ Specifically for children's ministry, preferably with a music or drama major. |
| <b>Credible</b>     | ◆ Good rapport with children and parents.                                       |
| <b>Committed</b>    | ◆ To the two aims of evangelism and nurture.                                    |
| <b>Trained</b>      | ◆ Probably teacher trained or theologically trained, preferably both.           |
| <b>Up-Front</b>     | ◆ Impressive ability in front of a large congregation.                          |
| <b>Contemporary</b> | ◆ Utilising the latest trends nationally and globally.                          |



Inquiries: Larry Galbraith, Senior Minister, York Street Church of Christ, Ballarat Vic 3350. Phone (03) 5331 1079. Fax (03) 5333 2454.



## Here and There Pointed Reminders

At Camp Hill, Qld, church one of the members threaded a large nail into each order of service to remind participants of the death of Christ on the Cross. Kym Smith writes to say that the nail added a special dimension to the worship and helped make worshippers think about the events of Good Friday.

## Road to Bethany

A Palm Sunday worship experience at CCTC Mulgrave on 23 March at 2.30pm is planned around the events depicted in John 11-12. The material will be viewed from Martha's perspective and presented within a framework of five cameos, threaded together with prose, poetry and music. The event could be a stimulus for the presentation of similar experiences at some later time.

## Passion Play

Over three weekends in March leading to Easter, a Passion Play will be presented at Rosebud South, Vic. The play will be set in the hills of the Mornington Peninsula in an outdoor setting of wooded slopes, a hill of Calvary and the walls of Jerusalem. Audiences of up to 1000 people will be able to re-enact the walk with Jesus in his last days on earth. The play is being sponsored by Lions Club, with proceeds to the Anti-Cancer Council, and will be of interest to readers living within the Melbourne area. Tickets at Bass or the gates of Peninsula Parklands. (Melway's 170 H9)

## Camp Counsellors

Each year a number of young Australians serve in the United States as camp counsellors during the summer months (June-August). New friends and contacts are made, along with considerable experience gained. Information is available from (02) 9223 3366. Applications close late April.

# Colleges Begin Amalgamation

**Colleges abandon age old rivalry for the Kingdom of God.**

An historic gathering of the Faculties, Board and Ministry Teams of Kenmore Christian College and the Churches of Christ in NSW Theological College swept aside artificial state limits last week to propose a new era of cooperation and shared ministry for God.

The weekend conference, in the magnificent countryside of Dorrigo, NSW, sought to explore and evaluate ways of working more closely together, towards the aim of greater quality and efficiency in equipping God's people for service.

After much searching and thorough debate, the meeting resolved to seek the support of both the Queensland and New South Wales Conferences to work towards an amalgamation of the colleges by the start of the 1999 study year.

The direction is a big step towards dismantling state boundaries that have artificially held us apart as Churches of Christ over the decades. It is a victory for "Kingdom" thinking, bringing unity across the two states. Adapting key aspects of the model of training being explored by Carlingford in



*Redefining ministry training in two states*

recent years, Kenmore Christian College has experienced a staggering increase in enrolments compared to the pattern of past years, bringing renewed vigour and excitement to the college.

The proposed amalgamation would allow the sharing of resources between states in a range of areas, from library to lecturers, from administration to accreditation, producing potentially big savings in cost efficiency and management procedures. The amalgamation is not without its questions, and much work re-

mains to define how the arrangement will work in detail. But the "in principle" agreement gives direction, hope and challenge for the future of both colleges in equipping God's people for service.

This proposed amalgamation fits well with the decentralised nature of the training model begun in NSW in 1993, and in Queensland in 1997. In this model, the college goes to the people rather than the people coming to college. Instead of one large central body, the amalgamation will mean increased opportunities to study close to home in either state, while administration and resources are managed more efficiently. Other key features inherent in the new model are a focus on building Christian character and spirituality as a foundation for ministry, and a deliberate attempt to equip all people for ministry, whether that be "full-time professional" or "lay" ministry, in line with the biblical view that all Christians are ministers of the Gospel.

## Begin your Easter experience on PALM SUNDAY

in the atmosphere of the CCTC, Jacksons Road,  
Mulgrave Vic (03) 9790 1000.  
23 March 2.30 pm-4.30pm (includes afternoon tea).

A dramatic interpretation of the journey on  
**THE ROAD TO BETHANY**  
to the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, as  
seen through the eyes of Martha.

Directed by: Janet Thompson, Chris Sharpe,  
Allison Carr and Penny Galbraith.



## From 15 to 350

### Indonesian Praise Church celebrates new facilities

Over 350 people, including tertiary students, church leaders, staff and special guests, crowded into the newly refurbished Malvern, Vic. chapel for a celebration service on 2 March. The service marked the opening of the new facilities.

The Malvern congregation was, until recently, a small group of people of less than 15 members. The buildings were made available to the Indonesian Praise Church, which had already linked with the Victorian-Tasmanian Conference, to accommodate a growing ministry among Indonesian students studying in Melbourne. A more recent decision was made to hand the church buildings over to the new group for their entire use.

Since that time church leaders have been enthusiastically planning for major redevelopment of the facilities. The wall between the chapel and hall was demolished to allow the previous chapel and hall areas to become one large assembly area. A new platform has been installed together with a sound system which is regarded as one of the most modern in Melbourne. Music is a vibrant part of the worship and in-

cludes a band, lead singers and a team of dancers in Indonesian traditional dress. The worship is probably the most lively of any Melbourne metropolitan Church of Christ. Services are in a mix of Indonesian and English.

Present at the service was the Indonesian Consul General for Victoria and Tasmania, Ernest G. Rumayer and his wife. A feature of the service was prayer for the Consul General by elders and leaders. Conference was represented by Allan Emmett of the Properties Corporation and Don Smith. The Properties Corporation assisted with a substantial loan, which the church expects to shortly pay out. Further renovations are planned.

The sermon preached by Indonesian evangelist Yanto Suryadi was a message characterised by intellectual depth and spiritual power. He challenged the largely student audience to a high commitment to serve their country in the future from the highest ideals of Christian faith and service.

Minister Agus Budiman expects that with the current growth of the church it will be necessary to look at even larger accommodation for Sunday worship, while



*Jenny and Johnny Hanafi (left), Ernest G. Rumayer and his wife, Consul General for Indonesia (centre), and Lilian and Agus Budiman (right)*



*Traditional dancers in worship service*

retaining the refurbished facilities for the various needs of such a large group of young men and women. Expectations are that by the end of 1997 attendances will

reach 500 and move beyond 600 in the following year. Agus Budiman is planning for various projects which currently go as far as the year 2001.

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#### Here and There

##### National Church Life Survey

Initial results of the 1996 National Church Life Survey will soon be available. In the next two weeks production of data printouts for 6,582 congregations from 22 denominations will begin. A new book *Shaping A Future* is a major piece of research on the characteristics of vital and effective congregations in Australia. It explodes the myths about what really matters.



## Friday Night's Alright

### Church on Friday nights

For some members of the Preston, Vic, Church of Christ Friday nights have now replaced Sunday mornings as the time to go to church.

Over 20 people have been meeting on Friday evenings for the last two months as part of Preston's strategy to offer an alternative to traditional Sunday church.

It's not simply the time that has changed! In fact, Friday nights are so different to what people normally associate with "church" that organisers have so far been unable to come up with a suitable name for the new venture.

The program starts at 5.30 in the hall as people gather in a circle to sing and welcome each other and any visitors. Next, everyone joins in a game or activity, which during the February heatwave included several water-fights.

Then, accompanied by musicians, the children and adults work together to arrange tables, chairs and food for the evening meal.

This is the highlight of the evening, during which birthdays are celebrated, stories told and communion shared. After, those gathered spend time singing and praying, and then break up into adult and kids learning groups where, instead of a sermon, the emphasis is on discussion and interaction. The evening concludes at 7.30 with everyone joining together for a farewell song.

Already the new Friday program has attracted a number of new people into the church. Its inspiration came from news of a Newcastle church that had successfully run Wednesday night services for over six years.

Having seen its potential to attract younger and non-traditional people into the life of the church, the congregation voted unanimously last November to give the idea a one-year trial.

An important part of the strategy has been ensuring a vibrant Sunday service continues. To this end Bill Sharrock, a 4th year student from CCTC, Mulgrave, was appointed to the ministry team to pastor and develop the Sunday congregation. The church also holds regular combined worship and social events to nurture relationships between the two services.

—Mike Janssen

## Easter March

### Aussie Awakening events



The Easter message will be brought to Australian communities by the "Awakening Movement". Marches will be held in capital cities and numerous regional centres. Marches began in Sydney in 1990 and have grown significantly since that time. Christians will march through the streets with colourful banners, balloons and flags carrying Easter messages. For details phone Fusion in your state—NSW (02) 9716 8277, ACT (06) 282 2226, Qld (07) 3891 1022, SA (08) 3826 5651, WA (09) 221 5574, Tas (03) 6229 1939.




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Advance bookings appreciated



# Easter

## Like a Full Pardon

**BARRY WARD**

**T**he little idol in its box of dirt sits and faces our home as if to challenge us and our God.

Its unseeing eyes and unhearing ears are unheeding of our neighbour's offerings and acts of worship. \*

Our eldest boy Ben has been fascinated by this bright little object and is loaded with questions ... "Is that their god?" ... "Do they worship the real God?" ... "Do they love Jesus?" ... \*

Our answers attempt to relay the truth of the one true God while stressing the need for tact and sensitivity to those yet to know this truth. \*

We cringe as we later overhear him striking up a conversation with the lady next door. "Is that your god?". We hold our breath, expecting our six-year-old to give a straight-from-the-shoulder, uncensored statement concerning their painted piece of plaster ... "Did your god die on the cross?" was his honest inquiry. \*

"No, only Jesus died on the cross," came her simple reply.

As if to say that seals the issue, Ben, satisfied, went off to play. \*

Only Jesus, through the cross, made a way for all people to know God, to find forgiveness and to experience that *Shanti* (peace) which Indians and all people desire. It is this Gospel that is capturing a more attentive and curious audience among the Indo-Fijian people. In unsettled and fearful times many are for the first time exploring the claims of Christ. \*

The beating of the Fijian drums on Good Friday have proclaimed the message of hope now for about a century. The Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities have, for the most part, experienced joy only in the prospect of days off and additional shop sales. \*

Last year at Easter we held an open air showing of the *Jesus* film and were surprised to see over a hundred come. About fifty percent were non-Christian Indians. The openness of their homes and their spiritual sensitivity makes one excited at the possibility

for a large movement towards Christ in days to come. \*

This Easter our little church at Nakasi is intending to hold an early morning service on the banks of the Rewa river. We will celebrate the gift of new life that many of our people have experienced and worship the one who made it possible through the cross. We intend to have a time of recommitment and of sharing personal testimonies. Life change is so obvious in our people, as a recent testimony from one of our ladies well describes. She spoke of the release from the fear of spirits, the freedom of not having to appease her gods through continual sacrifice and of the peace and freedom she and her family now knew. \*

For many of us brought up in Australia, the once for all sacrifice made by Christ on our behalf doesn't always impact as it could. For those who were in bondage to continual sacrifice and fear, it is like a full pardon for someone imprisoned for life. \*

Barry Ward and his family are in Fiji with our Overseas Mission Board. \*





# Easter

## Because There's Life ...

RICK LEWIS

**S**omebody once said that the loss of hope was the worst thing that could happen to a living soul. From what I've observed, that may well be true. Without hope, we are easily crushed by even small setbacks. But while hope burns in our hearts it is possible to bear up under tremendous pressure and pain. \*

The Easter message is filled with hope. We have a God who brings life out of death! \*

The death of Jesus on the cross appeared to be the end of the road. Yet

*We need a hope that is based on more than positive thinking and feeling good about ourselves. That sort of thing is akin to wishing upon a star.*

God was still to have the final word. By his great power he raised Jesus from the dead, thus bringing the most unexpected conclusion to the Easter drama. \*

Now all of us who face "end of the road" situations as we follow Jesus have good reason to maintain hope. Not long ago I wept with a couple in their lounge room as they told me that their marriage was dead and over. It was not what they wanted, but they had given up hope. We remembered together that God had the power to raise their dead marriage back to life. Recovering hope, they recovered the will and the energy to work on their marriage. \*

I spoke to a man recently who had experienced some devastating events and

had almost taken his life. After talking about the past I asked him about his future. He didn't see that he had one. He's tried many techniques for getting his act together: going to seminars, reading self-help books, trying exercise, diets and herbal remedies. Some of these things have been helpful, but none have given him hope. But after he heard the Easter story explained in the Alpha course run at our church, there has been a change. Now he is thinking that maybe God could do something with his life after all. \*

We need a hope that is based on more than positive thinking and feeling good about ourselves. That sort of thing is akin to wishing upon a star. \*

Sadly, that is about all the world has to offer. \*

In God we find a solid basis for hope: the fact that he loves us, has called us for a purpose and has the power to make a way where there seems to be none. \*

At a conference a few months ago I bumped into someone who used to serve as a pastor in our churches. Previously, I had been distressed at how a man could be so crushed through ministry, but this time he was different. There was a sparkle in his eye, the energy was back in his voice and he was talking positively about his future. The turning point for him was the renewal of hope. The door to ministry had been slammed in his face. There seemed to be no way. But now he sees another door opening. \*

It happens in whole churches too. Some of our fellowships have the reputation of being "dead". It's bad enough that these things are said, but it's even worse when the members of those churches believe it and give up hope. Do you think your church is dead?



Then pray for another resurrection this Easter! Plead for God's mighty power to be exerted once again to raise up the body of Christ! \*

Remember Jeremiah's words: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" (Jer 29:11) \*

"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning." (Lam 3:21-23a) \*

There is a hope that goes beyond wishful thinking. It is given to us by the Holy Spirit as he assures us of God's commitment to each of us who trust him. So Paul's prayer for the Romans is mine too for those of you who need a renewal of hope today: \*

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom 15:13) \*

Rick Lewis is minister at our Telopea Church of Christ, NSW.



# Easter

## The Forgotten Cross

BRUCE ARMSTRONG

**T**he closing scene of Lew Wallace's epic novel *Ben Hur* presented on the wide screen, was the crucifixion of Christ. The silhouette of Calvary, where it all took place, shows a cross on either side of Jesus. We were viewing this in a setting that allowed for conversation. One astonished comment was, "There were three crosses, I didn't know there were three crosses!" \*

The details are clear in the New Testament. Yet it could be said that not only have we forgotten the two criminals, we

*Australia has one of the highest teenage suicide rates in the Western World. It could be that the answers we have offered our children have been too shallow.*

have seemingly forgotten the central cross. \*

The intention of Christ in surrendering his life in death provides the answers for life and death, answers which most of us long for. Satisfaction from other sources is usually short-lived. \*

Worldwide, incessant and cowardly acts of terrorism reveal how hostility and hatred will stop at nothing. Attempts to halt this process, even from the most powerful law enforcement agencies, have failed. Hatred is devious. Hatred is insatiable. We have to find new ways of reversing these negative values. The Bible makes it quite clear that the primary process that brings about peace and harmony is the reconciliation ef-

fect by the cross. Anything less is only a truce. Reconciliation allows for positive change. \*

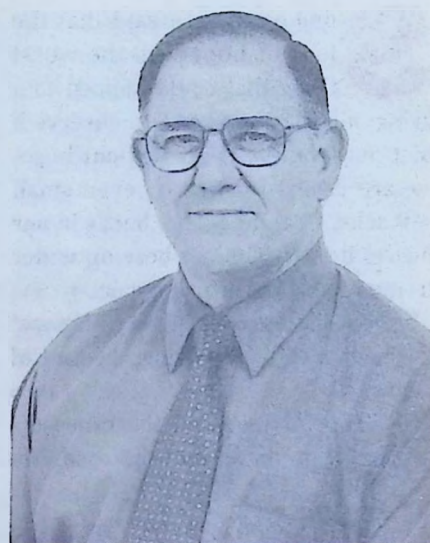
Domestically, while marriages break down and innocents suffer, the solution is not escaping from "the tie that binds", not in pity parties, but in the love of God. Why do we waste community resources questing for solutions in all the wrong places? \*

The Apostle Paul said he would preach Christ crucified. He indicates that "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ". When we are in a right relationship with God the Father, we can expect to live in harmony with our fellows. \*

As ungainly as the cross of Christ might appear on the surface, Christ crucified can only be ignored to our own detriment \*

The Australian Values Study survey indicated that while some 80% of Aussies believe in God, only 40% translate that into a belief in a personal God. In other words, we are too intelligent to reject the existence of God on available evidence, but fail to earth it into everyday living. It's acceptance of fact, without any commitment to its truth. \*

The result is poor church attendance, with bubble like bulges around the sensitive times of Christmas and Easter. \* United Nations figures indicate that Australia has one of the highest teenage suicide rates in the Western World. It could be that the answers we have offered our children have been too shallow. We need to reconsider the importance of the cross as it applies to their developing lifestyle and quality of life. God is patient, not willing that any should perish eternally. His invitation is open to us to express our factual "belief in God" in the reality of our commitment to him personally as the Sav-



jour of the world. \*

What God has done at Calvary is to defeat Satan's power over us. That "forgotten cross" is the symbol of victory. It is clear that Jesus' death is incomplete without the resurrection. Paul earthed it when he said to the Roman Church, "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly be united with him in his resurrection". \*

Jesus himself never spoke of his impending death without the foretelling of his resurrection. He never thought of the shame without the triumph. His humiliation and his glory were inseparably linked. \*

The resurrection of Jesus gives strength to four great truths:

1. Truth is stronger than falsehood.
2. Good is stronger than evil.
3. Life is stronger than death.
4. Love is stronger than hate. \*

The "forgotten cross" can never be ignored. \*

Bruce Armstrong is Senior Minister of the Toowoomba Church of Christ, Hume Ridge.



# Easter

## Empty Images

STEVE CLARKE

In the 1660s Rembrandt portrayed the crucifixion of Jesus and included himself among those around the Cross, as sharing responsibility for the deed. In the 1960s Andy Warhol painted Campbell's Soup cans. Both works of art serve as powerful symbols in terms of their respective visions of reality. Every society has its symbols, its icons, which tell of its search for meaning. Once a crucified God was our icon; now we stare at Campbell's Soup cans. We were once sinners who crucified Jesus, but now

*What about Warhol and soup cans? They, like us, are empty. In Warhol's world the emptiness is trivialised, In Rembrandt's it is confronted.*

we are merely consumers of canned soup. \*

There is something terribly hollow about modern life. As John Alexander reminds us, "The tragedy of modernity is that we have nothing worthy of worship; the absurdity of modernity is that we go ahead and worship anyway." You see, the issue of what we worship is inextricably linked to our understanding of who we are ourselves. \*

Absent from Warhol is the person, human or divine. For him, we are merely consumers of soup. The can is the object of veneration, itself an absurdity. For Rembrandt, our identity is tied to the crucifixion of this man on a cross; he is the object of veneration and won-

der. Both raise questions of human significance and divine purpose. \*

The absence of the human from Warhol is ultimately due to the absence of the Divine. Without Christ, human beings have no identity. They are merely consumers. In such a world, therefore, all things are ultimately absurd. \*

The presence of the human in Rembrandt is due to the presence of the crucified Christ. It is in him that we discover what our humanity entails. His presence among us speaks of our inalienable value and worth. Our presence at his death speaks of our fallenness and culpability. We are hollow because we are sinful. Rembrandt's painting is full of these rich images. \*

What about Warhol and soup cans? They, like us, are empty. In Warhol's world the emptiness is trivialised, In Rembrandt's it is confronted. \*

At Easter, we are again faced with the question of the meaning of the crucified and risen Christ. In moving from the one-dimensional banality of Warhol to the multidimensional spirituality of Rembrandt, we have to ask, "What do we worship, and why?" \*

As Christians, we worship Christ, crucified and risen from the dead. Why? This is the crucial question in these postmodern times. We have passed from Warhol's 60s image of empty consumerism; but to what? The most commonly cited depiction of the postmodern condition is found in Edvard Munch's painting, *The Scream*. It shows an agonised, tormented figure on a lonely bridge, holding its head in a desperate attempt to shut out the raging violence which surrounds it. The figure is asexual, the swirling background unidentifiable. The only clarity is in the agony of the person—the scream! \* God has heard humanity's scream. It



is the agonising cry of human despair, borne out of human sinfulness. God has come among us, he has confronted the raging violence of our moral and spiritual confusion. The Cross tells us to stop lying to ourselves and admit our fallenness. We crucified him. Yet he bore our sins willingly. \*

It is in this mystery that we come to know the power of the risen Christ. Postmodernism is not asking just for proof of the resurrection, although such proof abounds. It is asking for the meaning of the resurrection. The victory of Jesus over death promises the silencing of the scream. It puts the soup cans back where they belong, on our supermarket shelves. But to comprehend all this, we must stand, with Rembrandt at the cross, own our share in his death, and gaze in wonder at his love. \*

Life does not end at the grave. Seen through the eyes of him who conquered death, life is not a scream, nor is it an empty, impersonal existence. It is taken up in adoration and wonder, in the worship of the one whose life was not only given for us, but is now shared with us. He is risen! \*

Steve Clarke is a lecturer at the Bible College of Victoria.



# Easter

## Crucified in Weakness

**RICHARD MOORE**

**M**any people today have a genuine belief in God. However, faced with human suffering that touches them personally, they are at a loss to understand how a God of love, an all-powerful God at that, can allow such suffering. Often such feelings remain dormant. Sometimes, however, they fester, breeding a deep-seated resentment against God. \* For centuries prior to the coming of Christ, there had been people who felt frustrated and angry at an all-powerful God who demanded particular standards of them, or who permitted certain situations to exist. \*

*As the Psalmist put it:*

*Why do the nations conspire,  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the LORD and his anointed,  
saying,  
"Let us burst their bonds asunder,  
and cast their cords from us." \**

(Psa 2:1-3)

How those opponents would like to have got back at God! Yet, because God is all-powerful, they felt unable to strike at him. The conflict was unequal. If only God could be reduced to human dimensions, they would soon vent their feelings on him! \*

That is precisely what happened during the incarnation. For in Christ's coming, God took on human form. \*It now became possible for those who were so inclined to meet God in a more or less evenly matched contest. In fact, their numbers were such that they had a position of superior strength. \*

In one sense, of course, the appearance of strength among those who opposed God and his Anointed was mere illusion. As the prospect of the cross loomed large, Jesus stated plainly that

there were twelve legions of angels (36,000-72,000 angels!) at his disposal. (Matt 26:53) Yet, by a deliberate act of will, he chose not to call upon them. To have done so would have meant circumventing the fulfilment of Scripture, and defeating God's purposes. \*

We humans find it strange that weakness should serve God's purposes. Yet, thinking of Christ's situation on the cross, the apostle Paul wrote: "He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God." (2 Cor 13:4) \*

*We humans find it  
strange that weakness  
should serve God's  
purposes.*

It was the same apostle who discerned Christ's willingness to submit to the crucifixion in order to accomplish God's purposes. In doing so, Christ did not please himself, but set aside his personal desires for the benefit of others. (Rom 15:1-3a) \*

Paul saw this attitude of Christ's foreshadowed in the Psalms: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me". (Rom 15:3b, citing Psa 69:10) Those who had long wished to insult or reproach God had their opportunity when Christ, "crucified in weakness", hung there before them. Jesus' tormentors had no idea of what he was accomplishing on the cross. In reality, his sacrificial death was the only effective means of addressing the problem of human sin. It alone made reconciliation with God possible. \*

As always, the theology Paul expounded was intended to serve a practical purpose. His remarks about Christ not pleasing himself were written to the



Christians at Rome. Evidently they had a variety of views on a range of matters. Many such matters were matters of indifference; there was no "right" or "wrong" opinion, there was no authentically Christian viewpoint. In such instances Paul urged the "stronger" Christians in the congregation to stop merely pleasing themselves by their insistence that the "weaker" members adopt their personal position. \*

Has this practical theology of Paul's lost its relevance for your congregation, for mine? A careful reading of this whole section of the Letter to Romans (Rom 14:1-15:13) shows that Paul is concerned with those matters on which our fellow-Christians hold differing views. At several points he appeals directly to the cross. We ignore him at our peril, placing ourselves in danger of injuring our fellow-Christians, of ruining someone for whom Christ died, and of destroying no less than God's own work. (Rom 14:15, 20) Let us who would follow the Lord and his Anointed take this as God's message for us this Easter. \*

**Dr Richard K. Moore** is Head of the New Testament Department of the Baptist Theological College of Western Australia and Lecturer in New Testament at Murdoch University.



# Media Matters

## Varied Viewing

VINEY LONGTHORP

**T**he viewing here recommended are certainly varied; two of them, the movies, are an utter delight. The other two are television documentaries, not quite full of delight as much as important statements. \*

It is often said that a good movie is as good as a good book, though we must keep in mind that each have their special ways of affecting our senses and sensibilities. \*

So, from Czechoslovakia comes *Kolya*. The time is 1989 and

thrown together by circumstances. Louka, a virtuoso cellist who has fallen foul of the Party, is barred from playing with top orchestras. Strapped for cash he reluctantly agrees to enter into a bogus marriage with a young Russian woman in exchange for enough money to buy a small car. Louka's real adventures begin when his new "bride" absconds to Germany leaving him with her small son. Kolya speaks no Czech; Louka speaks no Russian. They are forced to cope with each other. As with all films of substance, it is the images which stir the imagination. \*

In one scene, full of pathos, Kolya talks to some Russian soldiers. These boys are beside themselves with joy to hear their mother tongue spoken in a land where all is hostile silence. Again, when the revolution reaches its climax and the citizens in the streets mock the old regime, two policemen who had cruelly interrogated Louka give him a sickly grin as they too are cheering the new order of things. This is real Vicar of Bray turncoat stuff. How lightly are some political loyalties worn. Later there is a heart-stopper scene when Kolya, lost in the Prague underground station, rides up the escalator, his new sandals allowing his socks to protrude. Will they become caught in the stairs at the top? Take my word—this will be your reaction. \*

Above all, in *Kolya* we see the world through the eyes of a five-year-old—all the adult absurdities, conflicts and petty hypocrites. \*

From Iran we have *Gabbeh* (to be released mid-April). It is a simple, lyrical vision of nomadic life in southern Iran. It is intensely visual, in that the im-



*Kolya—full of pathos*

ages predominate, with slender verbal elements. Gabbeh is the name of the central character, an unhappy young woman who yearns for marriage. It is an old story: family demands have kept her from marrying her intended. In this case, her father insists she delays her plan until an uncle finds a suitable bride. Gabbeh dreams that the uncle will be successful. Her own would-be husband remains nothing but a silhouette on a horse, forever framed against the horizon. \*

Though simple, the story is fascinatingly resonant. Whether Gabbeh's state of perpetual yearning is taken as a metaphor for her endangered people, or a comment on the disadvantages of women in traditional societies, or a reflection on the eternal frustrations of romance, the director's telling never falters in its grace and elegant economy. Gabbeh is a poetic excursion in what, for most of us, is an unknown world. In every sense of the word, this film is a real eye-opener. \*

Two television documentaries complete the varied four. ABC TV has just concluded a three-part series *Frontier, a history of*

land wars in Australia between 1788 and 1935. It was a vivid and authoritative account of the European occupation and its impact on the life and culture of the aborigine peoples. If you missed it, the ABC are always helpful in making tapes available. An inquiry would be worthwhile. \*

In a similar vein, and happily still within our viewing reach, is the eight part series, *The West*, seen on SBS TV, Sundays around 7.30pm. It commenced on 2 March. Here is the tragedy, the heroism, the romance of the settlement over many centuries of that vast terrain between the Mississippi and the Rockies. The story of America's West ranks with Iliad and the Norse Sagas as one of the world's greatest adventures and one of the most significant. \*

As we know the impact on the native Indian was profound, but this series offers no simplistic judgements: as one historian states: "The world is never big enough for all people to live in isolation". \*

Both these documentaries remind us that we all have to come to grips with what it means to live in God's one world. \*

*Kolya talks to some Russian soldiers. These boys are beside themselves with joy to hear their mother tongue spoken in a land where all is hostile silence.*

Prague is on the eve of the "Velvet Revolution", when the Russian forces of occupation will be sent packing. The film is a warm-hearted comedy-drama about a middle-aged bachelor, Louka, and a cherubic Russian five-year old, Kolya, who are

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## Classifieds

### IN MEMORIAM

**CHALK, Doreen June** Called home to be with her Lord 29.3.87. Although 10 years have now passed our memories of her still last.

### HOLIDAYS

**FREMANTLE, WA** Bethel Guest House.

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

**HERVEY BAY, POINT VERNON** Whale watch or explore magical Fraser Island. Premier holiday position. New 3BR house, lock-up garage. All modern cons, has everything. Fully furnished, carpets, colour TV, washing machine, dryer, microwave. Short stroll to Bay, boat ramps, shops and parks. Bookings phone (02) 790 3710. **HOUSEBOAT** "White Heron" 8-berth. Moored at Blanchetown, SA. Phone (08) 365 1153 or (085) 40 5250 or write 7 Gameau Rd, Paradise 5075.

**NOOSA, QUEENSLAND** Luxury fully-equipped private 2 bedroom unit available all or part early June to mid August while owner overseas. Attractive rates. Full details Carmilla Wilbraham (07) 5482 7489.

**SA SEASIDE HOLIDAY PLAYGROUND** includes Victor Harbor & Port Elliot. Uniting Church owned self-contained 2 and 3 bedroom units available for hire in both locations. Also units overlooking Adelaide at suburban Belair. Phone UCA (08) 8212 4066.

### TO LET

**CURRUMBIN BEACH, QLD** Beach frontage house to let. Telephone (07) 3870 9002, preferably evenings.

### WANTED

"**THE MAKING OF A MIRACLE**" by Keith Skillicorn, or two new reprints called *An Impossible Dream* published in California & Tennessee on e-mail. Contact Margaret Goninon, 5 Theresa St, Smithfield NSW 2164. Telephone (02) 9724 5317.



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Melbourne  
(cnr Swanston &  
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### Sunday

9.00 a.m. & 11.00 a.m.

Worship & Communion  
Services  
Gospel Celebration

7.00 p.m.

### Wednesday

1.15-1.45 p.m.

Lunchtime Service

For further enquiries, please ring (03) 9663 3884

## Remembrance Service for Pregnancy Loss

As part of its Pregnancy Loss Counselling Service, **Open Doors Counselling** holds an ecumenical service entitled "**Saying 'I love you', saying 'Goodbye'**", for anyone grieving the loss of a child through miscarriage, abortion, ectopic pregnancy, IVF or stillbirth, recent or past.

The next service will be held on **Wednesday 2 April at 8.00 pm at the Church of Christ, 13 Bedford Rd, Ringwood, Vic.**

Phone (03) 9879 2332 for further details.

Family members and friends welcome.

## Pastoral Care

# Do I Have To Listen To Another Story!

**GLEN WEGNER**

**O**ne of the first things a minister encounters in pastoral ministry is having to listen to many stories. Hospital visitation is no different. \*

Some people will tell their pastor the same story each visit. I suspect many ministers have felt it was a waste of time to endure listening to someone's life story. \*

If we feel impatient about hearing stories, it means that pastorally we don't understand the value of stories, nor

*If we have no  
story, we are  
nothing or  
nobody.*

appreciate how to respond to them. \*

The Bible is full of stories. The great themes of Genesis are conveyed through story. Jesus used stories. Some of his parables are the best short stories ever told. Story becomes a medium for conveying message or feeling. The themes of Genesis are stories about a creative God, the origin of life and the mystery of the universe. It's important to look into the story with an inquiring mind to see what meaning may lie within the story. \*

If we are good pastoral carers we'll hear many stories. But what are we to do with such stories? First, let the story flow uninterrupted. Then keep two questions in mind. Why am I being told this story; and is there a theme, if so what is it? \*



I once listened for 45 minutes as an elderly lady told me her story. \*

At first I felt it was unfocused and disjointed. But as I thought more deeply about her story I found that it was consistent, logical and cohesive. \*

The consistent theme was loss, and persistent emotion was pain. For this lady her story became the vehicle for her to share her life's pain with another. \*

For some older people, the relating of one's story becomes important in order to express who they are, where they have been and what they have achieved. It has something to do with identity and integrity. \*

The pastor engages in a therapeutic process by listening to someone's story. \*

It's time-consuming, but pastorally valuable. It affirms the person who is telling their story. It acknowledges who they are and what they've done in life. Perhaps the story comes from someone who has never dared disclose their story before. By being a receptive listener we have entered their world and supported them as they looked for identity and integrity. \*



## CHANGES

**BROOKLYN PARK, SA**—Minister John Main, 13 Marshall Tce, Brooklyn Park SA 5032. Phone (08) 8352 3813 (H), (08) 8352 7820 (W).

**MAROOCHY, QLD**—Secretary K. Hooper, 25 Keil Mountain Road, Woombye 4559. Phone (07) 5442 1896

## BAPTISMS

•Lauren Hutchings, Geoff Hutchings, Ryan Beames, Bianca DiGance, Happy Valley, SA •Nella Baker, Bob Baker, Tootgarook, Vic •Philip and Kath Fennamore, Ainslie, ACT

## MARRIAGES

•Kirrilie Baggs and Matthew Smout, Happy Valley, SA •Jenele McDonald and David Hyland, Harcourt, Vic •Celia Nielsen and Neil Doyle, Caveside, Tas

## DEATHS

•David Kruger, Grote St. Adelaide, SA  
•Caroline Gadsen, Red Cliffs, Vic

## OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words  
**KRUGER, David Alexander**

(13.12.96) Born in Boonah, Qld, 5th child of William and Minnie Kruger (29.10.10). Gave his life to Christ at 13. In 1930 he married Lucy. They had two children, Garnet and Alwyn. They moved to Adelaide in 1949 and later at St Marys. The Clovelly Park church was commenced in their home. In 1974 David became a member of Grote St church and served as a deacon, elder and building committee member. He was the church's handyman up to the time of his passing. David left us an example of exemplary and victorious Christian living.

ing. Psalm 116:15.

—PJA

**SMYTH, Vera Florence** (nee Freebairn)

(24.2.97) Vera, the daughter of Thomas and Rosina Freebairn, was born 12.1.07. She attended Alma Congregational Church, becoming church organist and continuing through to that church's closure in the mid seventies. She was a member of the Owen Church of Christ where she remained. Vera's talents at the organ were put to good use in the Owen Community Church, where she served faithfully into her eighties. She married Len Smyth on 17.3.34. They had four daughters—Barbara, Mary, Helen and Jenny. There are now eleven grandchildren and nineteen great-grandchildren. Vera was involved in many community activities and was always generous in her dealing with others.

—DWW

**WRAY, Olive Eva**

(6.2.97) Olive Eva Wray was born 23 July 1904, the eldest of the five daughters of George and Alice Helps. On 29 October 1930 she married Thomas Wray, and they had six children. She raised the children during the depression years while Thomas was away working. The children appreciated the care they received and remained close to their mum. After being baptised on 4 March 1949, Olive joined the Owen church. Olive never used an excuse to be absent from a worship service, study group or prayer meeting. The Christian faith of her family is the greatest tribute to her.

—DWW

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## Churches of Christ in New South Wales

### Conference Executive

### invite expressions of interest for the position of Ministry Coordinator

The Ministry Coordinator is directly responsible to Conference Executive, who are an elected body of people representing the interests of the local churches within New South Wales. The position holder will be responsible for the coordination and facilitation of the various aspects of the life and mission of the Conference of Churches of Christ.

The successful applicant will be self-motivated, with strong personal presence, initiative and confidence, who knows how to create and maintain the balance of a large and complex organisation by unifying and appreciating the diverse contributions of everyone involved.

You will require excellent communication skills, a strong commitment to team-building and teamwork, a proven background in leadership, together with the skills and experience necessary to resolve difficult and conflicting issues.

**Applications will close on 30 April 1997.**

Written applications and requests for further information should be made to:

Gay Cooper  
Administrative Assistant  
Churches of Christ in New South Wales Conference Executive  
PO Box 140  
Carlingford NSW 2118  
Phone (02) 9630 7533  
Facsimile (02) 9630 6103



All inquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Conference Board reserves the right to invite people to apply. Our aim is "under the direction of God, to be a Christ-honouring, biblical, relevant, vital, contemporary Australian church which impacts the community by making disciples".



## SA

**HAPPY VALLEY (Andrew Ratcliff)** Joy & Alan Shadforth new coordinators Share-Care Program ... John & Betty Sanders, Alan & Margaret Jessup celebrated 50th wedding anniversaries ... Matt Eldridge appointed youth leader ... Tim Sherwell reappointed further 12 months ... Fortnightly free BBQ for visitors part of community outreach program ... Car boot sale, craft stall successful.

## VIC

**HARCOURT (Roy Armitage)** Dinner 2 February to farewell members leaving district ... New Sunday School started with 6 children ... Youth group growing fast, 25 involved ... Walking ramp erected by Adam Swift to help elderly enter church ... New sound system due to shortage of organists. Music sounds good, all pleased with results ... Gospel Radio 104.7 on air for test until 24 March ... Joyce Nixon elected CWF President.

**HAMILTON (B. Tunks, R. Hope)** Annual meeting saw return of officers as of last year: Chairman B. Tunks, Secretary T. Trimmell, Pastoral N. Beard, with an enthusiastic meeting and many positive suggestions put forward, the

mood of the fellowship is most positive ... The manse has been freshly painted outside & many working bees have grounds looking great, ready for 75th anniversary ... Baptismal class commenced with eager anticipation.

**SURREY HILLS (Jonathan Moore, Julie Adam)** 1997 theme "Alive in God's Way", emphasis is on forgiveness & reconciliation ... Advent services included guest speaker Charles Bayer & presentation by children, Christmas Bowl giving over \$4,500 ... Congregation studied "Just reconciliation between indigenous & settler Australians" in January, discussion most helpful ... February picnic enjoyed by all ... Daytime Bible study to start ... Newsletter preparation shared by Cathy Bradley & Janine Johnston. **RICHMOND (Linda Pilton)** Planning retreat held at CCTC, facilitated by Charles Bayer, with some exciting decisions made ... Church is benefiting from CCTC short course on the parables of Jesus, conducted by Stephen Curkpatrick ... Ecumenical Lenten Program including combined worship services and study program in operation.

**NORTHCOTE (Rod Brown)** Rod & wife Lois commenced an interim ministry on 2 March & were welcomed by the church ... The previous Sunday ended

Bruce Alcorn's ministry of nearly 10 years with a good congregation of members and visitors present. At lunch provided by the ladies there was a larger attendance when representatives from other churches & the ICC joined the congregation. Presentations were made to Bruce & Pearl.

**RED HILL (Paul DeWildt)** Paul, Lynn, Emily & Daniel DeWildt welcomed on 26 January, Paul inducted by Mike Folland on 2 February at inspiring, well-attended service, followed by morning tea ... Candlelight Dinner held at Keith & Win Crouch's home raised \$250 for Library fund, ladies raised \$600 at market stall ... Church's 112th anniversary celebrated on 2 March with Ron Brooker as guest speaker **RED CLIFFS (D. Smith)** Speakers in January: L. Mellberg, R. Sharrad & D. Clarke (Mildura) ... Doug & Eleanor Smith accepted church's invitation to part-time ministry, Doug inducted into ministry by elder Sue Griffin ... All auxiliaries have started activities, Dale Stewart leader of youth group ... Good display of produce & preserves at Harvest Thanksgiving, goods sent to Church Homes ... Recently formed

choir gave item ... Church attendance heartening.

**TOOTGAROOK (M. Giezendanner)** Conference President was guest speaker in January & Director of Prison Fellowship in February ... All auxiliaries under way for 1997, Open Door & Friendship Group picnic both well attended ... Dorothy Smith in hospital with broken arm after fall ... Nadia & Izzy Brandsma involved in car accident, Nadia injured but not seriously ... Nella & Bob Baker baptised at Thursday Prayer meeting ... Church approved purchase of new photocopier at special meeting.

**PRESTON (Roger Bone, Mike Jansen, Bill Sharrock, Kaye Twining)** Bill Sharrock & wife Pauline welcomed into ministry ... New Friday night congregation commenced attracting new people already. Sunday worship continuing strong ... New format Boomerang Kid's Club now meeting monthly ... Open Door drop-in for older community recommenced ... 37 farewelled Reeves family moving to Yea ... High-lights: Christmas Eve midnight service, outing to Air Show. Ahead: joint Good Friday service with West Preston.

Applications are invited for the full-time position of

## Prison Chaplain

at Long Bay Jail, La Perouse NSW

The successful applicant will be a Minister, with ability to work cross-culturally in an ecumenical situation. He/she will be committed to a local Church of Christ and will involve that church as much as possible in his/her ministry.

The position will be available from July 1997.

Send applications to Wendy Parish, Director, Community Care/Welfare, Locked Bag 1, Pendle Hill NSW 2145. Phone (02) 9636 7400. Fax (02) 9631 0945.

## Due to staff transfers, positions exist for Missionary Personnel at the Olive Laird Hostel, Carnarvon WA

The staff work as a team, providing quality care for up to 12 residents.

### Practical Christian Service may include

- Activities commensurate with the care of the aged
- domestic work
- bus driving, gardening
- some maintenance
- some shift work



Further details relating to salary, conditions, accommodation, etc, are available from the Federal Aborigines Board Office, Po Box 1199, Wangara WA 6065. Phone (09) 309 3922. Fax (09) 309 4101. E-mail [cofcfab@msn.com](mailto:cofcfab@msn.com).



# Church News

## NSW

**LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS** (Stephen Templeton) Minister commenced 27 January. Vision set for 1997 & church spirits high ... House to be used in future for youth & children's ministries, allowing chapel to be opened into hall ... Attendances up by 40%, offerings up by 28% ... David & Michelle Varley welcomed into membership.

## WA

**DIANELLA** (Tony Armstrong) Several new committees handling aspects of church life ... Sunday home groups supplementing regular evening service ... Baptisms & baby dedications in February-March ... Leaders' dedication service 9 February ... Church in prayer for members with health problems ... Preparing for Ian Robinson's "Gossiping the Gospel" 4-6 April ... Decision to undertake several short-term mission projects during the year.

**BUSSELTON** (Graeme Ritchie) Area attracts many visitors on holiday. Church enjoys fellowship with them ... Minister leading series on prayer. New home groups developing ... Craft group meets weekly with 100-120 ladies present. Creche provided for young children. Great outreach opportunities ... Cornerstone Christian School now into 12th year. High school enrolments last year ... 5-acre lot with 4-bedroom house purchased, with view to relocation when old property sells.

## TAS

**CAVESIDE** (John & Colleen Harrison) Excellent study day in November led by Clinton Wardle (Hobart City Church) on "Understanding the Grace of God" ... Visiting speakers during January included Geoff Hays, George Green, Col Heier & Bill Clayton ... Congratulations to Raymond Johnson & Paula Seal & Jeffrey Byard & Mandy Johnson on announcement of their engagements ... J. Harrison completed series of messages on "Spiritual

Maturity" ... District Harvest Thanksgiving 9 March.

**LAUNCESTON** (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison) Church in conjunction with Rosny Children's Choir presented a concert on 22 February in aid of Launceston City Mission. \$2000 raised ... Jim Harrison back in hospital ... Ella Crawford awarded Medal of Merit for services to the Scout Movement in Tas. Medal presented by the Governor, Sir Guy Green ... Dianne Dick spoke at

Wednesday afternoon fellowship of her experience in Kurdistan.

## QLD

**CHINCHILLA** (Rod Feldhahn) Congregation joined with other churches for Carols by Candlelight in Civic Centre ... Church saddened by deaths of family who lost their 2 eldest daughters aged 13 & 11 in road fatality. Church in prayer for family ... Two of elderly folk in hospital ... During absence

of minister on holidays, local men filled in as speakers ... Church activities recommenced for year.

**CAMP HILL** Sadly we accept the resignation of Allan Lochhead after three years of ministry. Lockheads will be greatly missed, we wish them God's blessing ... New additions are Rachel Markham & Aimee Johnson ... The Samoan Church now share our facilities for worship ... Celebrations under way for our 40th anniversary this September.

## COCOA brings HOPE



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

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

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

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

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....Postcode .....

Amount: \$ .....

Please charge my: ☐ Bankcard ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Expiry Date: .....

Signature .....

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



# Snippets from History Campbell in Jail

GORDON STIRLING

**I**t is true, that the great Alexander Campbell, one of the pioneers of our movement in the USA, spent 10 days in a Scottish jail. \*

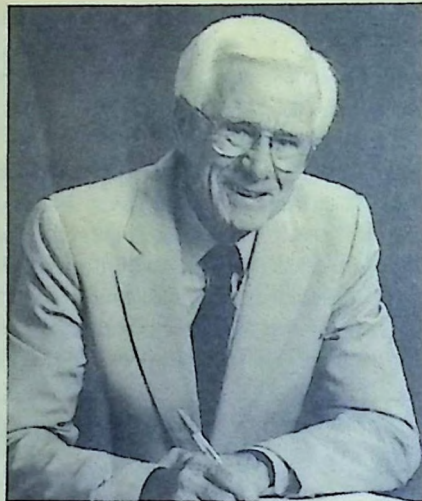
He had gone to Britain in 1847 to visit the Churches of Christ there. Wherever he went great crowds gathered to hear him. It was not until he visited Scotland that there was trouble. \*

Some Scottish clergy were frightened that his preaching and lecturing might attract some of their flock. The Reverend James Robertson allied himself with some extremists of the Scottish Anti-slavery Society to find ways of discrediting Campbell. They assumed that coming from Virginia, he would be pro-slavery. \*

Campbell had inherited slaves with his farm but freed them after training them in citizenship and the gospel. He explained to Society delegates that he was opposed to slavery ("The black spot in American history", he said.), but opposed its abolition by force or illegal means. This did not satisfy Robertson. \*

So wherever Campbell went in Scotland, Robertson posted placards reading, "Beware. The Reverend Alexander Campbell of Virginia has been a slave holder himself and is still a defender of man stealers". The placards aroused some hostility. When Campbell lectured in Edinburgh 7000 mostly hostile people came. At first there was considerable heckling, but after three hours Campbell had the people with him. \*

So the Anti-Slavery Society challenged him



to a debate. He replied that he would meet any debater, even Mr Robertson himself, provided he was not the Reverend James Robertson who had been dismissed from the Baptist ministry for violating his own mother. Robertson promptly filed a suit for libel. As a foreigner, Campbell had to arrange bail so that he did not skip the country. He refused offers from Glasgow church members to pay his bail and went to prison for the ten days before the hearing. \*

At the hearing the judge threw out the charge and ordered Robertson to pay all costs. Robertson appealed. The appeal judge charged him with false arrest. So he skipped the country. The \$10,000 security posted on his behalf by the Anti-slavery Society was left, and given to Alexander Campbell who promptly gave it to charity. \*

## The Last Word

**It is only because of Easter that our gospels were written. Without Easter they make no sense.**

—David J. Bosch. "Transforming Mission"

*They say a well-balanced Australian is one with a chip on both shoulders.*

*Excuse me, I don't normally talk to a strange people in the street, but I'm on my way to confession and I'm a bit short of material.*

*So what did your blind date look like?*

*Well, a lot better over the telephone.*

*As you know, I never repeat gossip ... so please listen carefully the first time.*

*Talk about desperate—my husband even shaves before standing on the bathroom scales.*

*How does an intruder get into a house?*

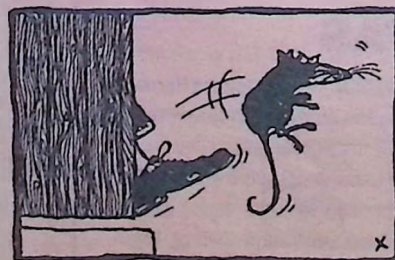
*Intruder the window.*

*Cinema Attendant: "That's the sixth ticket you've bought".*

*Customer: "Yes, I know, there's a girl in there that keeps tearing them up".*

*Why don't you tell secrets in a vegetable garden?*

*Because corn has ears and the beans talk.*



*Muriel had hoped the church would offer her the caring, family community she was yearning for.*

(National Church Life Survey)

## 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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