

THE AUSTRALIAN

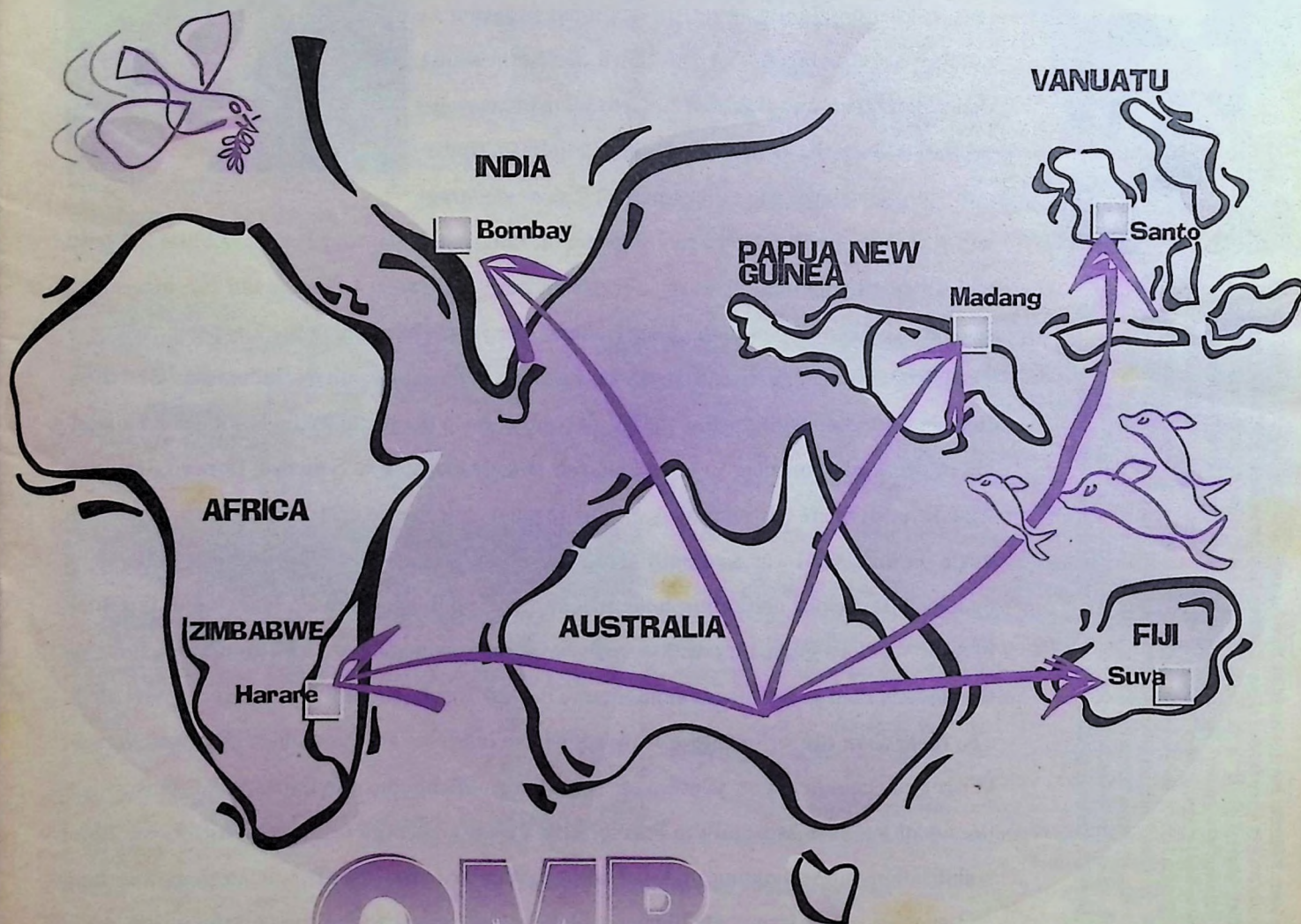
Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 101 No. 11, 8 July 1998

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TAKING THE LOVE OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD



AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES OF CHRIST OVERSEAS MISSION BOARD



THE AUSTRALIAN

Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 101 No. 11, 8 July 1998

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Editorial

Strategic Thinking

DON SMITH

Australia's place in our region is an issue much to the fore at this time. I was deeply moved by Fay Christensen's analysis of Churches of Christ in PNG. The future with all its demands gives ground for optimism. Likewise, when we look at Vanuatu with its church planting projects and the developments in Fiji, there is every reason for confidence about the regional program in which we are involved. Then we have the forthcoming visit of Jeff Weston and Nathan Nhan to Vietnam to evaluate possibilities there. Work in India and links in Zimbabwe with our New Zealand partners are also encouraging.



* These reports reflect a real measure of statesmanship by our Overseas Mission Board and the sacrificial and visionary service of both Australian workers and the increasing strength and capacity of indigenous leaders. Here is partnership in the Gospel in reality. * The big development in recent weeks has been the new contact with our Indonesian churches. Here in the nation with the fourth largest population in the world we find a vital and expanding network of churches. Here is a church already working in Sumatra, Borneo, Java and Irian Jaya. Here are churches cooperating to plant churches in each of the 27 provinces with goals set for 2000. I was especially struck by new churches in Irian Jaya among indigenous peoples. Maybe our PNG churches can join them! All this has the familiar ring of the Book of Acts. What a significant position we are in with growing networks all around us. Imagine the Apostle Paul's response at similar news in New Testament times! * In a recent article in *The Australian* the writer Steve Howard, whose interests are Australia's strategic place in our region, comments on a recent speech by Jean-Michel Severino, the World Bank's vice-president for East Asia and the Pacific, with a clear challenge to Australians to lead in the stabilisation and rebuilding of Asia and in particular Indonesia. This is strategic thinking and analysis about issues of policy, population, economics and in the end the wellbeing of our one world community. The writer spoke of the challenge in secular terms. These words apply just as significantly if we apply them to the progress of the Gospel. *

Missions

Our coverage of overseas mission includes reports from various locations and comment on the issues faced by returning missionaries.

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

Modelling Unity

To the Editor,

This note is to say how heart-warming I found your reference to the Bono, Arkansas, Church of Christ as "one of our churches".

I am a minister of an a capella Church of Christ and first met Christians from Australian Churches of Christ at the 1996 World Convention in Calgary. The positive impression of you I received there led me to subscribe to *The Australian Christian*.

After almost two years as a subscriber, it seems evident to me that what we share in common is so great as to make our minor differences of little consequence.

Much progress towards unity in our movement has been made here in the US in the past fifteen years.

Much, of course, still remains to be done.

Restoring unity within our Restoration or Stone-Campbell movement is a necessary prerequisite to becoming once again the witness for Christian unity that we set out to be. Thanks again for modelling a spirit of Christian unity.

—Gary Pearson

(Westminster, Maryland, USA)

Harm Minimisation

To the Editor,

Bob Aldred ("AC", 10.6.98) springs to the defence of harm minimisation, and in doing so has raised a number of issues.

The arguments and analogies used by Warwick Murphy are neither illogical or irrelevant; and further, are just as pertinent as Bob's. Can you imagine Jesus saying to the woman at the well, "Go your way, and—by the way—don't forget harm minimisation. In future use condoms!" (I couldn't find a biblical example of illicit drug taking!) As is the case with both analogies and parables, their purpose is to give further insight. When the parallel is taken too far, the comparison soon becomes ridiculous.

If harm minimisation is intended to cause those already addicted to look at reducing their intake, and therefore the effects, we may well concur that it is a good thing. If however it is intended to thwart the drug trade and drug taking, it is a failure. It is simple logic that the closer we come to eradicating the drug trade, the less will be the associated problems.

There is common ground when it comes to the necessity for harm minimisation when the drug used is medical or socially (legally) accepted by society. This fact only emphasises the need to prevent any blow out in the availability or community acceptance of drugs, rather than a feeble acceptance "that drug problems are increasing", and watching further names being added to the list of addicts. Let us aim to help those already addicted to minimise the resulting damage they do to themselves and others. But at the same time, let's use maximum resources to prevent those not already involved just adding to the drug statistics. There is a mighty powerful word which can and must be used. The word? No! If only my dad had used it when offered his first cigarette.

There is a need for Harm Minimisation—damage control after the event. But why not get in first and

Letters to the Editor

prevent the damage occurring? A need for minimisation and a need for prevention—shouldn't these two work in harness?

There is the well-known tale of the council dispute over whether the town should pay for an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, or put money into building a fence at the top. Bob, you man the ambulance; I'll back the fence at the top. Unfortunately, we need both!

—Vin Waters
(Essendon, Vic)

Mobilise the Members

To the Editor,

In recent times, I've pondered, "What has the church become and where is it heading?" There has been a paradigm shift in churches: worship and edification dominate, leading to more "week-end churches". Many churches have become a "parks and recreation place for the middle class". The message of the New Testament was "Go!" The message of the church is "Come!" Come to the party!

As a result, these churches and colleges aren't able to deal with the problems in society. The 1986 census revealed 42.6% of the Australian population over the age of 15 were never married, separated, divorced or widowed. In 1996 census, this figure had risen to 47%. Twenty-seven percent of children are raised in single-parent households. If trends continue, for the first time in history, the adult single population will exceed the married sometime during the next decade!

The church's greatest mission resource is the individual calling of every member. I have come to fully appreciate the Biblical principle of laity using their spiritual gifts and witnessed ordinary people doing extraordinary ministry. Singles For Christ, Parramatta, NSW, directly assisted over 3,000

singles in the first ten years, and planted ten other singles ministries, which have assisted thousands of others!

If Australian churches are to be effective we need visionary leaders to discern the changes. We need to create an environment that encourages the use of spiritual gifts. Passionate, committed leadership and laity need to be mobilised and use their spiritual gifts. We need to rediscover God's mission for the church in order to more effectively bring his message of love, grace, forgiveness and hope to a lost and deeply hurting world.

—Colin Murdoch
(Parramatta, NSW)



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Update

Dear Readers,

This issue with its focus on Overseas Mission work has been prepared with the help of Jeff Weston, Executive Director of the Board. In our last issue we made a request for a gift subscription for Paulus Wibowo of our Indonesian Churches. Our Melbourne Indonesian church readily responded to this invitation. A number of other readers also responded with the offer of a gift subscription. We were pleased with the good response and obvious interest.

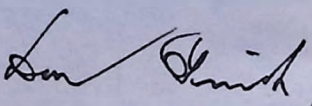
Readers have also responded well to the cartoons by Janet Woodlock on the back page. Janet has prepared a set of six cartoons which we shall use in sequence. We are always open to talk with anyone interested in cartoon preparation.

The index for the 1997 issues of the paper is now available at a cost of \$5.00, including postage. Please contact the office if you would like a copy sent to you. Orders are taken on an annual basis unless a specific request is made to forward copies each year.

We now have both the first four pages and full versions of recent issues on our web site. The ma-

terial will be progressively updated. The address is <<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~aceditor>>. Readers are also invited to visit the site conducted by Russel Kilgour. To join the discussion list go to <<http://www.xcel.net.au/christian/index.htm>> fill in the details and click on the "Subscribe Now" button. Readers may also want to look at the "Shoot the Messenger" Web site for a range of articles on the Gospel and modern culture. The site has received an outstanding response, far beyond all expectations. See <<http://www.shootthemessenger.com.au>>.

Responses to our last two issues on "Stewardship" and "Baptism" have been most encouraging. Ministers and church leaders from a number of churches have requested multiple copies of the "Stewardship" issue. One church is using 100 copies in its forthcoming planned-giving program. Copies of the "Baptism" issue have been sought, with readers telephoning the office with their positive comments.



Charlie (Charles) Bynoe

Outstanding contribution, especially to youth

Charlie, born at Normanton, in Queensland's Far North Gulf Country, a member of the Kurtjar Tribe, has been blessed with a rich ancestral heritage, which includes some faithful Christians. Today Charlie is a member of the Queensland Churches of Christ-sponsored Aborigines and Islander Christian Fellowship Board (AICF), a director of the Aboriginal and Islanders Christian Community Centres Limited, a director of the Kurtaja Aboriginal Corporation and a director (at one time Chairman) of the Aboriginal Morr Morr Pastoral Company, one of the largest cattle stations in North Queensland. For many years he was a teach-

er's aide with the Normanton School. From this he has developed a wonderful understanding of the needs of young people. He has developed leadership skills, artistic abilities and musical talents. Coupled with all of this he is a trained drug and alcohol counsellor. Currently he is an Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer with the Queensland Police Department, based in Normanton, a position he obtained after intensive training at the Queensland Police Academy five years ago. Charlie became a Christian when he was a teenager and has since then been involved in the Sunday school and youth programs at the Normanton church. He is also a

regular driver of the bus operated by the Normanton Christian Centre. These activities are now quite difficult with the demands of shift work and being the sole parent to his three delightful children (James 9, Kimberly 7, and Sharona 5).

His love for young people's work, has also seen Charlie work in a government-funded community youth program in both Normanton and Karumba. His work in the community was recognised, when he was given an award for voluntary youth work this year on Australia Day.

Some years ago, Charlie was diagnosed as diabetic and this health condition is causing much



concern. Being a working dad, with the care and responsibility for his three children and all the associated home duties, and with community leadership involvement, Christian service and diabetic condition, it is, at times, a very heavy load. The Queensland AICF Board has invited prayer for Charlie Bynoe.

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Indonesia—An Introduction

Important personal links made with our Indonesian churches

The visit by Indonesian leader Paulus Wibowo to Australia in May-June introduced Australian Churches of Christ to Churches of Christ in Indonesia. Most of our readers will be unaware of the presence of our Movement in Indonesia. Paulus is the National Director for the network of some 75 churches. Origins of the work were from our US Independent Churches, who supported the fledgling venture for some years. In 1971, there was personal contact between Paulus and the late Rex Ellis and Diane Henry (Feeney) of our then Woolwich Bible College, NSW. In the meantime, the network of churches has expanded significantly throughout Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Irian Jaya. Paulus has also had personal links with Noel and Jean Flint of NSW and some other Australian families. Jean Flint contacted the Editor about the pending visit of Paulus to Australia to

attend and speak at the recent Awakening-sponsored AD2000 Missions Conference, held prior to the National Gathering of 30 May in Canberra. (Reports of these event were carried in our issues of 27 May and 24 June.) In our interview with Paulus Wibowo he told how our churches in Indonesia have a goal of planting a new church in each of Indonesia's 27 provinces by 2000. So far, 20 new churches have been established. At the Awakening Conference Paulus was invited to speak of his work in Indonesia at a particularly difficult time for Indonesia. The outcome of his address was a decision by participants to take an offering for the ministry. Over \$2,000 was given, enough to support 14 workers for three years and provide a roof for a church in West Sumatra. The recent civil unrest has created problems and dangers for the churches.

Melbourne's Indonesian Churches of Christ minister Agus Budiman was able to meet Paulus and has warmly embraced the ministry. Agus was delighted to learn that Paulus knows and works with some of his own associates in Indonesia.

It is of interest to note that Fusion Australia has been encouraging and assisting the ministry. Mal Garvin of Fusion had met up with Paulus at an international conference and has maintained links since that time. Of interest is the fact that Paulus is the official representative for Churches of Christ with the Indonesian Government. It is hoped that links between In-



Indonesian leader Paulus Wibowo

donesian and Australian Churches of Christ can be furthered and that Indonesian churches can be represented at the World Convention in 2000. A report of the Editor's contact with Paulus has been sent to the Overseas Mission Board.

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Applications to Senior Minister: Larry Galbraith, 410 York St, Ballarat Vic 3350. Phone (03) 5331 1079. Fax (03) 5333 2454.

Goolwa Shave Off Joseph

Cold heads raise money for overseas aid

On Sunday 14 June a fund raiser was held when six men had their hair shaved, including the minister Chris Ambrose, a previous editor of *The Australian Christian*. Several weeks before the event a target of \$700 was set. This was easily met, with the amount raised now over \$1,000. The money is to be divided between World Vision 40 Hour Famine and Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA). Prior to the shave, a "poverty luncheon" was held, consisting of one dinner roll with a simple topping, a piece of fruit and either water or a cup of coffee or tea. The shaving took approximately an hour amongst much laughter. A comb was presented to each of the



Linda Hunt shaving Chris Ambrose, Minister

brave volunteers as token of appreciation. The afternoon was enjoyed by all.

Marvellous performances at Doncaster, Vic

Over 1,200 people attended performances of the musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" at the Doncaster, Vic, church in May.

A cast and crew of over one hundred, aged from 3-70 years, thrilled the audiences with their various talents.

Over \$3,000 was raised for local church-based projects MOPS and Stable.

Comments have included, "My family hasn't stopped singing the songs", "This was the best weekend of my life", (from a seven-year-old participant), "My friends loved it" and, "What are you doing next year?"



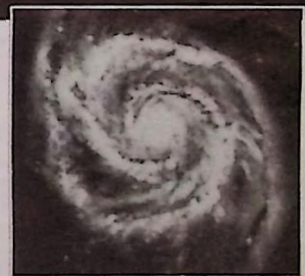
Darryl Kilmartin, who played Pharoah and Elvis, with Tim Warren (Joseph)

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Launch Out Centre

Church realises long-held vision



Photo courtesy Guardian Mail

*Nell Pfeifer cutting the ribbon with Glen Hardwick
(minister) standing by.*

The Upper Yarra, Vic, church saw
the fulfilment of a long-held vision
with the opening of the Launch
Out Centre on 9 May. Using
rented premises close to where
Sunday services are held in the
primary school, the church now
has a visible presence in the com-
munity. The centre has an office
for the minister, a Christian li-
brary, prayer room and well-
equipped kitchen. It is already
being well used by the church,
and some community groups are
being involved.

At the opening Lynette Leach,
Vic-Tas Conference Executive
Officer, along with representa-
tives of the Shire Council and the
local press were present. The lo-
cal primary school principal at-
tended and wrote a complimen-
tary article in the school newslet-
ter. Representatives were present
from the Montrose and Mitcham
churches and Nell Pfeifer from
Mitcham was asked to cut the ri-
bbon and declare the centre open.
Nell and the other ladies of the
Mitcham CWF have been most
supportive of the outreach plans.
The highlight of the day was when
Nell handed over a cheque for
\$500 from an anonymous donor.

—Alan Rackemann

Making News

New Church in Vanuatu

Mark Dodd reports new
church established on island
of Tanna which is stronghold
of ni-Vanuatu custom culture
and church planted in French
Pacific colony of New Caledo-
nia.

Alan Hirsch to Speak in NZ

New Zealand Churches of
Christ announce that Alan
Hirsch, Executive Director of
Division of Mission and Revi-
talisation, Vic-Tas Conference,
is guest speaker at forthcom-
ing NZ Convention and minis-
ters' refresher.

Children's Book on Award Short List

Vital Publication's *Will Anyone
Listen To Me* by Paul and
Michelle Andrews is short-
listed for the Children's Book
of the Year Award by the Aus-
tralian Christian Literature
Society. Awards announced 26
August.

NSW State Conference

Encouraging and stimulating events



Graham Long, outgoing President (left), with Bruce Armstrong (right), presents Richard Menteith (centre) with the symbolic Bible as he begins his Presidential year

Conference 113 was held at Stanwell Tops mid May. It was run in three segments. The minister's refresher, youth vision and delegated Conference.

The minister's refresher, in the hands of the Ministers' Association, ran from Wednesday to Friday. Stimulating speaker, Mike Frost stirred the minds of a large number of our ministers from across the state. Les Scarborough

took sessions on the responsibility to the standards of the Code of Ethics. The event is gaining momentum.

Youth Vision's Friday night saw a swarm of some 500 frenetic, energetic young people hit Stanwell Tops for Wild Worship. Gordon Barr and Youth Vision run this sound and visual presentation of high intensity. Peppered with music and drama, the stage was set for Andrew Ball of Albury to challenge their commitment.

While the day of delegated Conference on Saturday is the traditional time to receive reports and deal with business, which we did, we are moving more to a pattern that informs and challenges. Peter Corney from St Hillary's, East Kew, Vic, was our guest speaker. He took two one-hour sessions, dealing principally with leader-

ship and issues of change. The outcome was a better-informed network of churches prepared to think through issues that affect the church's ministries, rather than decide its polity.

Our Ministry Team leaders gave informative and exciting reports. They also provided a very comprehensive display area, along with Christian Projects. Three leaders were reinstalled for a further five years of service: Pam Clapshaw in Seniors; Gordon Barr in Youth Vision and Graham Long in Community Care Welfare. National representatives Bob Smith, National Coordinator, and Avon Moyle, FAB, made good impact. Three new churches were received into our Conference. South Queanbeyan, Southland (Sutherland) and Southern Cross (Lismore). Representatives from each were assembled and prayed for.

Richard Menteith was installed as the new Conference President. He is General Manager of Corporate Services at Wesley Mission and was previously an elder at Greenacre. Dick spoke strongly of his commitment to our churches who have provided so much for him and his family. He has been released and commissioned by Wesley to carry out his role this Conference year. Dick has planned a visitation program that will take him to many churches. Outgoing President Graham Long was commended for his strenuous effort in, along with his Presidency, acting as Interim Ministry Coordinator while retaining his Pendle Hill Ministry and his Welfare Ministry Team leadership. Graham had faced many very important issues in that time and brought the present structure into some cohesion. It was a promising start to a year when church planting will become a priority in NSW.

—Bruce Armstrong
Ministry Coordinator

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—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

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Queensland Elections

Caboolture member elected to parliament

Bill Feldmann is the new member for the Queensland state electorate of Caboolture. He has been appointed parliamentary leader of the One Nation Party and spokesman for police and corrective services.

He is a member of the Caboolture church and was an elder until he stood down to contest the seat as a One Nation candidate.

He had been a police officer for 21 years and held the rank of sergeant.

Bill has had a strong interest in Queensland Police Union affairs and it was out of this experience that he decided to stand as a candidate in the recent election.

Bill was a founding member of the Caboolture church and was previously a member at Sunnybank, Qld, church.

He and his wife Gail have been active in the church's life and held numerous offices. They have been married for 20 years and have two teenage children.

Bill is conscious of the importance of his new role and especially the general political cli-

mate in which the election took place.

He is looking forward to making a contribution and invites the prayers of members as he takes up his new position.

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Queen's Birthday Honours

WA member honoured for services to the community

Kevin Watson of the Dalkeith Road, Nedlands, WA, church was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List. The award was for services to the community, through fundraising activities for charities, to commerce and to the arts.

Within Churches of Christ, Kevin is chairman of the Dalkeith Road Board and chairman of the Bethesda Hospital Board.

He has been active in fundraising for the Red Shield Appeal for many years and is the current chairman of the Appeal. Other community roles include deputy chairmanship of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Governor of the

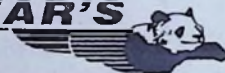


Kevin Watson AM

Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Children and a member of the Board of the WA Opera Company.

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Sunbury Community Church, Vic, is Moving Again!

We are moving to new leased factory premises which we are fitting out as a 600-seat worship and ministry centre. This is a huge but exciting undertaking.

As a relatively new church, our budget can only go so far—we are stretched just covering the ministry demand! We are appealing for help from our sister churches to assist us to finish equipping our new centre. We are asking for donations, gifts and/or the loan of equipment to finish our project in time for launch day in August.

We Need Your Help

Could you or your church help in lending or donating the following items:

Overhead projectors (4)
White boards (4)

Lockable steel cabinets
Sound equipment

VCRs & Television sets (3 each)
Children's chairs (130)

Kitchen equipment (oven/stove)
Computer/Printers

Overhead Projector Screens (4)
Bookshelves (as many as we can get)

Lockable filing cabinets
Stackable chairs

Tables (as many as we can get)
Lecterns (4)

Data projector

If you can help us with our new project, please call Ian Huke (Administrator) at the office on (03) 9740 8799. We would appreciate your call.

Women, Prayer and Fun

Women's Camp Bicheno, Tas



Miss Bicheno's Beauty Contest, 1998

Eighty-four women from Tasmanian Churches of Christ recently gathered at Bicheno on the East Coast for a weekend of teaching and fun. Numbers swelled from an expected 60 to over 80. The study theme was "Things happen when women pray", led by June Gray, a retired missionary currently assisting her husband in his pastoral care role with the Launceston Church.

Women were challenged to explore their prayer activity and were given ways of making their

prayer life more effective. Suggestions such as gathering as a group to pray for your children's school, taking "prayer walks" and the power of small groups of three, were well received. Feedback received suggests women have already started putting these into action. On the Saturday night "Miss Bicheno's Beauty Contest, 1998" hosted by bubbly radio personality Emily Jade O'Keefe and Ruth Clayton created lots of fun and laughter.

Churches of Christ Federal Aborigines Board Inc

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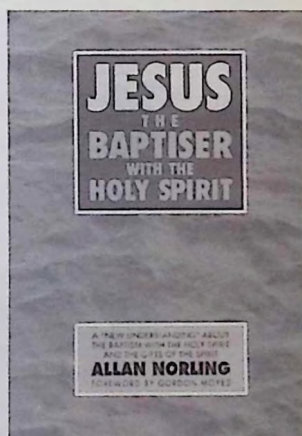


Reviews



Jesus the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit

by Allan Norling (self-published) \$14.95.



Allan has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the New Testament scriptural teaching on the Holy Spirit.

He sees Jesus baptising us afresh with the Holy Spirit every time he wishes to minister through us. Each fresh baptism contains three elements, (1) a momentary dying to self, (2) a dynamic living in oneness with Jesus and (3) a quickening of Holy Spirit power sufficient for the piece of ministry before us at that time.

Jesus is seen to be personally and intimately involved with us in every detail of authentic ministry, in addition to being completely

involved in our salvation, deliverance, sanctification and our abundant life through the Holy Spirit. He looks at traditional Evangelical viewpoints about the Baptism with the Holy Spirit which say it is not available today or only at the time of conversion, and that the gifts of the Spirit ceased at the end of the first century.

He says that Pentecostals, Charismatics and "Third Wave" Christians who pray to the Holy Spirit should pray to Jesus as the only mediator between God and humanity (2 Tim 2:5) and not to the Holy Spirit.

To the degree we spontaneously obey Jesus Christ in each situation, we will have revival of New Testament Christianity.

Available from Koorong or PO Box 219, Beecroft NSW 2119.

—Ken Clinton

Escape from Armageddon

by Ken and Val Walker,
(Good News Australia)
\$13.00.

The authors are aware of the differing eschatological interpretations and have chosen the futuristic view. This is an exciting, well written novel which can be obtained from the authors at PO Box 642, Glen Waverley Vic 3150, for \$13.00 posted. —Ken Clinton



AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN OVERSEAS MISSION PARTNERSHIP



Jeff Weston
Exec Director



Craig Bossie
Assistant Director



Lorraine Lewis
Admin. Assistant



Carl Collins
DDP Coordinator

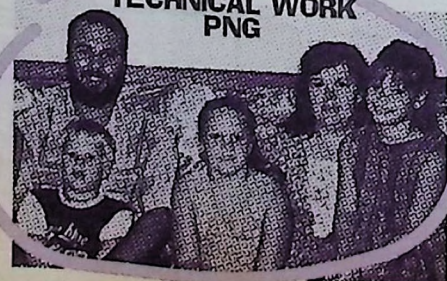


Fay Christensen
BIBLE TRANSLATION
PNG



Shem, Elizabeth, Sandra
& Steve Tema
YOUTH WORK
PNG

Phil, Ruth, Denaye, Hayley
& Jacob Culver
TECHNICAL WORK
PNG



Bill & Janet Buli
PRINCIPAL BIBLE COLLEGE
PNG



Mark Dodd
PASTOR-ADVISER
VANUATU



Gaylene Anderson
TEACHER
RANWADI High School
VANUATU



Mike, Ruth, Aaron, Brooklyn
& Ashleigh Folland
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Missions

PNG—Paradise or Hell?

FAY CHRISTENSEN

The tourist brochures tell us Papua New Guinea is Paradise. The news media seem determined to prove that it is hell on earth! Actually they're both wrong.

It is a fact that over the past year we in PNG have had plenty of national crises—government unrest and corruption, drought, flood, hunger and the unending problem of “rascal” (gang) activity and tribal fighting. It is a fact that the value of PNG currency has dropped and prices of goods have risen, with no corresponding rise in wages. It is a fact that medical and educational

cal well-being, not in a comfortable lifestyle, but because God is among them. Churches of Christ have been working in PNG since 1958, mostly in the rural, less-developed areas between the Ramu and Sepik Rivers. Town ministries operate in Madang and in a small way in Angoram, targeting the rural people who are in the towns either looking for work or for trading. Today there are around a hundred Churches of Christ in remote villages, all of which are totally organised and financed by the PNG people. Most have been commenced by the evangelism of other local churches.

A new Bible School is being built to help in the training of leaders for the churches. The carpenter who is spearheading this project is a Papua New Guinean.

The Churches of Christ in PNG are organised into a Conference structure, with various departments to coordinate different types of ministry. Evangelism and church growth, training and education, youth and children, women's ministries, administration, and technical. These are headed by people from PNG, Vanuatu, and Australia. Despite the physical difficulties of poor infrastructure, difficulty in communication (no roads, no telephones, rough terrain), lack of finance and the complications of many tribal groups working together, the ministries are growing.

The theme of the current chairman of our Conference, Tony Waulik, is “unity.” Unity is not easy in a Conference in which the people have about twenty languages and cultures, each of which traditionally thought of itself as “the people” of the earth. It is not easy in cultures where fighting and mistrust characterised the normal relationship with people who were not “family”.



It is not easy in cultures where fighting and mistrust characterised the normal relationship with people who were not “family”.

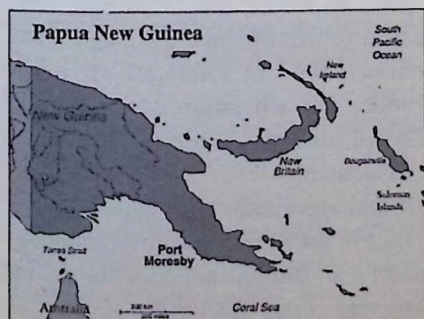
services to many bush areas are poorly funded and in many cases non-existent. Malaria, TB, and AIDS are serious health problems, with many ill people going untreated. But the situation is not hopeless. PNG is not hell on earth, because God is there, God is at work. The people of PNG have hope—not in physi-

But that is the beauty of what the Gospel has done in this little piece of PNG. Many times I have heard the comment, “Our ancestors only got together to fight. Now because of Jesus, we are all brothers and sisters, and we can eat together, worship together, and help each other. We are not afraid any more”.

Hell on earth? No, a little foretaste of heaven and the complete oneness in Christ that we will one day experience.

But there are still struggles and we aren't in paradise yet. Your Christian brothers and sisters in PNG still need expressions of unity and love from their sister churches in Australia. Some missionaries are still needed for support and training for the PNG leaders. We need your continued prayer. We need financial help to reach out to others. We need you to remember that there are still people in the remote jungles and towns of PNG who don't have the Good News yet. For them, life is hell!

Fay has worked with Churches of Christ in PNG since 1974. She is currently leader of the missionary team there, which is aiming to translate the NT into the Rao language by 2000.



Missions

Daund Hospital

DON SMITH

Statistics are a strong point with Doctor Philemon Pawar of the Churches of Christ Daund Hospital in India's Maharashtra state (pictured to the right). And they are statistics which impress!

In his recent visit to the office of *The Australian Christian* he talked about the 700–800 deliveries of new babies each year, which includes normal deliveries, emergencies and caesarean births. In one night he has known seven deliveries. Some 50% of cases are unbooked. As the hospital's only full-

As the hospital's only full-time doctor he is on 24-hour call for six days a week.

time doctor he is on 24-hour call for six days a week. He is assisted by another doctor on a part-time basis and a staff of 26 permanent workers who cover a wide range of medical services at the hospital and in the surrounding rural communities.

The hospital is highly regarded for its maternity services. Many patients come from lower socio-economic levels, people who cannot afford private hospital treatment in the town. There are no government medical benefits available.

Many of the hospital facilities are now 50 years old and, although functioning satisfactorily, there is a need for improvement. The hospital has 50 beds with a 60–80% occupancy rate. Outpatient treatments number 40–50 per day. Asked about particular problems, Dr Pawar mentioned that there are no blood bank facilities and patients are often anaemic and in need of a blood

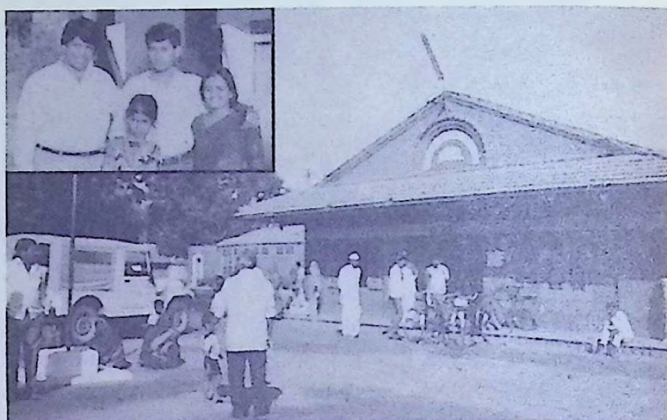
transfusion, especially at the birth of a child. Persuading family members to donate blood can be a problem. After a busy night all supplies can be exhausted.

The hospital actively supports the Indian Government's national family planning program, which centres around the theme "We two and our two". Set alongside India's 900 million population, which is anticipated to exceed that of China by 2005, Dr Pawar sees these programs as basic to improved health, education and better living standards for all. The government advocates female sterilisation after two children are born.

The hospital sponsors a strong community health outreach to villages through its team of multi-purpose health workers.

Asked about how he saw the hospital's work, Dr Pawar strongly affirms the sacrificial service and lifestyle of the staff, which is seen as part of the Christian vocation of staff members.

Asked about their family, Philemon and Shalini are proud of their two children, Moses who is seventeen years old and Miriam, aged eleven years. Moses is currently studying in Pune and is looking at medicine as his vocation. (The family is pictured in the inset above.) Shalini is a teacher with a MSc degree in Zoology. She teaches in a junior secular college in Daund where she says many staff members are Christians. Christian staff members are highly regarded for their honesty and integrity. Shalini has 125 boys age 15–17 in her



biology class and 78 girls in another. She sees her teaching as a rewarding experience and one which she obviously enjoys. Philemon says she is able to keep good control of the large classes.

Dr Pawar was born in a village near Daund. He is from a third-generation Christian family. His grandfather was influenced by the late Dr G.H. Oldfield. He joined the hospital after his graduation in 1982. In the Daund area he sees Christians well-accepted in a town of 80,000, of whom 10,000 are Roman Catholics and Protestants. The Convent school and the hospital are well-accepted by the community and highly regarded for the quality of their work. Along with Muslims, Christians are definitely minority groups within Indian society.

In some areas there is definite opposition to Christian work and at times violence. However, this is nothing compared to the violence Christians have experienced in Pakistan of recent times. The Christian community at Daund continues to pray for Christians in Pakistan.

Dr and Mrs Pawar have been on deputation in the ACT, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth and also attended the annual meeting of the OMB in June.

Missions

On Fire or Burned Out?

JEFF WESTON

As I interact with the various countries where Australian Churches of Christ are engaged in mission partnership, the level of commitment and sacrifice by many of the people I meet continually humbles me. One hot afternoon recently I visited a small house, only two rooms and a shared toilet-bathroom, in one of the resettlement areas of Zimbabwe. The house was home to the pastor of the largest church in the Associated

Although his congregation numbers around 600, they cannot afford to pay him a full salary or provide a house.

Churches of Christ Conference. Although his congregation numbers around 600, they cannot afford to pay him a full salary or provide a house. He has to work for a local shoe company to make ends meet. Yet he and his wife and three teenage daughters gladly live in this tiny house so he can continue his service for the Lord.

As I sat I asked myself whether I would be prepared to make the same type of sacrifices? I, like most Australians, live in an extended comfort zone with a beautiful house and every modern convenience. I receive a regular salary and have two cars in the driveway. I also belong to an encouraging and supportive congregation that knows very little of the struggle for survival by two-thirds of the world's peoples. Inflation in my country is almost non-existent, while in Zimbabwe it is running at 33%. In my world some people believe that

sacrifice for the Lord is the meagre offering we give on the Sundays we attend church! I have come to the conclusion that I, and most of my community, know nothing of real sacrifice for the Lord.

This should not surprise, for in order to know and be prepared to sacrifice we need to have a consuming faith, a faith that is on fire in the Lord. Most of us, if we were ever on fire to that extent, are now burned out or trying to preserve the fire's fuel! It is almost as if we have put on fireproof suits that protect us from allowing the fire to touch us. Ask yourself, when was the last time you really became excited about the word of God? So excited that you couldn't help yourself but tell every person you encountered, whether they were Christian or not! Or perhaps became so excited about a need that you not only gave excessively from your own funds but canvassed others to give also?

Perhaps we have become so complacent that the exciting things God is doing and calling the church to be are simply not heard, or even worse, are ignored. The flow on from this is that our churches, Conference departments and Overseas Mission Partners suffer from lack of resources. Many needs go unmet and we miss an opportunity for God to challenge, strengthen or encourage our faith.

Of particular concern to me as the person charged with the responsibility of overseeing the overseas mission partnership of Australian Churches of Christ, is the increasing decline of our support base. Too few people have a vision for overseas gospel outreach, while the opportunities are ever expanding. What is to happen to these opportunities? Will they go unmet?

The required budget for our overseas



outreach program equals around \$12.00 per member per year, yet we struggle to raise this. These funds provide missionary salaries and resources, financial support to indigenous Conferences, support of indigenous pastors, training programs, Bible translation, and youth outreach.

Because we are working in mainly rural subsistence areas in two-thirds world countries, there is a desperate need for financial support to keep these ministries operational. With the equivalent to one year's average salary (without allowances) for an Australian pastor we can support forty pastors in rural areas in Papua New Guinea. The total youth ministry work reaching over 2,000 young people in Papua New Guinea could be funded by an equivalent amount. Our commitment to the cost of operating the Vanuatu Conference, including Banmatmat Bible College, is the equivalent to two pastor's salaries here.

There are many opportunities for sharing the Gospel with the unreached, but it requires sacrificial supporters who have a vision and passion for the things of God to make it happen. Will you be bold and enter into this journey of excitement with us?

Jeff Weston is Executive Director of our Overseas Mission Board.

Missions

PNG and Vanuatu

SHEM TEMA AND MARK DODD

PNG



We often hear from our leaders and politicians that "Youth are the leaders of Tomorrow". This statement no doubt is true, but the potential of young people can only be realised if enough resources and services are allocated to their development. On the other hand, if resources are allocated the concern is how effective will be the end result of the services and training offered. While the needs of young people are special, they are rarely recognised as such by older people who generally tend to see them in a different light. In the case of a lot of isolated communities we are working with, social problems and community ills are often seen as almost inevitable. The potential and usefulness of young people is only recognised in sport and as providers of entertainment.

It is sad to see that each year more and more kids are pushed out of the education system with no hope of future training opportunities. Where will these young people end up? It could be at the front of your church door. That would be wonderful, but what about the church's youth ministry programs and leadership?

Our Conference youth department in PNG is planning to see that relevant training, skills and knowledge are developed in potential youth leaders. Their responsibility will be to work with young people who are struggling within

our education system. This ministry is of vital importance to the future development of our people and our nation. Already four youth leaders have completed a course in youth and community development with the Commonwealth youth program, coordinated by me with the South Pacific regional Commonwealth youth program office in the Solomon Islands. Because of the successful outcomes with our first four

The potential and usefulness of young people is only recognised in sport and as providers of entertainment.

youth leaders, we are now putting 45 youth leaders into a new course. This course commenced in June 1998 and finishes in February 1999. Pray for these new students and also for me as I am involved in the tutoring.

I see these young people as assets to our community, to the church and to our nation. I believe they have enormous potential for the future.

Shem Tema is responsible for Youth and Children's Ministry for PNG Conference.

Vanuatu

There are many exciting things happening in the churches in Vanuatu.

In July, there will be a team from Banmatmat Bible College going to the West Coast of Santo, to the area of Mount Tabwemesana.

This will be a mission trip into an area which as yet has no Christian presence. Following this trip, several of the students from Banmatmat will be staying

in the area to facilitate the formation of new churches and to build on the work of the team working there in July.

This is an exciting opportunity and is the newest area in

which our churches are working.

Other new areas of work include new churches on the island of Tanna, which is the stronghold of ni-Vanuatu custom culture.

The first Churches of Christ congregation has been established in the French colony of New Caledonia.

My own involvement within the Conference is working with the church leaders. This year I shall be visiting the churches on Ambac, Maewo, Pentecost, Santo and the newer areas of Malekula and Tanna. I shall be working alongside Simon Tambe who is the Conference Director of Mission and Evangelism.

We shall be visiting the different churches and running studies and seminars for church leaders. Topics to be covered include leadership, prayer, Bible study, the Holy Spirit, stewardship, discipleship, mission and evangelism, priorities and goal setting. The studies aim to clarify the range of leadership roles within the churches and to give leaders tools to enable them to continue to teach and minister to their congregations.

This is a year full of potential and full of opportunity for leaders to grow and develop in their understanding of faith.

Mark Dodd is a missionary in Vanuatu with our Overseas Mission Board.



Missions

Negotiating the Gap

DOROTHY HOLSTEIN

Two and a half years ago I returned permanently to live in Australia. According to the experts, I am now halfway through what they term "the gap"—that period of time required to leave one culture and satisfactorily adjust to the culture back home. I affirm with other returnees that this is a painful process. Someone has likened it to peeling off the layers of an onion.

Because it is a process, therein lies hope. With God's help, determined honesty and the passage of time, the gap narrows.

Some weeks prior to leaving I reached a point where I was no longer sad. One layer had been peeled away.

For me, the gap began some months prior to returning to Australia. It was accompanied by a whirlwind round of goodbyes across a large chunk of India, a somewhat distancing of myself from local hands-on involvement and many tears.

Some weeks prior to leaving I reached a point where I was no longer sad. One layer had been peeled away.

I believe that the honesty previously mentioned needs to be on three fronts: with oneself, God and people in general. I should not expect others to understand everything regarding my present situation, but I am required to communicate with them as clearly as possible. Being honest with myself means no pretending, no denial. I must acknowledge feelings of depression, negativeness and suddenly being overwhelmed with a sense of inability to

cope. This may be painful, but it spells progress. The only really safe place for such things is with God, the unchanging one, and it is to a loving heavenly Father that I need to bring them.

Missionaries permanently returning home have sometimes barely touched down before being asked, "What are your plans?" The legitimate answer at that point could be, "Survival". I am most fortunate to have a great volume of support, which may not be the case for some. My heart aches for the returning missionaries of earlier times when very little research had been done into the re-entry process.

Before I arrived back, my home church had written off to a place with experience of returning missionaries asking for some tips on what to do with me. Aileen Draney, whom I feel I know quite well, though we have never actually met, wrote to our church secretary with some "Do's and Don'ts" for handling "Dooky". Kindness indeed. Diana Catts travelled from Sydney for a visit and some debriefing. It was helpful.

Here in Taree, NSW, there are several who have previously served as missionaries. All have been marvellous in their help and support. Eight Indian families were living in Taree when I first came home. Their struggle to adjust somehow helped me in mine. Moving from a heavily relationship-orientated society into one more individualistic and weighted on the side of program is certainly different.

Initially, our pastor's wife helped me with the shopping. A brave lady to whom I owe much. She was patient, answered my questions, and I recall the gentleness through the whole procedure until we made it to the checkout. She must have surely had some anxious moments, but did not let it show. I now



shop and enjoy it. I am able to thumb my nose at the walls of pet food in the supermarket without getting furious inside.

For the past fifteen months I have been working in aged/palliative care in a local nursing home. I found the many new (to me) gadgets frightening at first and was certainly on an acute learning curve. This was in spite of previously doing an eight-week refresher course with the College of Nursing.

It was a special joy to have Philemeon and Shalini Pawar stay with me recently. I was embarrassed that they needed to keep asking me for drinks of water. How quickly I have become Australian on this one. I vividly remember my concern on first coming home that I could well die of thirst because nobody seemed interested in giving me water.

Negotiating the gap does not necessitate obliterating the culture in which I previously lived. Adjustments abound, but the enrichment which India has brought to my life must surely remain. I trust that I will carry it in my heart beyond the gap and on to new horizons of the future.

Classifieds

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Thinking Biblically The "A to Z" of Suffering

WAYNE BETTS

What do you do when life falls apart? When everything you've known, trusted in and worked for is swept away? When even God seems to have turned his back on you? How do you find a way forward?

A significant chunk of the Old Testament focuses on the response of God's people to disaster.

In 587 BC Jerusalem was overrun by the Babylonian forces of



*The problem
hasn't gone
away. It's not
going to end up
"happily ever
after".*

King Nebuchadnezzar, the temple was destroyed and the city and surrounds sacked.

The book of Lamentations records the distress of the people, and even the city (1:1-8), at the destruction, and tries to find some meaning in the tragedy. Lamentations consists of five poems, each written in the style of a funeral lament, using the letters of the Hebrew alphabet to start each stanza. Why? Perhaps as a memory aid (Psalm 119 uses the same technique), or perhaps to sum up the completeness of the devastation—the "A to Z" of suffering, if you like.

But there may be another possibility. Just as the alphabet provides control to the poem and eventually comes to an end, so too the poems may subtly be suggesting that the suffering of the people is under God's con-

trol and will come to its conclusion.

The laments paint a grim picture.

Priests have been killed in the temple and the siege has forced people into cannibalism (2:20). Death and destruction are everywhere (2:11, 5:14-18). Where is the hope in a situation like this?

The well-known verses from chapter three provide the focus of hope: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (3:21-23).

For people undergoing enormous trauma surviving is a victory in itself. Somehow, despite how things appear, the author affirms that God is in this calamity and only in him is there any hope of making sense of what has happened.

It's significant that Lamentations doesn't end there—defying our desire for a quick-fix to difficulties. The problem hasn't gone away. It's not going to end up "happily ever after". There's still suffering to be endured. But the security of God's faithfulness is something to cling to when everything else is coming loose.

Media Matters

The Apostle

VINEY LONGTHORP

Most students of the cinema claim that convincing religious movies are very difficult to make. I tend to agree with them. However the latest movie by America's Robert Duvall is a notable exception. *The Apostle*, in which he both acts and directs, is a fascinating and deftly-structured work. It rings true throughout. Duvall plays the role of a passionate and complex religious personality. However, if the main character is complex, the setting and the story are not. We are taken to Ameri-

The movie infers that only Grace can save Dewey from his worst and deliver him up to his best self.

ca's Deep South, among communities of the white poor, blacks, and Hispanics. This is also the territory of the "red necks".

Thus "Sonny" Dewey, a popular and colourful Pentecostalist preacher, finds his world crumbling around him. His long-suffering wife has fallen in love

with a younger minister. She has become tired of Sonny's long absences and philandering. She manipulates the church by-laws to have Sonny dismissed. Much worse follows. Soon after, in a fit of temper and when slightly drunk at his sons' little league ball game, he lashes out at the young minister with a baseball bat and seriously injures him.

Sonny is now on the run. He adopts a new identity, baptising himself simply as The Apostle. But preach he must. In a small nearly all black bayou town he starts his own church—"The One Way to Heaven". He also preaches on a local radio station. Both ventures succeed beyond all expectation.

But his sadnesses increase. He phones home to a friend to learn that his adored mother has died. He also learns that the young minister has died after a long coma. Even as his church flourishes, The Apostle cannot escape his own inner demons and his burning desire to see his children again. He continues to seek his own salvation by continuing with fervent preaching. His nemesis is never far away. Inevitably the voice of The Apostle is recognised by a listener as that of the wanted Sonny Dewey. His last sermon is delivered with a state trooper standing in wait in the front

door of the church. As the credits roll we last see him preaching in a chain-gang, certain in the knowledge that he has once more discovered his true calling—preaching Jesus to fellow prisoners.

One strength of the film lies in the honest presentation of a complex character. For Dewey is indeed as many-sided as Hamlet. For instance, though his intentions are pure, he betrays the arrogance of a self-righteous man who presumes to "save" the soul of a total stranger without even determining if that person is Christian or even needs "saving". Yet in a scene involving a car-crash, Sonny brings spiritual comfort to the two victims. He later says to his mother: "Mama, we made news in heaven this morning". This is a revealing comment, indicating that "scoring points" for himself with the Almighty may be as important as earning them for others.

Furthermore, The Apostle is not telling the story of a saint who turns out to be a sinner. As Duvall as director says: "A lot of these guys (like Dewey) become corrupt as soon as they get on television and in the public eye. But there are those who don't. And there are those who are wonderful people. Our Dewey errs, but he's not a bad guy at all. He does what he does for a living, and there are pros and cons."

The movie also eschews the melodramatics that often mar stories about religion and spiritual leaders. The movie is naturalistic in style, almost semi-documentary. There are no heavenly choirs or celestial lights helping Dewey out of his spiritual and temporal problems or to embrace God. (But there is a lot of great old-fashioned



Gospel music.) The good and the bad are all mixed up in him. The movie infers that only Grace can save Dewey from his worst and deliver him up to his best self.

This story follows, in part, a long-standing tradition in Southern literature in which a charismatic and mysterious stranger comes to a small town and has a transforming effect on the community, wherein the stranger himself is transformed as well. While in this small town, Sonny works quite a few "miracles" of grace before his past brings him down. Many would respond to the Sonny we see in the movie by asking, "Is he for real?" Duvall would claim that he has created a very real person, based on what he saw in those southern regions. Further, our director made every attempt not to caricature preachers "as some movies do". I'd strongly recommend anyone to see this movie. Sure, I found Sonny a puzzle, but then, aren't we all? I was also fascinated by the religious "culture" of the deep south, so objectively pictured. And even though I'd feel like a fish out of water worshipping with the Sonny's of this world, it would still make me marvel the more at the vast array of styles of worship extant—all in the name of the one Lord Jesus Christ.

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Maybe we can help you to help us in return. May God shine upon your pathway and may it lead to our door!

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Oakleigh Church of Christ, Vic
(03) 9568 1825.

CHANGES

CAVESIDE Pastoral Team—Ron and Lyn Chapman, 91 Nixon St, Devonport Tas 7310.

BAPTISMS

•Jeffrey Green, Carol-Ann Green, Scarborough, WA •Luke, David and Sham-mai Searles, Colonel Light Gardens, SA •Michelle Bialy, Chinchilla, Qld

MARRIAGES

•Sarah Randall and Isaac Moran, Scarborough, WA

DEATHS

•Ivan Cameron, Don McManus, Red Cliffs, Vic •Dorothy Wills, Ann Peters, Portland, Vic

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

BUTTRESS, Alice Evelyn (nee Casson)

(3.6.98) Alice was born 30.4.08 in Melbourne. For most of her life she lived at the same address in Moonee Ponds. She attended the Ascot Vale Church of Christ but later transferred to Essendon. In her younger days she played her part in the ladies' clubs, particularly the CWF. One of her prime interests was in crocheting. Regrettably, she lost her husband, Bill, quite early but continued to refer to him often throughout her life. Alice faithfully maintained her attendance at church with her sister, Mona, till shortly before she died. She leaves another sister, May. —KS

MORRIS, Bertha

(8.4.98) Bertha Bourdzle was born near Bayonne, France, 12.6.11 and came to Australia with her parents who became associated with the City Temple, Sydney, NSW, where she was baptised in 1922 and later became active in numerous activities. She married Rex Morris in 1939, with whom she had attended Crown St Public School, NSW, and the City Temple. They had association with Penshurst, NSW, and Belmore, NSW, churches and were later involved with Bankstown, NSW, which merged to become Greenacre, NSW. In retirement, Bertha and Rex moved to the Blue Mountains and were associated with Wentworth Falls and later Katoomba churches, NSW. Bertha was most involved in community and church activities. She leaves

her husband and children, Marie, Rex, David, Victor, Jim and their families.

—RM

TRELOAR, Ada

(12.5.98) Ada was born in Beulah, Vic, in September 1909. The family shifted to Brighton in 1921 and in that year Ada made her confession and was baptised. When 17 she began teaching kindergarten at Brighton church and stayed in that role for 37 years. Ada was devoted to God serving him through women's fellowship and, in later years, as an elder at Sunshine church. How appropriate the closing hymn at her funeral was "Jesus wants me for a Sunbeam". She sang it hundreds of times, helping to lead little children to Jesus, our ultimate hope.

—DRM

El Kanah Marysville

Cathedral Mountain Christian Community Centre

Ladies Retreat

7-9 August

Ladies, we invite you to join with us and enjoy rest, relaxation and fellowship.

Single Parenthood Retreat 14-16 August

This weekend will help you gain new insights and understanding as a single parent.

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Speaker Brian Good 12-16 October

Speaker Maurice Gray 9-13 November

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December

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20% discount for all school holidays.

Phone Bev on (03) 5963 3229 for more information.

Director of Nursing

Churches of Christ Nursing Home is a 61-bed facility at Pendle Hill, NSW, and is one of the most popular and respected aged care providers in the western Sydney area. We are seeking a highly-motivated and professionally committed person for this exciting and challenging position.

As a church-based organisation, the nature of the position requires that the applicant be a committed Christian, actively involved in their own local church. In this regard, a supporting reference is essential.

Preference will be given to persons with experience in the management of a nursing home, or who are currently employed in aged care that can demonstrate the appropriate skills required.

Salary and conditions will be in accordance with the Nursing Homes & C Nurses Award.

A copy of the relevant job description can be obtained by phoning the administration office on (02) 9636 5892. Written applications and resume marked confidential is to be forwarded to:

Mr Des Malone
Locked Bag 1
PENDLE HILL NSW 2145

Applications close 31 July 1998.



Church News

NSW

LOWER BLUE MOUNTAINS (Stephen Templeton) Many great things happening ... Development of house for ministry has begun, extra parking being provided, sanity saver put in for pre-school children, men's ministry begun, as well as craft outreach mornings ... "Endless Praise" took part in services for 7 June, gift of \$900 given with thanks for their ministry ... Outreach weekend coming up 2 August with Doug MacFarlane ... Average May attendances 149.

TELOPEA (D Wilson, L Berthelsen, J Berthelsen, J Elsmore, S Hall) Victory on the Inside new preaching series for July ... Recent Saturday prayer seminar led by Brian Pickering & the Spirit Alive team much appreciated ... Numbers attending Thursday church increasing & separate Kids Ministry being considered ... Church continues to release members into ministry elsewhere & will be supporting Alison Roeth as she moves into cross-cultural ministry overseas.

QLD

CHINCHILLA (Rod Feldhahn) CWF held outreach morning with Bev Grenfell of Toowoomba as speaker ... Members attended Western Districts Churches camp at Bunya Mountains. Gary Hills study leader ... Family camp held in April ... Church combined with Baptist church for Good Friday service. Easter Sunday service joyful with baptism of Michelle Bialy ... Minister & family delighted with manse renovations, completed by John Johnson a church member & builder.

SA

DULWICH-ROSE PARK UNITED PARISH (Gary Harris) Muriel Coombe returned after spending several months in England ... Volunteer members spend a day a month on church building maintenance. For longer-term work, especially maintenance on win-

dows, \$1,200 raised by Peg & Cameron MacNaughton & helpers by making & selling jam, relishes & sauces.

COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS (Bryan Sellers) Community Service held March recognising work of Service Clubs in district ... Education service in September to recognise work of local schools, TAFE etc ... Fay Dealy Memorial Playgroup grown from 2 to 25 children ... Kid's Club continuing to grow ... Evaluation & planning day held, worship & communion leaders successfully introduced ... Phil Searles baptised his 3 children.

ELIZABETH (Lindsay Mayes) Exciting & positive time for church recently ... Appointment of Tim Clark as youth minister 2 days a week & Brian Hill as pastoral care minister one day a week ... Various new ministries ... Using Network study material to help people discern gifts ... New groups for seniors, young adults & youth ... Effective use of Alpha course.

HAPPY VALLEY (Andrew Ratcliffe) HUB Club children presented flowers & lollies to mums on Mother's Day ... Soup-pasty lunch fundraiser for Living Link, followed by AGM ... 50s Plus led morning service, Ron McLean guest speaker ... Peter & Rhonda Johnson moved to Ceduna. Their involvement will be missed ... Basket Ball season commenced ... Soup-roll lunch after 40 Hour Famine finished.

TAS

CAVESIDE (Ron & Lyn Chapman) John & Colleen Harrison finished ministry 26 April. Farewell service held ... Ron & Lyn commenced ministry 10 May. Induction service conducted by John Powell, Tasmanian Conference President ... "Welcome" craft group for ladies meets monthly ... Ladies banquet. Delicious meal prepared by men ... Home fellowship group increased, need for 2 groups, Caveside & Deloraine ... Ron commenced a series on "Being a People of God".

NUBEENA (Keith Moulton) Guest speakers recently have been Mort Denwer & Brett Nichols from Hobart ... Combined churches service held 31 May ... Some members attended the Power & Glory Pentecost service in Hobart ... Over 20 children attend Kid's Own ... Sunday morning services being taped for isolated people ... Some sickness among members.

VIC

TOOTGAROOK (M. Giezendanner) Church in good heart, average attendance at worship 100 ... Visitors include past members Miriam & Jan Holloway from WA ... Mid-year mutual market netted \$700 ... Visiting speaker 7 June Ted Bourne from Gideons much appreciated ... Open Door Friendship Group & CWF continue to meet monthly. Weekly bible study & prayer meeting. Also KYB fortnightly.

OAKLEIGH (Don Milne) During last quarter outreach program held with Doug MacFarlane & Chadstone musicians ... Church buildings painted & new signs erected ... Mrs Mae Purvis & Mrs Ada Treloar brought into membership. Sadly Ada died 12.5.98 ... Samoan congregation using facilities as well as Polish & Chinese fellowships ... New pastoral system in operation ... New family Circle of Friends outreach being formed ... Bible study group growing.

BURWOOD/MOUNT WAVERLEY (Peter Wing Tang) Meaningful Easter services held ... Annual car trial a trial for some navigators, but enjoyed by all ... Russell Croxford speaker at recent men's breakfast ... Many past members attended 40th anniversary. Service held 26 April, Bob Stokes guest speaker, lunch & PSA followed ... Beryl Drake, Beryl Reid welcomed back after their lengthy illnesses ... New arrival Isaac Purdie welcomed into fellowship.

RED CLIFFS (Ian Hunt) Sue Griffin & helpers taking services at local day care centre & nursing home ... Minister attended State Conference ... Ruth

Perkins SIM speaker telling of work at Maradi Niger ... Care & Share held annual luncheon cruise on Murray ... Horsham church band & team took service 7 June ... Charles Bayer, speaker Sunraysia Conference, spoke at Red Cliffs 14 June ... Church planning 75th anniversary in August.

LATROBE TERRACE, GEELONG (David Jones) David Jones speaker at special inner churches Pentecost service held in chapel. Tea provided following service ... \$80 received for cancer research when ladies entertained men with talk & slides by Railway Travel Department. Cooked breakfast & talk enjoyed by over 20 men ... Organists assisting Geelong East church ... Minister's family & others participated in 40 Hour Famine, raising over \$1,200.

PORTLAND (Blair & Julie Davis) Several groups doing Alpha studies, including teenagers ... Drama group putting on plays during services ... Visit from Catfords from Tabor College ... Worship seminar with Dennis & Noelene Prince well attended from surrounding fellowships ... Couple going to China orphanage for short time. Church busy raising funds to help with fares.

MOUNT CLEAR (Rod Ratcliffe) Chek Chia (Conference President) guest speaker on Spirit & prayer ... Senior Friends VIP service, favourite hymns ... 7.00 pm Encounter Services questions & answers ... Youth Refocus/Vision breakfast ... Learning New Songs night ... Many sickies to visit ... Card from Sally & Scott in NT ... Helen Brown coordinating women's groups.

WA

SCARBOROUGH (Nigel Merrick, Ken Doran) Vicki Mustafa of NCOO & Ken Laeffer guest speakers ... Nigel Merrick attended FEBC's 50th anniversary celebrations in Manila & Hong Kong ... "Operation Shoe Box" commenced. Boxes to be filled with small toys & toiletries for an overseas child ... "Baby Boomers" group going well.

Exploring the Day Miracles

JANET THOMPSON

Damien, one of the younger members of our cell group, was quite belligerent. "There are no miracles any more. God doesn't do that. Why not?"

We talked about it. No-one had a first-hand experience of a mountain being moved (I mean a real rocks-and-soil mountain!) as evidence of God's intervention. The conversation moved onto metaphorical mountains, and the obvious question—what is a miracle? Theological definitions are not settled by cell-group discussion, but it was interesting to hear people's views.

As we pursued the subject, we uncovered a wide range of ideas about miracles. A young couple in the group were on the IVF program; one of the women resented the early death of her mother; one of the men had been abused as a child ... our pictures of miracles were as diverse as our experiences. And it became obvious that what most of us wanted was for God to perform magic tricks to make our lives go the way we thought they should be going. Damien wanted flashes of lightning and pillars of fire to justify his beliefs, and silence his critics. He stuck to his opinion—there are no miracles.

It's tempting to picture a series of miraculous events—poetic justice for people who get in the way, rewards for good behaviour and the untangling of unmanageable situations. The current expression, "In your dreams!" is a reasonable response. Once in a while, something extraordinary does hap-

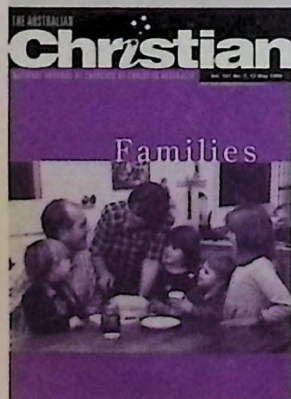


pen, defying explanation. Perhaps it is a miracle, perhaps not. I ventured the comment that we might be taking the real miracles for granted. As churchgoers we have grown accustomed to seeing lives changed when people are prepared to step out in faith—it happens a lot. Are we overlooking the obvious?

It was thought-provoking stuff—but not for Damien. Sadly, he was only looking for people to agree with him. He left our congregation a few weeks later. So he missed out on our shared joy when the couple on the IVF program became parents and went on to have a second child with no medical intervention.

Perhaps seeing a miracle depends on what you believe. Have you seen any miracles lately?

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The Last Word

Nothing was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

You know you're a missionary kid when:

You can't answer the question, "Where are you from?"
You speak two languages, but can't spell either.
You embarrass yourself by asking what swear words mean.
You have a passport, but no driver's licence.
You watch national geographic specials and recognise someone.
You watch nature documentaries and you think about how good that would be if it were fried.
Strangers say they can remember you when you were "this tall."
You sort your friends by continent.
"Where are you from?" has more than one reasonable answer.
You know what real coffee tastes like.
The majority of your friends don't speak English as a first language.
You can't identify a robin, but storks are common sights.
National Geographic makes you homesick.
You flew before you could walk.
All preaching sounds better under a corrugated iron roof.
You know how to pack.

The 90s Woman (3)

