

THE AUSTRALIAN



Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 101 No. 13, 12 August 1998

PRINT POST APPROVED PP34P151/00410

YOUR SELF IMAGE



Looking in the mirror • Children • Teenagers • After trauma • Men



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Editor: Don Smith, Production Manager/Sub Editor: Nigel Pegram Issue 26 August Deadline 13 August; Issue 9 September Deadline 27 August; Issue 23 September Deadline 10 September. Address for all correspondence: PO Box 101, Essendon North Vic 3041. Telephone (03) 9379 1219, Fax (03) 9379 0015, E-mail <aceditor@ozemail.com.au>. World Wide Web <www.ozemail.com.au/~aceditor>. Member publication of the Australasian Religious Press Association. Published by the Board of Management of The Australian Christian, a Department of the National Conference of Churches of Christ in Australia. Keith Aird, Chairman (SA); Lindsay Mott, Treasurer (Vic); John Batchler (Tas); Tom Glynn (NSW); Bev Grenfell (Qld); Lea Nelson (ACT); Allen Smyth (WA). Printed by New Litho Pty Ltd, Surrey Hills Vic. Responsibility for electoral material is accepted by Don Smith, 2 Lakspur Ave, Doncaster 3108. This publication is indexed in the Australasian Religion Index. ISSN 0004-8852. Advertising Rates: Displayed: \$6.00 per column centimetre, Classifieds: \$15.00 for the first 25 words and 25c for each additional word.

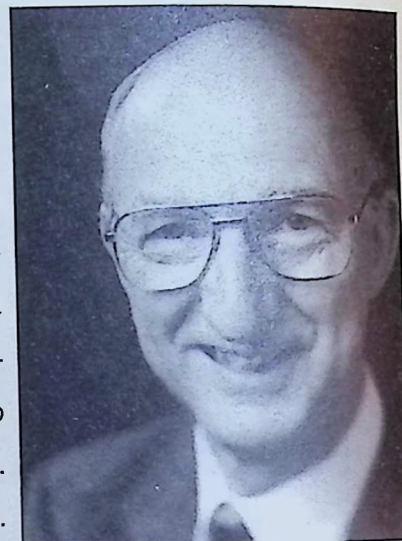


Editorial

Image is Everything

DON SMITH

Image is everything or so they say! It constantly seems to matter in the entertainment world and also in politics, where the every move of leaders is evaluated in terms of image. At times we are saddened by the downfall of a high-profile person whose public image has been tarnished. I recently heard of someone who has had quite a high public image on a particular social issue, who carries an intensely confused self-image. * A healthy group image is important for the churches to which we belong. The New Testament abounds in images of the church. Paul Minear, in his book *Images of the Church in the New*



Testament, discusses ninety-six such images. He says they have the capacity to describe and convey an impression of something that is already well known, such as salt or light. Sometimes a reality which is inherently a mystery will demand the awakening of the imagination by an image. Images can also serve to advance self-understanding, whether by an individual or by a society. Minear observes that we carry within a gallery of self-images. They may include "rebel or rock, inventor or destroyer". * Effective self-integration will derive to a large extent from one of these images becoming dominant and mirroring the authentic self. Unauthentic images lead to malaise and perhaps even communal or group deterioration. Discovering and rediscovering authentic self-images have the potential for rebirth and growth. Think for a moment about how you see the group image of your own congregation. This is a fundamental question for churches. * These comments on the image of the church are important because whatever we say or do impacts on the people in our network. Are we helping to develop attitudes, values and ideas which will enable those in our care to stand in a secular world, sustain faith and cope with life in a society which often does not share our values? A full-orbed self image is basic to this challenge. Our task is not to create some intellectual and emotional ghetto or Christian refuge, but rather to equip and sustain those in our care with a heart, mind and spirit that is open to all the fullness of life in our society. *

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How we perceive ourself is critical to our Christian growth. Our writers examine some issues concerning our self-image.

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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.

One Nation

To the Editor,
If one actually reads the article ("Queensland Elections", "AC" 8.7.98), it simply records the bald facts as reported: Mr Feldman's previous service to the church and the community and his recent entry into Parliament. No political gerrymandering or political comments were made, or even implied.

I commend *The Australian Christian* for its non-biased professional reporting.

Unfortunately, it seems that Max Collyer or Peter Dixon ("AC" 22.7.98) would have the Editor include political censorship as part of his role!

I have never hesitated to communicate with a member of any Party and have always received courteous replies, not always to my liking, so, when the One Nation party hit the headlines, I requested copies of certain speeches and other information.

The contrast between the actual material and what was reported by the Australian media was astounding.

Relevancy and truth seemed to have been swallowed by a sea of misinformation, hysteria, and political opportunism. I have never before witnessed such an apparently well-orchestrated attack. (Although the Bob Menzies' Reds Under Our Beds, Malcolm Fraser's Anti-Moscow Olympics, and Bob Hawke's Down With Aus-

tralian Pilots, campaigns do come to mind.)

If for no other reason, we should thank the One Nation party for having now forced the Government to pay attention to ordinary Australian citizens.

Let's all be thankful that we have some fine Christian representatives (including Bill Feldman) in our Parliaments. We certainly need them!

—Vin Waters
(Essendon, Vic)

Out of Work

To the Editor,
Is anyone who is reading this out of work? Is there someone who has still fresh memories of being out of work? Are there readers who know someone else who is or has been out of work?

My next *Encounter* on the ABC's Radio National will be called "Being Out of Work".

So I'm looking for people who know what that's like to take part. I'll want to know about your last job, and why it ended—or whether you've not worked since leaving school. About what it's like taking knock-back after knock-back, when in a healthier climate you'd be snatched up. About what you think of CES, of Job Link.

I want to know how you make ends meet, whether any congregation or perhaps church agency is supportive.

I want to know what role your faith (if you have one) plays in this trying time, and how you keep going—or if you've given up. Drop me a line to the ABC, GPO Box 9994, Melbourne, including your telephone number, or ring the ABC in your capital city as soon as possible from Monday 19 August.

And thanks!

—Kay McLennan
(Melbourne, Vic)

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Letters to the Editor

One Nation

To the Editor,

If one accepted at face value the criticisms of One Nation by trendy journalists, one would have to agree with the comments of Max Collyer and others ("AC" 22.7.98) about this party. The fact of the matter is that One Nation has picked up a groundswell of dissidents who are concerned about a range of social problems, including unemployment, economic rationalism, gun laws and the decline of social amenity in rural areas. Many sincere Christians are concerned about some of these issues.

Therefore, universal condemnation is not appropriate. Further, since one of the concerns of One Nation is that Australia is being run by and for elites, such condemnation by bureaucrats, business people, bishops and other elite groups serves only to confirm the perceptions of One Nation sympathisers and publicise its cause. One Nation is best dealt with by addressing the sources of alienation in Australian society and by public scrutiny of its policies—not attacks on the party or particular members of it.

One Nation would claim not to be racist, but concerned about social equity. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the recently

appointed Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in NSW, the Hong-Kong born David Tsai, recently praised Pauline Hanson as a courageous woman, stating "she's raised all the right issues". From discussion in the press, it would appear that some Australian-born Chinese would agree.

I am inclined to the view that culture rather than race is the big issue in Australian society. It is unfortunate that, encouraged by the rhetoric of multiculturalism, most people confuse the two. Racism has become a label that is used to vilify people who question this rhetoric or who try to investigate scams which involve people



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Update

Dear Readers,

This issue contains a focus on "Self Image". Several of our contributors have mentioned publications which may be interesting to readers. Space does not allow a listing. Alaina Westaway and Talitha Powell have supplied a list of related books on their teenage theme. A list is available upon request. Dr Cliff Powell has also noted that core ideas in his article are adapted from *Unloading the Overload* by C. Powell and G. Barker to be published late in 1998 by Strand Publishing, Australia.

We have received more "Letters to the Editor" than we can handle for one issue. Some must be held over for subsequent issues. Don't let that discourage you from writing! Mr Feldman's appointment to the Queensland Parliament has certainly focused the attention of readers on related issues. Bill Feldman is also among our subscribers. On a minor matter relating to "Letters", it is our practice to use the name of the writer accompanied by their residential address, which is not necessarily the same as the name of the church with which the writer may be involved.

Lois and I recently enjoyed a short holiday and private visit to Tasmania to share with family members. We worshipped with the Launceston church at two services and were thrilled with the continuing membership growth and the vision of the leadership. It is great to see what is now one of our larger churches in Australia in Tasmania's second largest city. I am also thankful for much smaller churches in entirely different circumstances. We belong together in one family. It is good to be able to rejoice together in our diversity free of unfruitful attitudes.

Occasionally we receive bromides from advertisers. As our publication process has been entirely electronic for quite some years, bromides incur costs on our part. These costs will now be passed on to advertisers, the current rate is \$20. Advertisers and readers are welcome to discuss particular needs with us. We are experiencing an increasing use of digital technology in this area.

Sam Smith

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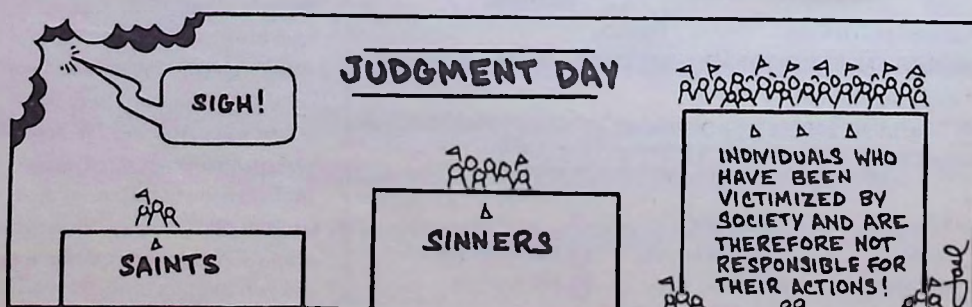
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Letters to the Editor

of non-Anglo ethnicity. For those who want to understand this I strongly recommend Paul Sheehan's book *Beyond the Barbarians*.

—H.E. Hayward
(Pymble, NSW)

One Nation

To the Editor,
Congratulation to Bill Feldman ("AC" 8.7.98) for being a Christian in a political party. I and/or others may not agree with his particular choice, but only God can judge his motives. If these motives are truly Christ-centred, he will be used by God in his sphere of influence.

Is there—or was there ever—a political party, that followers of Christ could really call "the only way"? Let's cease to swing brick bats at those we see as, from our

point of view, wrong.

Christians are to be the leaven for God within his world, whether they be in religious, political, ethical, or whatever, groups. Let us, each, be Christ to and within the situation, to people wherever we are.

—Glenda Hurst
(Frankston, Vic)

One Nation

To the Editor,
Over the years, members of Churches of Christ have been actively involved in the Australian Labor Party, Liberal Party, National Party, the Democrats, the Greens and now One Nation. The simple encompassing reason is that Christians care!

We do not have to agree with them. We do not have to vote for them. Our grace role is to affirm

them as siblings in Christ, extend to them Jesus' love, and pray for them, that their lives may be at one with the will of God. I give thanks with a grateful heart for that dash of Christian salt in the cooking pots of every Australian political party, even if it's not the menu I'd choose! —Max White
(Ballarat, Vic)

Indonesia

To the Editor,
We have been thrilled with the growth of our Churches in Indonesia. When we visited central Java in 1972 there was one small church. Now there are over 75 churches in various places in Indonesia, as noted by Paulus Wibowo ("AC" 8.7.98). As well, we have a healthy Bible College. We need to pray for the pastors

and people. A recent letter stated, "When money remains a problem, businesses pull out, which then makes it difficult for the poor, since a number of large factories close. It is difficult for someone not here to realise the depth of poverty this brings. All the financial advance that was gained in the last 20 years has been wiped out by the financial crisis and rioting." Some of our churches have Chinese Indonesian pastors and people who are under extreme pressure, for in times of economic tension people look for someone to blame. In many areas Chinese-owned businesses have been burnt to the ground. Pray that our people will be protected and steadfast.

—Jean and Noel Flint
(Warrimoo, NSW)

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Who Said We're Too Old?

Exploring ways seniors can contribute to the church's ministry

On 27 June over 70 seniors gathered for another Seniors' Saturday organised by the NSW Seniors' Ministry Team. The program was hosted by the Pendle Hill church and held in the facilities of Crawford Lodge.

There was ample time over a BBQ lunch to catch up with old friends. This informal sharing was followed by the afternoon program which included five seniors telling their stories and sharing the ministries they are involved in. Those who participated were Jean Flint and Margaret Langley (Lower Blue Mountains), Neville Hing (Belmore), Pam Johnson (Moorebank) and Lex Lake (Stanwell Tops). The ministries included Sunday School teaching, pastoral care at a local hospital/nursing home, hostel visitation, worship-service leading, mentoring younger Christians, Bible-study leading, contacting non-Christians, offering respite care and more.



Pam Johnson shared her story at the NSW seniors' Saturday

Their stories were both an encouragement and a challenge to all present. A ministry checklist was also distributed to those present. This contained over fifty suggested areas in which seniors might minister. We anticipate the list will grow as seniors around the state catch the vision and continue to use their God-given gifts and experience.

—Pam Clapshaw

Good Gear

Marion, SA, converts clothing to cash



The work at Marion is supported by a dedicated team of workers at Good Gear

"A Grand Prix tee shirt bearing the signature of Beatle George Harrison was once found in a pile of clothes," recalls Gwen Fisher, coordinator of Marion's Good Gear Recycled Clothing Shop. "It sold some months later at a memorabilia auction for close to \$400—making it without a doubt the most expensive item we have ever sold."

Gwen talks with great enthusiasm about her beloved Good Gear Shop that plays a vital role in the financial strength of the Marion church, raising \$1,000 per week through the sale of quality used clothing and bric-a-brac.

The story of Good Gear is a remarkable one, spanning almost twelve years and involving scores of volunteers in that period, with a total of \$272,000 having been raised for the church to offset loans and pay for special projects. "I am amazed by the way our current team of 50 volunteers works with such enthusiasm—particularly as many of the tasks are quite menial, like the sorting, washing, ironing and hanging of clothes," comments Gwen.

What she is too modest to talk

about is her own incredible leadership style which has enabled her to successfully recruit, maintain and inspire these volunteers, many of whom are in the late 60s and 70s, with the oldest being 92 years old.

Good Gear's reputation for quality and service seems to get bigger with each passing year and it certainly stands as positive proof that there is money in recycled clothing!

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Making News

PNG Tidal Wave

The tidal wave which caused devastation in the north-west Aitape area of PNG has left all our Conference work untouched. The Overseas Mission Board is open to receive donations which will be channelled through the National Council of Churches, Australia. The most effective donation is money.

CCA Editor

Christian Conference of Asia newspaper has Australian editor



Geoff Alves (right) shows his first issue to "AC" staff member Nigel Pegram.

Geoff Alves (seated), one of our past staff members who has recently been appointed Editor of the Christian Conference of Asia paper *CCA News*, is seen here showing his first issue to Nigel Pegram of *The Australian Christian* staff.

Copy for the paper is sent to Geoff by e-mail from Hong Kong, the headquarters of the Conference. The text is edited and the finished layout of the paper sent to Hong Kong for printing.

This quarterly paper circulates widely throughout Asia among affiliated churches. Geoff's contribution is on a voluntary basis and is a further expression of his skills in the publishing area.

He attends the Footscray, Vic, church. The CCA has 119 member churches from all streams in seventeen Asian nations, including Australia and New Zealand. Glynthia Finger, one of our ministers, is also a staff worker operating out of Hong Kong.

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Paddle Steamer Dedicated

First steamer of its type built in over eighty years



PS William Randell on the Murray at its dedication, with builder Roly Bartlett (inset)

Roly Bartlett, a member of the Goolwa, SA, church has almost completed the first traditionally-built wooden paddle steamer on the River Murray since 1913. The keel was laid in January, 1993 and a service of blessing and commissioning of the *PS William Randell* was held on 27 June 1998.

During this time, Roly has spent an estimated 7,000 hours constructing the craft, with some assistance from friends. The *William Randell* is built of grey box on steel frames, with a wooden superstructure. She is a

side-wheeler, with ten-foot paddles coupled to a Ruston Hornsby steam engine, which came to Australia in 1923 and was used on a shearing plant in New South Wales.

The blessing ceremony, witnessed by over 200, was conducted by David Marr, Senior Police Chaplain for SA (a Churches of Christ minister) assisted by Goolwa minister, Chris Ambrose. This was a time of celebration and joy and also an opportunity to ask God's blessing on all involved in sailing on the *William Randell*. It was also a chance for Roly and Denise to express their faith in God, and share that with their friends and the community.

The commissioning of the *PS William Randell* was conducted by Mrs Barbara Rymill, a granddaughter of William Richard Randell, the first steam navigator of the Murray River (William Randell built his boat, the *Mary Anne*, in 1852-1853 near Mannum and commenced the first steam trading journey on the river system in 1853).

Hands of Grace

Seminar and Concerts with Geoff Bullock

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Celebration Dinner

Fifty years of Girls' Brigade in SA

With Verna Lander as Captain, the first Girls' Brigade Company in South Australia was established at the Henley Beach Church of Christ on 29 June 1948. Known as The Girls' Life Brigade in those years, many lives were touched through their involvement in the 1st Adelaide Company. Some of those members are in active leadership within Girls' Brigade today.

A relaxing evening over dinner was enjoyed by past and present leaders and their partners. There was much animated chatter as people renewed acquaintances. Of interest was the display of memorabilia. Music was provided by "The Sherrahs", who worship as a family at the Marion Church of Christ. "The Sherrahs" are recording artists and have won awards at the Tamworth Country Festival. Their contribution to the evening was much appreciated.

Yvonne Lanyon (pictured here) is currently serving a three-year term as State Commissioner of Girls' Brigade in SA. She was Captain of the 1st Adelaide Company for five years and has served a three-year term as a Divisional Commissioner. Yvonne and her family have worshipped at the



Yvonne Lanyon, State Commissioner of Girls' Brigade, with husband Phil at the dinner

Marion Church of Christ for seven years. She works full-time there as the office administrator. While not experiencing Girls' Brigade as a girl, Yvonne has a strong commitment to the movement. She represents Girls' Brigade SA and her Lord well as she carries out her duties with quiet but firm leadership.

Making News

Fiji Visa Extension

Barry and Sue Ward have been granted a three-year extension to their visa for work in Fiji.

Vanuatu Trek

Mike and Aaron Folland have recently returned from a two-week trek into a remote area of Santo with a team of Bible College students. They successfully climbed Vanuatu's highest mountain. A new church plant is proposed in this area.

Help Make the News!



"By including 'The Australian Christian' in your will, you can help make the news for years to come. A bequest will help ensure that your newspaper continues to provide news and information to our future readers."

—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

A bequest to The Australian Christian can be made through your solicitor or contact us for the appropriate wording.

A Record Year

State Youth Games, Victoria 1998

More people, more churches and more rain than ever before! That was State Youth Games '98. It was a big event—in more ways than one. The Lardner Park field days site near Warragul came to life when around 1100 people from 32 churches gathered with tents and caravans for a non-stop week-end of activities. Not even the rain could dampen the wild enthusiasm for fun, friendship and physical activity.

Twenty different sports were offered, ranging from the more vigorous events such as the triathlon, to the quieter darts, or even chess. New sports like aerobic dance and mountain-bike racing added lots of interest this year. Many attended simply to take in the spectacle and enjoy the atmosphere.

And there was more than just sport at State Youth Games. Renowned speaker and author, Michael Frost was featured in the worship meetings, which saw a large number of young people respond publicly. The program also included live bands, drama, disco and coffee shop.



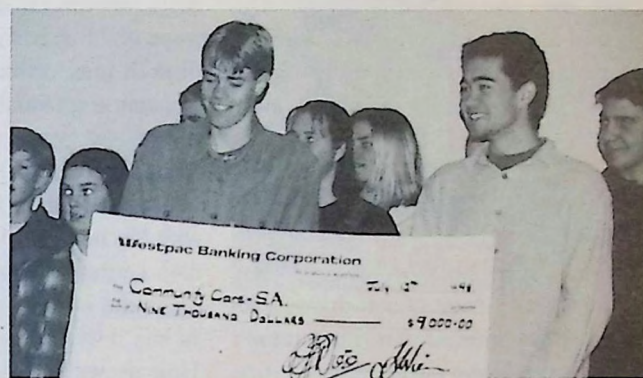
Some of the basketball action at the games.

State Youth Games director Russell Croxford was very pleased with the success of the event and believes it offered huge potential for the outreach and development of local church youth groups who participated in the weekend. So who won? Congratulations to the Ballarat Central (small group), Mulgrave (medium) and Blackburn (overall winner) Churches of Christ for taking home the major trophies.

—Russell Croxford

Youthworx Raises \$18,350

Money raised to aid Community Care SA youth work and injured member



Youthworx, Bordertown, SA, members display the cheque for Community Care's work

Joanne Flavel, a sixteen-year-old Bordertown, SA, youth club member suffered serious spinal and neck injuries at a school aquatics camp late last year and the Bordertown community have established a trust fund to which Youthworx wanted to contribute. Funds were raised by a new goods and services auction in the Bordertown Civic Centre on 12 June. From the proceeds, \$9,000 was donated to Community Care, SA, and \$9,350 to Joanne.

A vacant shop in the centre of the main shopping area of Bordertown was kindly donated to allow display of all items donated for auction. Church ladies operated the shop on a roster system for six weeks leading up to the sale and kept items on a trading table to also assist with the fundraiser.

A short video interview with Joanne, filmed by Community Care SA youth worker Rachel Andrews during one of her visits to Joanne, was shown at the commencement of the auction.

The auction at the Civic Centre attracted 300 people. A cricket bat

signed by Sir Donald Bradman was a star attraction bringing \$1,600. High-quality distressed pine stained furniture, kindly donated by Stephen and Leanne Sanders of Stephlea Furniture, Port Elliot, raised \$7,000, when all of the 210 lots were sold.

The 24 Youthworx members organised an early dismissal from school to set up the hall for the auction. All were dressed in their bright red Youthworx T-shirts and were assisting the auction team, selling catalogues, staffing the door and selling drinks.

It was an excellent effort which has resulted in support of a fellow Youthworx member who is now confined to a wheelchair. Support has also been provided to Community Care SA youth worker Rachel Andrews, who works with homeless youth, potential suicide victims and other young people struggling with various issues.

Many have been encouraged by this initiative. We praise God for the total success of this activity which raised almost double the original goal. —Graham Carson

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Self-Image

Looking in the Mirror

PAUL SCULLY

What image do you have of yourself, when you look in the mirror? Someone who is good-looking? Alternatively, do you see an image that gives you the urge to take up jogging and join Weight Watchers? Most people are concerned about how they appear—even those who do not dress to impress. So what do we see in the mirror, when we look at ourselves? This is an important question, because that image of self drives a lot of our behaviour. Come this summer when you go for a swim, your self-perception will determine whether your strut your stuff in brief swimmers or you wear a neck-to-knee bathing suit, or forget about swimming altogether, lest they think you're a beached whale.

We are more interested in having the right personality, than the right character.

Feeling good about how we see ourselves is clearly preferable to feeling depressed and dejected. However, a proper understanding of our self-image comes from appreciating the question, "In whose image are we made?" Self-image is a product of our reactions to our family and friends, and society's perception of us. Consequently, many young women today, including Christian women, see themselves as overweight. But such a self-image is often false. Most young women aren't overweight. Such a view that limits self-image to body shape is also false, since our identity is more than our physical bodies.

The Bible teaches that people are made in the image of God (Gen 1:27, James 3:9). But what is the image of God? A good-looking body? Traditionally, the church taught that the image of God was some spiritual quality, rather than a physical quality. A simple approach to understanding the image of God, is to look at Christ. Corinthians teaches that Christ is the image of God (2 Cor 4:4). Christ's attitude and actions reflect to us the kind of godly person we are to be.

How do we see ourselves? We should see in the spiritual mirror an ever-increasing reflection of God's glory in our lives (2 Cor 3:18). Put simply, the character of Christ ought to be seen in increasing measure in our life.

Another matter with self-image is the issue of character versus personality. Jesus surely had a unique human personality, which we are not called to mimic. God is interested in our character, which moderates our personality. Yet often we tend to get it the other way around. We are more interested in having the right personality, than the right character. I suspect personality is something that is predetermined by genetics, while character is not. Paul the apostle, for example, appeared to be a zealous, driven person all his life. Paul was ambitious for himself, and proud of who he was (Phil 3:3-6). But he rejected this image of himself, for an identity in Christ (Phil 3:7). Paul always seemed to have that zealous, driven personality, but his ambitions and what he boasted about changed. Paul wanted to be like Christ to the core of his being.

How does this apply to life. The secular self-image model, for example, would encourage people to assert themselves, teaching that such an ability to



assert ourselves is critical to emotionally healthy well-being. In the extreme, the secular self-image teaches, "I am, after all, the most important person in the world." No doubt, feeling confident about oneself is important. However, the Christian model of self includes the belief that I will willingly choose not to assert myself. Instead I would humble myself and forgo my rights for the sake of others, as Christ did.

The model of a servant for our self-image is not politically correct, nor is it particularly appealing from a marketing point of view. However, we are called to be like Christ, who is the perfect image of God. When we look in the mirror, do we see the image of Christ in our character, or are we more focused on the extra pounds we have gained? One self-image will pass away, the other image will endure forever!

Paul Scully is minister at Bundaberg, Qld and is completing a Masters in Counselling at New England University. Paul also worked for Relationships Australia and Lifeline.

Self-Image

Children and Self-Image

MAUREEN SAVAGE

Understanding ourselves is a lifelong process, which we begin in infancy and continue until our inevitable death. The concepts we develop about ourselves are shaped by the people with whom we interact and the environment in which these interactions occur. These ideas we hold about ourselves provide our mental picture of ourselves—our self-concept. From this we develop our own level of satisfaction with ourselves, which is what we call our self-esteem. Our concept of ourselves may be that we are tall or short, clever at numbers or good with our hands, but our self-esteem is about how we value that attribute. The

Most of young children's behaviour is motivated by the need to feel competent and successful.

valuing of that attribute is based on how others in our environment value tallness, shortness, ability at numbers or manual skills.

The development of a sense of self occurs in the context of human relationships. The bedrock of self-esteem for the infant is about the partnership which develops between the child and one or more loving and accepting adults. Self-esteem is like a web which is woven between the generations. Through the child's interactions with others, the child develops a sense of trust, feelings of worth and significance, a sense of autonomy over people and the environment, and the competence to make judgements about themselves and others. If the interac-

tions between children and adults are not positive, children develop a sense of mistrust, a feeling of powerlessness and feelings of guilt about their actions. When Jesus said, "Let the children come unto me", he was demonstrating his valuing of children and his acceptance of them as part of the Kingdom. He was giving to the children that sense of trust which children must develop to accept themselves. He was saying to his followers, it is up to us to provide a responsive environment which allows children to feel valued and important. Helping young children to feel that they are capable and competent to meet the demands of their world is an important contribution of the church community. Jesus valued the contribution the boy made with his loaves and fishes when he offered them on the hillside, while the disciples failed to understand that contribution. The young boy knew that he had something worthwhile to offer. He may, as children often are, have been slightly unrealistic about the size of his gift, but he felt secure in the belief that he could contribute and that his contribution was worthy of attention. It is this feeling that children's contributions are worthwhile and respected that we need to engender in our church life if we are to provide an environment in which children's self-esteem is developed and encouraged. If children are only tolerated—to be seen but not heard—we set up an environment in which they develop feelings of inferiority because they cannot meet our expectations.

Most of young children's behaviour is motivated by the need to feel competent and successful. The toddler who wanders down the aisle in church is mastering her environment and displaying trust in those around her. We



smile at the toddler, but often fail to recognise that slightly older children are also attempting to show their interest in the church environment when they ask us about the communion or baptistery. We need to provide opportunities for children to raise their "I can" level as part of the church family. Children can help take up the offering, distribute and collect hymn books, help at morning-tea time and so forth.

To develop positive self-esteem children need a sense of connection. Children develop this first in their family, but need to develop special relationships with other groups. The church family is one such group in which children need to be accepted for who they are. Adults who model the Christian values of appreciation, affection and affirmation help children to develop a sense of belonging.

The most important thing we can do as Christians for the children of our congregations is to respect and value their childhood, to show genuine interest in their lives and to act towards them in ways in which we would expect others to act towards us.

Maureen Savage recently retired as Associate Professor (Early Childhood Education) at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and lectures on a part-time basis at Monash University. She is a member at Hartwell, Vic.

Self-Image Help! Teenagers!

TALITHA POWELL AND ALAINA WESTAWAY

One of the greatest challenges faced during adolescence is the development of a positive self-image. It's a time of great struggle and change as young people go from being children dependent on their parents, to being young adults seeking their own independence. How parents handle this time can greatly influence the adolescent's success in this area. Effective communication is important to adolescents. When their opinions and views are listened to in their family, they learn that they are valued and respected.

Show your vulnerability and be open and honest with them. Discuss your fears and concerns and seek advice on issues that are affecting you. Share with them your hopes, dreams, problems and shortcomings, and allow them to see you as a peer rather than a parent. Create an atmosphere where your teenagers feel free to talk openly about issues concerning them. When conflicts arise, word your responses carefully. Norman Wright talks about toxic verbal weapons—words that emotionally hurt and lead to the contamination and poison of children. Be aware of the impact words have on an adolescent's vulnerable self-image. "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing". (Prov 12:18 NIV.)

Colossians 3:21 says "Parents, don't be hard on your children. If you are, they might give up." (CEV) Anne Ortlund describes adolescents as "wet cement" and stresses that words mould their shape. The use of positive statements is imperative in developing a healthy self-image. Adolescents are anxious to become important, worthy people and they need to grasp every positive affirmation they can get!

Constantly uplift your adolescent and encourage recognition of their strengths. Focus on the things they do well rather than shortcomings. Frequently remind them of their special uniqueness in both your eyes and God's eyes. When mistakes are made, address the behaviour rather than use personal attack.

Adolescence is a time of exploring and testing the world around. Adolescents need the freedom to make their own mistakes and experiment with the complexities of life within a safe and supportive environment. Cloud & Townsend in their book suggest that instead of aiming to control a child, you should increase freedom along with responsibility. Encourage teenagers to set boundaries in areas such as values, money and time management. Experiencing the real-life consequences of overstepping boundaries can be an important learning experience. A supportive environment can help them build confidence about their ability to make right decisions.

James Dobson suggests that the process of letting go of our children should begin soon after birth and conclude some twenty years later with the "final release and emancipation". Parents should begin to relate to teenagers more as peers. This liberates parents from the responsibilities of leadership and the child from dependency. Avoid imposing your goals and dreams upon the adolescent. Lift them toward their own God-given ones. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider



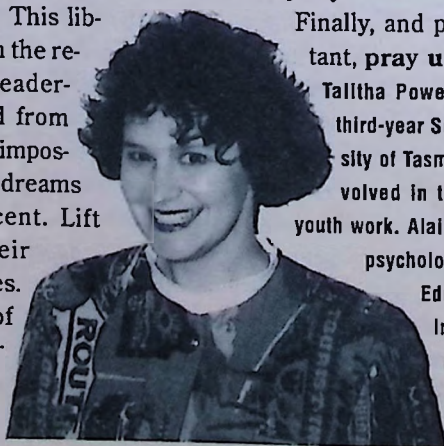
Talitha Powell

others better than yourselves." (Phil 2:3, NIV.) God has not given you the responsibility of raising perfect children, only to impress his commandments upon their hearts. (Deut 6:6-7.) God has given us free choice. Try to avoid doing anything for your teenager that they can do for themselves. This will encourage their independence. As this encouragement increases, so will their self-confidence.

The effectiveness of encouraging a positive self-image within your teenager will be influenced by your own self-image. Children and adolescents learn through the models their parents set. So it is essential for parents to display within their lives positive images of themselves and others. It is also vital that a real Christian faith is modelled within every aspect of your life, especially in your relationships with others.

Finally, and perhaps most important, **pray unceasingly!**

Talitha Powell is currently studying third-year Social Work at the University of Tasmania. She is actively involved in the Launceston church's youth work. Alaina Westaway works as a psychologist with the Tasmanian Education Department and in private practice, as well as providing a counselling service for the church.



Alaina Westaway

Self-Image

Men

DEAN PHELAN

In writing about men's self-image, I went inside myself to try to get hold of what I think and believe, and in conversation surveyed various friends and colleagues (both male and female) for their views.

In middle-class Australia, men's self-image is a sensitive conversation area, particularly when partners are present. Self-image is interwoven with roles, and males seemed wary for fear of opening up an uncomfortable area of discussion. Mostly the men waited for their wives to have the first words. The women were all interested and generally more articulate about men's roles and self-

Men are attempting to re-invent themselves in today's society.

image. Men seemed okay about themselves, but were hesitant about making statements for other males. Conversations diverted to women's roles, humour and sex.

Men have been affected by dramatic changes: the feminist movement's deep impact on their self-image; the changing nature of work means they can no longer define themselves in terms of a long-term career with one organisation; and postmodernism, which rejects the framework of traditions and beliefs about "what is right". The role models of our grandfathers are no longer viable. Many men are unsure of their real role and what their personal credo and philosophy is, or allowed to be.

Older males (60+) saw themselves as head of the household and provider for their wife and family. They also joked not to tell their wives, who were really

the boss. An oft-played-out, loving repartee I suspect. They were bought up on the model (or meta-narrative) described in Eph 5:22-6:4. The TV portrayal of SNAGs (sensitive new age guys) is at the other end of the spectrum. There seemed to be feeling among the younger men (less than 45) that women would like them to behave more like a SNAG than they were.

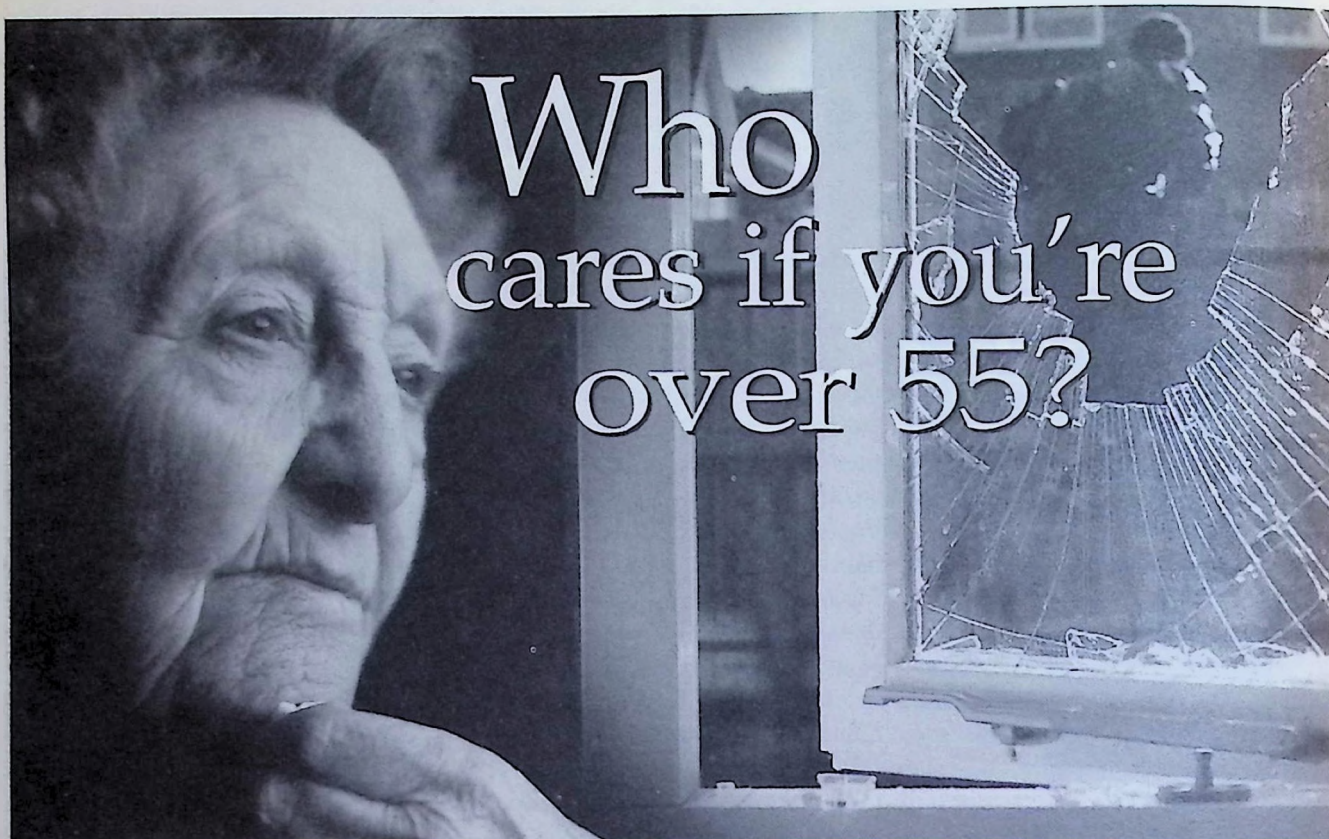
My reflection is that today many men define their role and consequent self-image in relation to their partner. There is a balancing of inner messages and upbringing (for both males and females) with what is required to keep the relationship balanced and working. Sam Keen in his best-seller *Fire in the Belly—On Being a Man* said that if we look into our being it is like viewing an opal with its coloured layers. He suggests that men can take an "archaeological journey" into their inner being and discover the bones of ancient hunters, warriors, philosophers, desert saints and robber barons. Much sits in our subconscious that doesn't surface, yet whispers to each man. He says the expression of these "callings of the heart" influence our sense of identity. Postmodernism says there is no ultimate truth on the nature of reality. It favours a wealth of perspectives with which to engage the issues that confront us. I believe a healthy self-image can only be built upon a commitment to values and the consistent behaving in accordance with them. The Gospels offer a clear statement of what these values should be. Discipleship is a call to live our lives in accordance with them. The kingdom of heaven and life in its fullness is offered to those who chart life's journey in these terms. Self-esteem and self-respect grow into respect for, and service to others.



Gospel values, as portrayed in Jesus' parables and Paul's writings on the fruits of the Spirit are not related to gender. The culture of those times, as described by Paul, does outline gender roles, but I believe that these are ancillary to the core gospel message. Prov 31:10-31 describes one who is a provider, businessperson, trader, tailor, manager of the household, speaker of wisdom, with arms strong for the task, whom you might assume to be male. However it describes the wife of noble character.

Self-image should not be gender or role based. It is in the honest striving to live one's life on a daily basis with integrity that a healthy self-image is built up. A healthy self-image comes from having a sense of purpose and a sense of making a meaningful contribution. It is said that the key to happiness is to have someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for. I think this is true.

Dean is Chairman of the Vic-Tas Conference Board. He is a corporate psychologist and Director of his own company, which provides human resource services around Australia.



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Self-Image

Recovering after Trauma

CLIFF POWELL

We all “construct” the world we live in, out of the people, events and experiences that we encounter in life. This largely-unconscious process simply produces a view of ourselves and our world, out of the emotional, somatic and cognitive responses we have as we encounter the experiences of our life.

This does not, of course, mean that there is no objective reality, or truth. As Christians, we accept that there is—and He is God! What it simply means is that we, limited by our senses, responses and reasoning powers, at vari-

Trauma, particularly repeated trauma or intense trauma, powerfully shapes the way we view our self and our world.

ous stages of life, can never take in the total reality around us. We always live out of our unique perspective on that reality.

Trauma, particularly repeated trauma or intense trauma, powerfully shapes the way we view our self and our world. As a clinical psychologist, I have seen people struggle to feel worthwhile, resulting from abuse of all kinds, chronic illness or disability (theirs, or another family member's), harsh treatment from an alcoholic or otherwise-addicted parent, an accident, death, divorce, a rage-aholic parent, severe rejection experiences, and such-like. Some of these experiences are someone else's fault; some are just the unpredictable events of life lived outside the Garden of Eden.

The Process of Recovery

Jesus laid out a foundation for those whose sense of self-worth has been damaged by trauma, when he told his disciples, “If you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31). Notice we must “hold” to his teachings—cling to them! Truth is often painful, hard to deal with, but ultimately it offers a hope of freedom and healing that avoidance, denial and deception never can. What are the specific steps?

1. We Must Search for Truth

We must begin the healing process by acknowledging that our inner reality is a constructed reality. It may “feel true” to us, but it is not truth. Acknowledging this, often a difficult step, frees us to search for more of ultimate truth, and that takes us to God's Word.

In Job 22:21 (NRSV) we read, “Agree with God and be at peace. In this way good will come to you”. Being willing to put aside our own distorted “truth” about ourselves and our world and asking God to show us more of his truth in fresh ways, begins the process. This quest, in Scripture, will lead us to the truth that each of us is created in God's image and precious in his sight, whether we have been damaged through a traumatic childhood or not.

2. We Must Soak in Truth

Memorising Scripture, as a way of reconstructing our inner world is important. But it is not a “snap-your-fingers-and-it's-done” process. James reminds us that the Word of God has to cut deep into our lives. “Humbly accept the Word of God planted [or ‘engrafted’] in you, which can save you.” (James 1:21b). Superficial encounters with Scripture will rarely be enough!



3. We Must Seek to Experience Truth

Those who have tried to renew their inner world with Scripture will know that often they can struggle for years, feeling dirty, unlovable, and bad. For many the transformation awaits an experience of truth—an experience of the love of God.

One difficulty is that we are not good at orchestrating such experiences. Often such experiences come as times of grace that God sovereignly distributes. At other times, a church camp, a special conference or a ministry time may be the instruments of this transformation. The “Walk to Emmaus” weekends, or “Cursillo” weekends, are among the best programs for facilitating a transforming experience of God's love. But even they are no guarantee!

If you are still seeking restoration of your sense of self-worth, the inner experience of transforming grace, keep asking God. But ask, not out of aggressive urgency, but out of humble submission, trusting God even when the answer seems delayed.

Dr Cliff Powell is a clinical psychologist and a sessional lecturer at CCTC, Carlingford, NSW.

Mini-Ministry at a Mega-Church

GRAHAM AGNEW

"You look tired darling," remarked my wife Bev as we headed off to one of Phoenix's inexpensive restaurants, following the final morning service at Central Christian Church, Phoenix, Arizona, USA. The fact is, I was tired and it didn't take me long to figure out why. During the course of the morning I had preached on three oc-

Churches can keep on growing without losing any of their warmth and effectiveness.

casions to a combined congregation of close to 3,800 people. In addition, at 6.00 pm the previous night I had addressed Central's "seeker" service, which according to the ministry team is "full of potential" with regular crowds in the low 600s! I found that the sense of "occasion" generated by such audiences had me preaching with even more energy and enthusiasm than usual. It just seemed appropriate and the resulting fatigue (I'm not getting any younger) helped me to under-

stand why Central Christian Church has no Sunday evening service—so much effort is expended on the four services already in place.

Meanwhile, back in Australia, Dr Leroy Lawson and his wife Joy, who minister at Central, were endearing themselves to everyone with whom they had contact. It's not hard to see why Central Christian has enjoyed such explosive growth during his 20 year ministry (the congregation was 450 when he arrived).

Being in that great church for those two weeks, sensing something of its life, vibrance and warmth, as well as meeting the staff and lay leaders, all helped to confirm what I have always believed: large congregations are not to be feared or treated with suspicion and derision, as has often been the case in our country. On the contrary, here is a church with a ministry to the people of its community which is nothing short of breathtaking!

Among the features of this so-called mega church which I observed are:

- Its priority on evangelism. (There are baptisms almost every Sunday!)
- Its insistence on excellence in all things. (The services have "Preparation" written all over them!)



Central Christian Church, Phoenix, Arizona, a mega-church where Graham Agnew had the opportunity to minister recently

- Its emphasis on the seeker and the newcomer.
- Its global vision for mission. (The annual mission budget is \$US370,000.)
- Its willingness to innovate.
- Its insistence on nurturing and developing ministry gifts among its people.
- Its strong emphasis on the family, with exceptional facilities for children and young people.
- Its recognition of the fact that leadership is a gift of the Spirit and those called to leadership roles should be empowered to lead.

Only two weeks prior to my visit to Phoenix, I'd had the pleasure of meeting with some of the more prominent ministers in the USA at the Robert Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership. There, as the only non-American on the speaking program, I had conducted two workshops on preaching and Christian communication. Again, hearing the stories of ministers in churches which had grown to two thousand, five thousand, up to ten thousand members reminded me of the fact that while size in itself is in no way a measure of a church's health and effectiveness, nei-

ther is size necessarily an indication of some sort of pragmatic avoidance of the essential demands of the Gospel. On the contrary, many of the bigger churches in the US and those within our own country have attracted large numbers precisely because it is within their exciting programs and services that people have discovered the reality of God in Christ—and they have liked what they have seen and experienced! Besides, the welfare and social justice initiatives of some larger churches are huge in both their scope and impact.

Ministers and elders in Australia need not be nervous about those rare occasions when churches reach the two or three hundred mark, thinking that they are getting too big or too impersonal. Churches can keep on growing without losing any of their warmth and effectiveness. Personally, I am yet to be convinced that there is anything which can be achieved in a small church which a large church cannot duplicate, particularly when it comes to the provision of smaller settings for support, nurture and care.

Graham Agnew is Senior Minister of our Northside, NSW, church.

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A World View Kingdom Building

TONY TWIST

It happened in a church just like yours or mine. There should have been no conflict, yet there was. The usual story. The visitor from another church really enjoyed the service. She asked the minister, "Would it be okay if I come to your church? The worship and preaching here really feed me spiritually".

So she came. At first everything was fine. She was quite friendly and quickly became part of a Sunday-school class. What the preacher did not know was that she was on a mission.

*They remember
that they used to
work together.
Many of them
still desire to do
so.*

She considered her beliefs to be superior to those of anyone else in the congregation. Soon she had convinced many other members that they were not "true" believers unless they adhered to her specific understanding. Before long many people left the church for a "more perfect way".

This pattern is not new. I've seen it many times in the American individualistic "do-it-yourself" style of religious proselytising. But it is new to Eastern Europe. Multiply this many times and you see how the insertion of denominationalism affects the churches in Eastern Europe. Communism forced the churches to work together as allies. When believers shared the same slop buckets in prisons, denominationalism meant very little.

Now this process is being reversed. East European churches are often pressured today to become competing denominations. If they want financial assistance, they must toe denominational (usually Western) party lines.

Thank God there are some missionaries and organisations fighting the antagonistic forces assailing Eastern Europe. These Kingdom efforts struggle against the nationalistic and cultural dynamics in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) which breathe out division. And they remind us that we should continually repent our way toward kingdom building—his, not ours.

At a recent meeting of the newly-formed East European School of Theology (a network of new schools trying to cooperate for more effective leadership training), I learned that there are over three hundred Western religious organisations now based in Budapest, Hungary. Not 300 individuals. 300 organisations!

One leader recently told me he would be thrilled if foreign mission groups would come for evangelism.

By that he meant that they should go into the streets and find ways to lead unbelievers to Christ. He was distressed because foreigners usually take members from existing churches to start their new denominations.

Regarding this practice, a church leader in the Czech Republic recently told me, "Most Western organisations never tell us why they are here or what they are doing". Odd, don't you think?

But not when we consider that each denomination is simply pursuing its own interests. And



Haus Edelweiss, where TCM International conducts courses, with Director Dr Tony Twist (inset).

Christian unity, the unity for which Christ prays, is tossed into the bin as foreigners travel through Eastern Europe on the way to the next popular missions spot (probably China when it "opens up").

This is why I thank God for those (from both East and West) who are committed to Christian unity. Kingdom focused. Rising above loyalties based on culture, class, nationality, geography, denomination and the like. Those willing to follow no book but the Bible and no creed but Christ; who desire unity in the essentials, liberty in the non-essentials, and love in all things.

What a timeless message! And one the East Europeans gladly hear.

They remember that they used to work together. Many of them still desire to do so. I see this desire in most students who come to Haus Edelweiss. They come from many countries, cultures, and denominations. Yet they greatly enjoy non-denominational, cross-cultural fellowship.

And they return to their homes with new relationships established.

Training Christians for Ministry (TCM) is committed to equipping Russian, Eastern and Central Europeans to proclaim Christ who is above all divisions and denominations.

Our goal is nothing less than the restoration of all things to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Please pray for us.

All of us sin, especially when we uncritically proclaim our own cultural peculiarities in the name of Christ. Pray that TCM will always proclaim Christ in a way that will build God's Kingdom and nothing else.

(Used by permission from *TCM's Report*)

TCM, International is a mission agency working in Russia, Eastern and Central Europe, with its roots in our US churches, and is based in Indianapolis. Tony Twist was born in Wichita Falls, Kansas. He was raised in Texas, USA, and Alice Springs, NT. He graduated from Alice Springs High School and subsequently completed degrees in education, counselling and social work and holds a Ph.D from Indiana University. Tony is the director of the TCM Institute at Haus Edelweiss near Vienna. He preaches and lectures throughout Russia and Eastern and Central Europe.

Ministry in a Traumatic Event

BARRIE YESBERG

"Others went out on the sea in ships, they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the wonders of the Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep." These words have been a constant source of encouragement to me, as a chaplain in the Royal Australian Navy. They are found in Psalm 107 verse 22. Verses 22 to 32 are known as the Naval Psalm.

Many who are reading this may have been following the events surrounding the engine room fire on board *HMAS Westralia* on 5 May this year. Four personnel lost their lives, five others were casualties and the crew were struck deeply by this experience.

I was given the opportunity to fly out by helicopter to the stricken vessel to minister to and support the crew as the ship came back alongside *HMAS Stirling*.

Personnel were milling around dazed, upset, bewildered, lost and worried. How do you best minister to these ones at that moment? How do you support them and their families throughout their grief, memorial service, funerals, questioning, the

Families are still a prime concern as they face their loved ones trying to come to grips with the tragedy and their part in it.

Board of Inquiry and on into the future? This is the challenge that confronted other chaplains, other professionals in the RAN

and myself. In nearly twenty years of ministry, I have not been in a situation like this, so the Lord had to work in spite of my inexperience, and this he did.

Ministering to personnel and their families took on many forms. These were public as well as private. Availability to people was very important. This ministry in the initial stages included an arm around people as they sobbed out their grief; sitting with a family who couldn't work out why their husband and father was so angry, frustrated and doing strange things; standing with crew as they vented anger over the way they felt the media had acted; standing with a sailor who was shining a torch into the eerie stillness of the engine room as the bodies were being extracted; preparing for the memorial service as well as sharing with other chaplains who felt the impact of the event. Ministry continued and is still continuing since then, as people are feeling the longer-term effects of grief, trauma and loss of friends and working environment. Chaplains were asked to be available to witnesses who were called to the subsequent Board of Inquiry. The whole ranges of emotions have been evident throughout this time. Families are still a prime concern as they face their loved ones trying to come to grips with the tragedy and their part in it.

Some of the common reactions of people during this time has been anger, frustration, emptiness, numbness and uncertainty. Many ask is it worth it all, will I get over it, what do I do? These are a cry for help of people who are discovering their own mortality and that many of



their coping mechanisms are not working because their world view has been shaken.

Among all this the Lord has been operating. I have seen the wonders of the Lord in the individual lives of personnel and families, the political circumstances around the event and the impact this tragedy has had on people. God's provision has been outstanding and I have seen the Church operating effectively towards people who have been part of the events and myself.

For me, the greatest privilege has been the opportunity to offer people the hope I have in Jesus Christ. I have given away New Testaments to people hungry for something. These words of Jesus have made an impact as I have shared them with people, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls". (Matt 11: 28-29.) Ministry in these circumstances is never easy, however, it is easier knowing that God is always working his wonders in the events encountered in the task. Barrie Yesberg is a RAN Chaplain and Churches of Christ minister.

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Who is my Brother or Sister?

CAROL PRESTON

"Clergy experience significantly more loneliness, burnout, and diminished marital adjustment than church laity". "Ministry marriages under severe strain". These are reported results of research which provoked my interest in exploring how our Churches of Christ minister's wives experience their lives and their role in the church. Most researchers agree that there are special vulnerabilities in the

They also need to feel like an integral part of the body of Christ rather than on the outside looking in.

pastoral life which, for the minister often lead to isolation, multiple expectations, blurred boundaries between work and home and difficulty balancing requirements of family and congregation. How does the minister's wife cope with these? What does the church expect of her? What unmet needs does she have? What support does she have? Who cares for her? These were the kinds of questions I recently asked forty wives of ministers in NSW Churches of Christ. The answers need to be heard by us all.

Many experiences in our lives turn out differently from what we expect when we embark upon them, but most of these women sadly report that life in the ministry has confronted them with many struggles they

were not prepared for. The strongest cry is about lack of friendship. Many feel that their position as the minister's wife makes it very difficult to get close to members of the congregation; that other women seem to see them as temporary or in a different category. Moving from church to church makes it hurtful to develop friendships and then have to say goodbye. The result is immense loneliness and a sense that no-one really knows what they are experiencing, that no-one is caring for them, that there is nowhere to turn in times of trouble.

Family issues are also very painful for these women. They often feel that people have unrealistic and unfair expectations of their children, that their home is a place people use like public property, that they are expected to be available 24 hours a day. No family time is sacred and not ever having weekends to relax with family puts a strain on relationships. Many also still feel there are expectations from church members that wives ought to fit into stereotypical roles, which they often do not feel gifted for or called to.

They report that God and their husbands are often the only ones who they feel safe to talk to. They rarely feel they have a minister or even an elder for spiritual support, because their husband is the minister and church leaders so often seem to be more in the role of employer or adversary. They particularly keep their personal struggles to themselves, and carry much of the stress of their minister husbands, who also have few places to share their burdens, and so bring them home. All this leads to a sense of isolation, a high level of stress and burnout, extreme physical tiredness, disil-

lusionment with the church and much self depreciation.

What they long for most is to have real friends who will just love and listen to them, pray with them and care about their struggles. They long for support from their churches so they can build quality time into their family lives, some privacy in their homes and time to relax, have fun and feel good about themselves and appreciation for the ministry they can give to the church.

Overall I heard a group of women who find themselves in a position where they are faced with a great lack of resources for personal, emotional and spiritual support. As a result, their self confidence and life satisfaction is often very low. While they all feel assured that God is there for them and in some ways their struggles have drawn them into deeper relationship with him, they also need to feel like an integral part of the body of Christ rather than on the outside looking in. Ministry ought not to cost ministers or their wives their participation in the benefits and blessings of being part of the body of Christ. They are individuals who have a part to play in the body along with everyone else.

The disturbing figures we have of people pulling out of ministry and of ministry marriages breaking down, calls us as God's people to reflect on the way we perceive and relate to our ministers and their wives, the kind of expectations we have of both of them and the ways in which we can enfold them into the fellowship and support system of the church family, so they know they are loved and cared about just as any other member of the body of Christ.



Carol Preston is a psychologist and Director of Counselling Services, Wollongong Church of Christ, NSW.

Here and There

Universal Christian Council 2000

A proposal to use the year 2000 to launch a process leading to a universal Christian council has been proposed by Konrad Raiser the general secretary of the World Council of Churches. The Council would be similar to those called by the early church. The proposal envisages a universal council to include Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Pentecostal streams of the church. Raiser said there has been little progress in reconciliation between different traditions in recent years. The past decade has demonstrated the problems of church unity, rather than providing a solution. Raiser acknowledged that there were significant obstacles to calling a council such as the issue of tradition for the Orthodox, the primacy of the pope in Catholicism and issues of ministry and authority in Protestant churches. CC John Lennon

"I felt he was a hypocrite. Dad could talk about peace and love out loud to the whole world, but he could never show it to the people who supposedly meant the most to him: his wife and son." Julian Lennon, on his late father John Lennon.

DEATHS

DAWSON, Elizabeth May (nee Woodbridge). On 24 July in Canberra, aged 95 years. Loving wife of Claude (dec), dearly loved mother of Brian (dec) and Daryl. Loved sister of Millicent (dec), Stan (dec), and Marjorie (Mrs J. Wright). Remembered with love and admiration.

THANKS

JONES, June (Box Hill) Frank, Derek, Brendan, Trevor, their wives and children have been deeply moved by the overwhelming attendance at the thanksgiving service and messages of sympathy received on the death of the one who loved each of them so much. Her passing after an extended battle with cancer, which she faced with dignity and great courage, occurred on Monday 13 July at Box Hill. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your prayers, love and concern.

HOLIDAYS

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WAYNE BETTS

"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit ... if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace." (Heb 6:4-6, NIV)



New Covenants.

Perhaps his congregation were wondering whether Jesus was as important to their salvation as they had first been led to believe. Maybe some had even turned their back on the new faith, and reverted to old ways. The message of Hebrews is: "Do you have any idea just how precious God's gift in Jesus is? The old system could only clean the outside—it covered sins, but couldn't deal with a guilty conscience. But now, instead of the daily repetition of animal sacrifice, Jesus, our perfect High Priest, has offered his own blood once for all. It's inconceivable that anyone could turn away from such truth!" You need to read the assurances of salvation, confidence and access to the very presence of God together with those passages that seem harsh if read in isolation. Christian faith was not a "lifestyle choice" for these people, as it is so often treated today. It was a matter of life or death. The hard words of Hebrews remind us that it still is.

I avoided Hebrews because I couldn't cope with such a hard-line view.

Wow! Tough words! I avoided most of Hebrews for years because I couldn't cope with such a hard-line view. What about the gospel of the second chance? Where's the grace? Then I had opportunity to study this letter (although its structure and approach are closer to a sermon—perhaps it's the first-century equivalent of a tape ministry!), and instead of trying to fit it to Paul's theology, I let the author (who is not Paul) speak for himself.

What did I find? Gems of assurance and confidence, shining against the passages of warning and judgement. The author's aim is to demonstrate and celebrate the superiority of God's revelation in Jesus to the old sacrificial system. But he cleverly interprets Jesus' accomplishment of salvation in the categories of the familiar sacrificial system, demonstrating the continuity between the Old and

Christian faith was not a "lifestyle choice" for these people

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Australia's Crisis of Politics

VINEY LONGTHORP

The Editorial of the July 1998 issue of the independent, ecumenical magazine, *National Outlook*, addressed some recent trends in Australia's politics. We considered it balanced, positive, and insightful. With permission of their Editor, we offer it in full: The rise of the One Nation Party has been grist to the mill of political commentary right across the country and beyond. The resulting political instability is, however, merely another stage in an ongoing process.

Parents will be reminded of gangs of little boys in the school yard at "big play lunch".

In our Federal and State Parliaments the numbers of independents or members of small, special interest parties have been increasing over two decades. It is now commonplace for governments to be beholden to one or two such members holding the balance of power in the Senate or a state upper house. At the same time, swinging voters have increased and surprise changes of government have become more common.

This is not just an Australian phenomenon. Countries across the developed world are more ready to change their governments. Many have groups or parties of radical extremists with a surprising amount of popular support, from the unreconstructed old guard in former communist countries, to neo-Nazis in Germanic Europe, and followers of M. Le Pen in southern France.



It is a truism to see Western democracies as increasingly ungovernable. It is not coincidental that when governments are finding it harder to achieve political stability, their control over their own destinies is decreasing. (Note the size and power of transnational corporations.) In recent weeks we have seen how easily aspects of the national economy can be in pawn to international currency speculators [who] are able to transfer huge amounts of money almost instantly across the globe.

The task of government has not been made easier by the current style of confrontational politics. Although so many issues—and particularly world prices for primary commodities—are beyond the control of national governments, we still have politicians promising to solve the unsolvable. Now that television has become a primary way for electors to get information on policies and to form their opinion of political personalities, leaders have become victims of the thirty-second grab, where answers to every political and economic question is: "We are honest and competent and we can fix the problem. The other side aren't and can't." Television has done political leaders a further disservice by giving viewers a direct look at their

behaviour in Parliament. Parents will be reminded of gangs of little boys in the school yard at "big play lunch".

Small wonder then that a recent Morgan poll rating on ethics and honesty showed politicians second lowest of 25 professions. Considered honest by a mere seven percent of those polled, they were only just above car salesmen at two.

Small wonder also that people who feel they are losing control over their own lives are disillusioned when promising fixers cannot deliver. Having lost confidence that the established parties can solve their problems, some of them are prepared to try something new. First it was the Democrats, then the Greens, then a host of special interest parties—No Aircraft Noise, Shooters, Christian Democrats (Fred Nile group), or whatever.

Now at a time of economic uncertainty, particularly in rural areas, it is One Nation. Such a collection of ingenues will probably soon fade away through sheer political incompetence and lack of consistent policies. But the nation's, and the developed world's crisis of politics will remain.

Unlike the communists of old, no present political group has a coherent agenda for the future well-being of all citizens. To expect one is to fall into the simple, utopia-seeking trap of those who would try One Nation.

Christians and their organisations, the churches, do not have a political platform, a program and set of policies for creating a new Jerusalem on earth. But they do have the responsibility to spell out again and again the principles that must be followed if our nation and our world is to develop in justice and peace.

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Applications should be sent to Dr Farmer
by 25 September 1998.

CHANGES

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST—R.V. Smith, Coordinator, PO Box 55, Helensburgh NSW 2508. Telephone (02) 4294 1913. Fax (02) 4294 1914. E-mail <bobsmit@ozemail.com.au>.

BAPTISMS

•Janne Errington-Smith, Robert Coutts, **Monash City, Vic** •Michael Barclay, Jeanette Chadwick, Cicily Nesbit, Blair Sinsheimer, **Croydon, Vic** •Aaron Turner, Daniel Turner, Kate Weger, Nakita Baggs, Tahlia Baggs, Mary Philp, **Victor Harbor, SA** •Rebecca Bowman, **Ballarat Central, Vic**

MARRIAGES

•Karen Stevens and Andrew Winton, **Scarborough, WA**

DEATHS

•Leila Priest, Frank Barrett, **Victor Harbor, SA** •Tilly Sims, **Balaklava, SA** •Catherine Ellen Dinning, **Bordertown, SA**

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
AVERAY, Keith
(6.7.98) Keith Averay was born 18.5.14. He confessed his faith in Christ and was baptised at 24 years of age at the Prospect Church of Christ, SA. Keith served at the Mile End church for 52 years as deacon, elder, secretary for 23 years, building-maintenance, choir and camps. In retirement years he also served with the Gideons.

Keith leaves his wife Jean and children Glenys, Roger, Christine, Lynette and their families. "Well done, good and faithful servant." —BB

DINNING, Catherine Ellen
(11.6.98) Catherine was born to Fanny and William Carson 17.9.08, the second of six children. She married Ivan Dinning 15.7.37 in Bordertown, SA, church. They had two sons, Bevan and Trevor. Cath played tennis and hockey at competition level. She made a Christian commitment at a young age. She was always a solid worker in the church, holding positions as CE worker, CWF secretary, Sunday school teacher, and secretary of the Combined Women's Guild. Cath loved gardening and supplying produce to others in need. She was widowed in 1961. Cath is survived by her sister Phyl Barnett, sons Bevan and Trevor, their wives Ben-Rose and Jenny, and grandsons Greg, Nigel and Clement. —LC

ELSMORE, Frank
(23.7.98) Frank was born 24.7.23 at Newcastle, NSW. At eighteen he enlisted in the AIF and fought in New Guinea. He married Marjorie Dunster at Lismore church in 1946 and had two sons Ken and David. Baptised at Epping in 1951, he served as deacon, secretary, elder and builder. Frank was involved in construction of buildings at Belrose, Telopea, Castle Hill, City Temple, Woolwich and Carlingford colleges, and the nursing home and retirement village at Pendle Hill. He served Conference on Building Advisory, College Board, Stanwell Tops Management Committee and the Community Care Department over a period of 40 years. Frank was a real friend willing to help where needed.

—Kevin Crawford

HADEN, Helen Margaret

(10.7.98) Helen Haden was a member of the Saxby family of Taree, NSW. She died at 89 years of age. Nell (as she was known) was a woman of integrity and insight. She was a staunch member of the Taree church and the CWF. Nell had a quiet dignity. Her wise counsel was sought by members of her family and church. She was predeceased by her husband Hector and is survived by daughter Elizabeth, son-in-law, Roy Eccles, son Michael and two grandsons Richard and Christopher Eccles. The funeral service was conducted by David Mansell. Scripture readings (chosen by Nell) were read by Win Murray and Ted Saxby.

—L. Drury

JONES, June Celeste Mary

(13.7.98) June was born 5.6.32, the youngest child of Arthur and Florence Parker. June was baptised at the Coburg church 7.11.48. She married Frank Jones at Coburg in 1954 and moved to Box Hill, where she attended for 44 years. She was secretary of the CWAF and CWF, taught Sunday school, played netball and tennis for the church clubs and was involved with

the friendship group, Kanga Kids, catering committee and countless others. June was known for her gentleness, dignity, courage and strength in the face of adversity. She leaves her husband, Frank, three sisters, one brother, three children and seven grandchildren.

—John Williamson

STRINGER, Mona Edith (nee Casson)
(26.7.98) Born 14.6.12, Mona attended the Ascot Vale, Vic, church before transferring to Essendon. She later lived in Glenroy, Kilmore and Shepparton before returning to Moonee Ponds to live with her sister Alice, recently deceased. She had two children, Keith and Lorraine, and thirteen grandchildren, for all of whom she knitted and crocheted. Other interests were reading and following the fortunes of grandchildren, Steven and Peter, who are active trainer/drivers of trotting horses. Throughout her life she attended Churches of Christ and was a member of the Essendon congregation to the end. She supported the CWF and was a tireless and prolific knitter for the Royal Children's Hospital.

—KS

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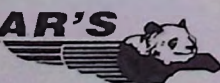
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WA

SCARBOROUGH (Nigel Merrick, Ken Doran) Nigel Merrick now serving in part-time capacity as he takes up new work as development officer for FEBC in WA ... 60 letters sent to missionaries ... 20 quilts made for blanket appeal ... Sara Stanford to attend Cincinnati Bible College ... Rutter triplets, Lisa, Penny & Rachel dedicated ... "Answers in Genesis" presented by dinosaur man Buddy Davis.

ALBANY (John Spencer) Monthly hymns of praise service continued ... Quiz night organised by the Robinsons well attended ... Monthly celebration service continued ... Church expressed sympathy to Don & Alwyn Jones on the death of Don's mother, also sympathy extended to Anne, James & Alwyn Middleton on the death of Alwyn's stepfather, Colin Reid ... John & Heather Spencer attended minister's retreat in Perth.

QLD

WYNNUM (Charles Cole) Prayer chain kept busy ... Much sickness ... Attendances improved slightly ... New people attending & returning ... CWF planning "Day with a Difference", incorporating all auxiliaries ... Kids from non-church homes responding well under leadership of Allan & Dale Gray ... Deacons' & elders' meetings held regularly ... Elders visit shut-ins with communion ... Highlights: 2 coach

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tours, PSA ... Gifts from "Christmas in July" replenished our welfare cupboard.

BURLEIGH HEADS (Jim Newton) Church without minister since end of January ... Elders filled in capably with the help of lay speakers & visitors ... Congregation has supported faithfully over the period ... Jim Newton received 100% vote of the membership & commences ministry in September ... Youth orchestra formed & play at monthly youth services ... Ladies' Night Out dinner & craft well attended monthly.

DALBY (Tony Ochse) 16 men attended fishing camp. Great time of fellowship ... CWM Ugandan night raised \$224 to enable Bibles to be sent to Uganda ... 14 young people & leaders travelled to Gold Coast to hear Ken Ham (Creation Science) ... Owen Vogler in remission from leukemia ... Berris Salter moved to Hobart, & Brett, Elizabeth & Rebekca Mandelkow to Ipswich.

VIC

MONASH CITY (David Moyes, Craig Brown) Morag Thome concluded service as worship coordinator ... Group attended Sydney Hillsong Convention ... Large number participated in State Youth Games ... General Eva Burrows & Gordon Stirling guest speakers ... New small group for parents of young children started ... Book room promoting Vital Publications material ... Faith Building seminars held with Dr Greg Forbes & Piers Crocker ... Serving opportunities program held.

CROYDON (Ben Richardson) Increase in number of prayer meetings & times ... Planned baptismal service in August ... Future consideration of church premises ... Continued growth in attendances ... Outreach program being planned for local areas ... Introduction of young men as preachers during evening services ... Commencement of healing services in August.

MAIDSTONE (A. McMillan) Easter service shared with Tottenham Bap-

tists ... Under leadership of Audrey grant, a successful garage sale held ... Attendances down owing to much sickness ... Some welcomed back, including church secretary Ida Phillips ... Mother's Day visiting speaker Eva Pearce ... Owing to Andrew's ear operation, James Pearce speaker.

BALLARAT CENTRAL (Jack White) Dedication service for Matthew Baldock 19 July ... Minister attended Minister's Refresher Course ... Ringwood church sleep-over 24 June ... Planning for youth camp ... Rebecca Bowman baptised 26 June, followed by 2 decisions: Mandy Fellows & Angie Eames ... Live & Learn craft group helping church with finance for items required in church building.

DANDENONG (Brian White, Jack Edwards, Martin Rees) \$400 collected for Bible Society ... "Know Your Bible" (KYB) group commenced for ladies ... 16 people attended Hillsong Conference in Sydney ... 16 attended State Youth Games, plus youth minister, youth leaders, helpers & 2 cooks ... "Being Disciple Makers & Nurturing New Christians" training module conducted by Brian White.

SA

VICTOR HARBOR (Graeme Rogerson, Suzanne Turner) Several new families welcomed ... Church in prayer for guidance for extensions ... Five generations present at Mary Philp's baptismal service ... Marriage enrichment course held ... Ministry to seniors in planning stage ... Intercessory prayer seminar at 7.00 pm service ... Ministers' Association combining for retreat ... Ecumenical service held with 160+ from 8 churches attending ... Our youth band playing at ecumenical youth service in Anglican church.

BAKLAVA (Grant Spangenberg) Annual junior camp held in June & senior youth camp in July, both well attended. A great mission to young people ... Ministry to Women group held social evening titled "Hyacinth's Elegant Dinner Party" ... Church in-

volved in much prayer & preparation leading up to Community Contact Week 2-9 August ... Pastoral care group have seminar planned with Alan Niven as leader 21-23 August.

BORDERTOWN (Darryn Hickling) Winter Appeal for Community helped boost supplies for needy ... Youthworx auction raised \$18,350. \$9000 donated to Community Care SA youth worker & \$9350 to support Joanne Flavel, a fellow Youthworx member who was seriously injured ... Youth camp at Hall's Gap 12-17 July saw 25 youth & 9 leaders enjoy a time of rejoicing. 2 commitments at youth camp. All looking forward to 1999 camp.

MILE END (Barry Benz) Recent 90th anniversary services inspirational ... Attendances at morning services increasing ... Betty Moate baptised & welcomed into membership ... Saturday night prayer times for God's power on services ... House visitation to be conducted ... Church involved with planned prayer vigil at the Mareeba Abortion Clinic ... Double Headed project providing funds for others & planned hall extensions.

TAS

DEVONPORT (Peter Willis) Nominations recently closed for elder, deacon & director ... Peter Willis recently attended Christian leader's seminar in Sydney ... Guest speaker Tony Halley from Sydney ... Kids for Christ beginning special missionary month in July ... 20 families took part in successful opportunity to extend fellowship to others within the greater church family. To be repeated later in year.

NUBEENA (Keith Moulton) Lynette Leach, John Gilmore & Denise Mundy met with church members for an informative meeting & luncheon 4 July ... Special morning tea to farewell Rae & David Paton ... Kid's Own celebrated their first birthday on 10 July ... Church planning for WEC team ... Minister pleased to meet Don & Lois Smith while in Tasmania ... Luke Williams successful in recent Talent Quest.

Exploring the Day Surrounded!

JANET THOMPSON

There are mice everywhere in my house. Don't worry, they're not real.

For several years I collected tiny pottery mice, and some of them are still perched beside, between and on top of things—looking cheeky and wearing friendly smiles. It's rather nice to have them around. I even sketched a mouse, which has been my "trade-mark" on cards and letters ever since. My friends have grown rather fond of the little creature, and they complain if the mouse is missing.

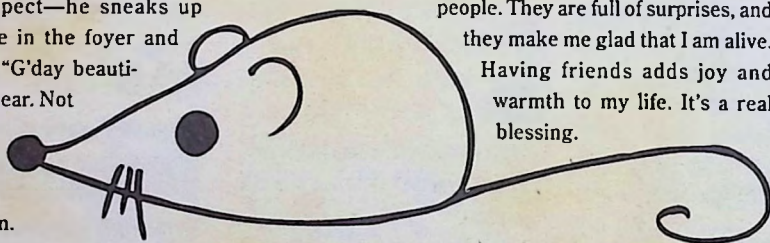
I've had to explain this to people who have never seen my mice, and most of them are polite about my strange habits. Then a letter appeared in my pigeon-hole at church. It contained a funny story about a boy who sneaked a mouse into the house against his parents' wishes. There was a mysterious "WPS" written at the end of the article. I went through the "S" section of the church directory but I couldn't find anyone whose name began with "W". Could it be a cryptic clue? I puzzled over it for a few weeks and another letter arrived, with the same initials on it. As I looked through the directory a second time, I realised that "Bill" begins with "W". I had overlooked the most mischievous and the most likely suspect—he sneaks up behind me in the foyer and whispers, "G'day beautiful!" in my ear. Not surprisingly, I am rather fond of him.



Friendship is very special, and it is a bonus to have friends who share a sense of nonsense, and enjoy whimsical things. Several of my friends are as mad as I am, so there is a lot of laughter in my life. I didn't laugh when a real mouse appeared in the kitchen one night, but all my friends thought it was very funny indeed.

It's interesting to reflect on the realities of friendship. The pottery mice may have friendly faces, but they never laugh. I prefer people. They are full of surprises, and they make me glad that I am alive.

Having friends adds joy and warmth to my life. It's a real blessing.



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The Last Word

Great minds have purposes, others have wishes.

—Washington

Graffiti

*Repeal the Law of Gravity.
Is there intelligent life on Earth?
Is there life after birth?
Support peace or I'll kill you.
Is Australia ready for self-government?*

Love

*Many a man in love with a dimple makes the mistake of marrying the whole girl.
Love: a temporary insanity, curable by marriage.*

—Ambrose Bierce

Love is the triumph of imagination over intelligence.

A rabbit's foot may be lucky—but not for the original owner.

Bill: I got up at dawn yesterday to watch the sun rise.

Phil: Well, you couldn't have picked a better time.

"Now tell me, just what could the other driver have done to avoid this accident?"

"He could have gone down another street."

Peg: "The teacher says I have to write more clearly."

Meg: "That's a good idea."

Peg: "But then she'll know I can't spell."

The 90s Woman (5)

