

THE AUSTRALIAN

# Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

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# PEOPLE

and their faith

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# Editorial

## A Diverse Bunch

DON SMITH

**T**he school ground was for most of us an introduction to human diversity. We then widen that experience. There is diversity within our churches too. This is well expressed by our feature writers. They represent a wide diversity of experience and life. Our contributors are drawn together by a common faith and commitment to fellowship and service. Their's is a story repeated many times over in our churches. When we look at ourselves as a "bunch" there are differences. Our "Letters" correspondents are one illustration of diversity. We can be thankful that for all our diversity we can celebrate a spirit of unity and fellow-



ship. This is one tiny mark of the Kingdom of God in our midst. \* We have just come through a federal election. While the political parties reflect diversity and difference, over the weeks that have followed we can celebrate a stable democracy. Over the decades a number of our members representing all major parties have served at state and national levels of government. Some have held ministerial office. As we look for a sense of national unity and purpose, it is good if we can encourage any among us with appropriate gifts to consider serving in any of the three levels of government. Hopefully, their experience and vision can contribute to unifying our diverse society and thereby share something of the ideals of the Kingdom of God \* I recently read of a massacre of sixteen Albanian civilians in Kosova. The story is ghastly, with its description of victims from infancy to older adults. Here human diversity leads to murder. This story is repeated again and again in our world. The Kosova incident reminded me of Bernard Shaw's lines in a speech he gave to Caesar in his play *Caesar and Cleopatra*—"And so to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honour and peace". Shaw concludes this dramatic speech with the hope that the gods will grow tired of blood and create a race that understands. The Gospel affirms diversity in unity. This is a celebration of the Kingdom of God in our world. To that end we are all called. \*

## People

**People from our churches speak of their life and faith.**

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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.**

## Cultural Relevance

To the Editor,  
 It seems that church growth experts never seem to tire of telling us that the church must become culturally relevant. "Cultural relevance" is typically translated as meaning the adoption of commercially-inspired, media-promoted elements of popular culture into our approaches to worship and evangelism.

This will not prove attractive to many thoughtful people who find contemporary culture crass and repugnant. In the longer term, it will not completely satisfy the devotees of popular culture because the church can never "do it" like the media.

The church is heir to a prophetic tradition that was often critical of and antagonist to contemporary culture. The gospel that it offered was a "stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles" according to Paul (1 Cor 1:23). Yet Paul was able to use the thought forms of the first century to reveal the shallowness of contemporary culture and offer a bold alternative.

That is the prophetic and apologetic task to which we must return.

—Harold Hayward  
 (Pymble, NSW)

## Yes Senior Minister

To the Editor,  
 I read with interest Kim Thoday's letter ("AC" 14.10.98) about a Senior Ministers group with "their ex-

ecutive style, hierarchical, neo-clerical, managerial models of ministry". Apparently they are inculcating unsuspecting, impressionable ministers with their non-biblical models of leadership and ministry.

My interest stems from a concern that this group not be confused with a group of senior ministers that I belong to. This is a group of ministers from churches with team ministries who meet regularly for mutual support and encouragement. These ministers are committed to biblical models of leadership and ministry. We also sponsor a program called Leadership 2000 that gives younger ministers an opportunity to travel to the US to study some dynamic churches and ministries. Several years ago, I was the recipient of a similar scholarship and the experience was pivotal in my ongoing ministry formation. I am delighted to be associated with this group of senior ministers that fortunately bears no resemblance to the group that Kim refers to in his letter.

—David Ratten  
 (Doncaster, Vic)

## Internet Discussion List

To the Editor,  
 Do we have a formal Churches of Christ Internet discussion list? If not, would this not be an excellent, inexpensive, voluntary way, for ministers and members to keep in touch, exchange ideas, etc, as we seek to minister more effectively?

Perhaps, if enough interest was expressed through the "AC" readership and the normal mail out of each state Conference took up the issue, a list could be set up. Further, I'd like to suggest we include those who are involved in specialist ministries and would like to be included, in a national Churches of Christ web site, with name,

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# Letters to the Editor

photo, ministry details, address, phone number and e-mail link, so that our National Network of Churches of Christ is synergised and enriched!

—Colin Murdoch  
(Parramatta, NSW)

## Update

Dear readers,

In our last issue we noted the death of Mrs Amelia Taylor, wife of a past editor of this paper, Mr Cliff Taylor, who served 1951–1963. We include an edited copy of the last letter Mrs Taylor wrote in response to receiving the Centenary bound copy. The letter was not sent prior to her death. It is included here with the permission of the family as an historical item in the life of the paper. An obituary is included on page 18. Mrs Taylor died just prior to her 80th birthday, the special event mentioned in the letter. The chairman Keith Aird, Board Members and staff of *The Australian Christian* express their sympathy to family members in the death of Mrs Taylor.

*Keith Aird*

Dear Mr Smith,

Thankyou for sending me the Centenary issues of "The Christian" and your letter. I appreciated that very much. The bound copy of the paper was well worth waiting for. Yes the technology is very different now from the earlier days. I can remember going to the Austral Printing and Publishing Company and watching the men type setting and Cliff pasting the long columns on to the paper and waking up in the small hours and hearing him tapping away on his typewriter.

My daughter Heather has the other bound copies and I will give her this one to be put into what my family call "their heritage". My daughter Wendy has lived in London since 1975. She had a fine career as a singer in opera and oratorio, concerts and the like. She will be here in September. I have a special birthday. We are looking forward to seeing her again. I am happy living in this village. I am just a few minutes walk from the ocean at Collaroy. The staff here are very caring. I am unable to go to Chatswood now. There is a little chapel here and we have a service on Sundays. This year I was asked to lead and conduct a little group of singers. We sing in the service and yesterday at a wedding in the chapel I feel God was using me again after so long.

Give my regards to all,  
Sincerely,  
Amelia Taylor

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RATS. RELIGION TAKES ALL THE FUN OUT OF BEING A BIGOT.

© Joel Kaufman

## Queensland Women's Ministries 1999

### Support projects planned for the coming year

Five projects will feature in the 1999 Queensland Women's Ministries projects.

Women will be invited to assist refurbishment costs for "Mirunya", a hostel offering accommodation close to Brisbane's major hospitals.

The facility provides for people from country areas while visiting or staying with loved ones receiving hospital treatment.

Khayelihle Children's Village is a project in Zimbabwe caring for or-

phans as a result of the AIDS virus.

It is predicted there will be 600,000 AIDS orphans by 2000.

Women will also be providing Sunday School materials for aboriginal children at Normanton and Mareeba.

Maintenance projects at Camp Cal will be assisted, along with support for three Indian school girls as well as "Living Links" through the Overseas Mission Board.

## Forrest Re-elected

### Long standing member re-elected

John Forrest a member of the Swan Hill, Vic, church was re-elected as the National Party member for Mallee in the House of Representatives at the Federal election of 3 October. Mallee is a rural seat in north-western Victoria, which John has held since 1993.

John Forrest is chairman of the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship and is currently completing arrangements for the National Prayer Breakfast and church service to be held in Canberra, 1-2 November. Mal Garvin of Awakening 2000 will be the speaker at the breakfast, which attracted 650 people last year.



John Forrest

[Figures from the Australian Electoral Commission indicate that John Forrest won every booth in the electorate, an enviable position! —Ed]

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GLASS BREAKAGE

## Alex Campbell Finally Baptised

**Historic namesake baptised in SA**

Alex Campbell has been baptised at last, at the Maylands Church of Christ, SA.

Most readers will recognise the name as that of one of our founding fathers. Alexander Campbell, with his father Thomas Campbell, were key figures in the early days of Churches of Christ, along with Barton Warren Stone, "Raccoon" John Smith and others. Campbell was a Presbyterian minister in one of the then 16 branches of the Presbyterian church.

The modern-day Alex has a very different background. He was a member of the SA State Executive of the Australian Communist

Party, belonging to that Party for some fifteen years. For about six years he ran the Adelaide bookshop of the Communist Party.

Now he has become a Christian, and has confessed his faith and been baptised at the Maylands church. Alex, aged 40, is one of four people to be baptised recently at Maylands, the others being two young Ukrainian women, and an eighteen-year-old archaeology student. Seven others have recently transferred into membership at Maylands, including two who have each been out of the church for about 30 years.

—Richard Lawton

## The Unseen Musician

**Creative solution to difficulties in providing musicians for services**



*Gwen Byard, the unseen musician*

The inter-denominational Launceston Ministers' Fraternal conducts worship services for residents of the Cosgrove Park Retirement Homes on a rotating basis. The Churches of Christ's turn comes around about five times each year. Each church has to provide its own organist.

Because commitments to our own service made it difficult at times for us to provide an organist, our assistant church organist Gwen Byard was asked to tape music for some hymns for the people to sing

to. Gwen taped both organ and piano music together for the hymns, giving a piano introduction to each hymn. On the other side of the tape, she put together several brackets of hymns for playing before and after the services.

This contribution by Gwen is greatly appreciated by all those leading the services and by the worshippers.

Recognition of Gwen's ingenuity was made at the Afternoon Fellowship on 8 July.

—Colin Heier

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**Interested in advertising in the 1999 edition?**

For further details of this new booklet please contact the editor by 30 November 1998.  
*Eden Guide*, PO Box 575, Kingaroy Qld 4610. Phone/fax (07) 4162 3690.

## Sydney March

**Christians march to express solidarity and love**



Worldwide Photos

Christians representing a wide range of denominational and ethnic groups marched from the NSW Parliament House through Sydney's city streets to Hyde Park on the Labour Day Holiday, 5 October. The march also included indigenous people and was intended as an expression of

Christian love for each other and solidarity between all Australians.

Speakers included Philip Rud-dock, Minister for Immigration, Cr Frank Sartor, Lord Mayor of Sydney, Fred Nile, MLC, with other artists participating in the Hyde Park program.

## Church and State Links

**Churches plan to build communication with those in power**



Worldwide Photos

*(L-R) Rev Wayne Magee Publicity Officer, Premier of NSW the Hon Bob Carr MP, Rev John Edmondstone, President, NSW Council of Churches.*

Premier Carr recently met with the NSW Council of Churches and was happy to take questions from the assembled delegates on a va-

riety of subjects, including oppo-sition to the legalising of brothels and hospital waiting lists.

John Edmondstone, President of the NSW Council of Churches said, "It is important for the Chris-tian church to do all it can to main-tain existing links of communica-tion with governments and to con-tinue to build a better relationship wherever possible so as to ensure the church's voice to uphold com-munity standards to an acceptable level is heard and received by those in power." He also added that, "The Council appreciates that the elected government must represent all people in the com-munity and not just those who fol-low the Christian faith."

Mr Edmondstone said, "We have a better chance to maintain our lib-erty to speak out if the church and the state, while agreeing to dis-agree on certain matters, contin-ues to communicate closely, and we intend to do all we can to see that this relationship is built and not eroded."

### Celebrate

#### 1998 Graduation Service

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# Ministry with STJKI, Indonesia

## An Australian's experience in Indonesia

Trundling up the steep side of a volcano on hand-built roads of rough cobble, in a rusted old Rover, was its own adventure. But when an engine stall offered a view under the bonnet of wires sparking where uninsulated portions made contact, adventure became blind trust. I was in Indonesia at the invitation of STJKI (Sekolah Theologia Jemaat Kristus Indonesia), one of two Bible Colleges associated with Churches of Christ/Christians churches. The College is located in Salatiga, central Java, and is part of a conference of 36 churches. Paulus Wibowo is President, as well as the Churches of Christ (GJKI) national representative. The remaining 49 congregations are more informally organised. The conference has seven commissions. Among them: Sunday School, Youth, Women, Bible College, Shepherding, Planning. The Planning Commission helps churches gain building permits and start-up funds for chapels. While visiting the mountain-side congregation, I was introduced to a "rock offering". This innovative

idea helps poorer churches qualify for building funds by having them provide some of the materials. Each time someone comes to a meeting, they are to bring a rock they have chipped from the mountain's abundant supply.

Another innovation that greatly aids the spread of Christianity is the requirement of ministry students to establish a church before graduation. The church which I visited was one such congregation. The College has a couple of acres of beautifully-maintained buildings and grounds, reflecting the Javanese culture in which it is located. Overseeing the work of the College is President Moel-yono.

My translator, brave chauffeur of that Rover, and principal host, Siswo Pratomo, kept me delightfully busy. Wherever we went he seemed to have some contact with whom we could share, including a Muslim teacher and three of his pupils. As I was teaching apologetics for a Muslim context, this allowed us both to see if I knew what I was talking about.

While churches are in good heart, religious pressure and economic considerations loom. Prices esca-



STJKI, an Indonesian ministry training college

late, the wet "dry" season has ruined cash crops. Persecution grows, particularly for Chinese Christians.

I concluded my visit with a family who had fellowshiped with us at

Gatton Church of Christ, Qld, where most of the Indonesian Christians studying at the University of Queensland, Gatton, fellowship.

—Ted Bjorem

## Murder Funeral

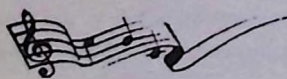
### Good coming out of tragic circumstances

On 7 October the funeral of Stacey Rhodes was held at Sunbury, Vic, in its new venue. Stacey, the daughter of Gary Rhodes, a Sunbury member, was brutally murdered at Bulla on 3 October. More than 700 people attended the service which attracted local press attention. The event, while tragic, gave the Sunbury church an opportunity to provide strong pastoral support. The service fea-

tured video footage and a "photographic eulogy" of Stacey's life which was projected onto the two cinema screens. There has been enormous positive feedback from the press and the community about the service and the striking new venue.

Anne Rhodes, the wife of Garry and mother of Stacey, made her faith commitment at a service on 11 October.

### In Praise and Faith



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## A Church on Fire

**Sunbury Church expands into even larger premises**

Over 1200 people attended services on 20 September to mark the opening of the new Sunbury Community Church centre, Vic.

Allan Meyer from Mt Evelyn and Peter Corney from St Hilary's Anglican Church in Kew were keynote speakers on the theme of "A Church on Fire".

This is the fifth venue for Sunbury in its short seven-year history, and one well overdue! The previous venue in Horne Street had

become overcrowded, was suffering chronic car-parking problems and growth had begun to plateau.

It took two years of exploration and research to finally locate the current venue. The new facility is a 12,000-square-metre factory on 2.2 hectares of prime land in what will become the demographic centre of Sunbury. The factory has been converted into a 700-seat auditorium. Six other meeting

rooms have been constructed, each of which can seat up to 70 people. The auditorium features state-of-the-art multimedia presentation technology, a massive stage area, lighting and an unusual but uniquely Australian colour scheme.

The existing modern office block now houses seven paid staff, with room for several more, and sixteen new work stations for other ministry volunteers.

The factory is leased at \$6,000 per month, with options to renew for twelve years.

The church borrowed \$150,000 from the Properties Corporation and raised \$90,000 to complete the fit out of stage one of the project.

Sunbury has negotiated a "right to purchase" contract at the completion of the lease period. The purchase price has been fixed at today's price and the owner has contracted to make a donation back to the church of \$200,000



*Milton and Anne Oliver*

upon settlement.

The two adjoining blocks of land have also been secured at no interest vendor's terms for the duration of the lease period.

The move to the new venue will enable stronger growth for Sunbury and a solid training base for church planters and new church plants well into the new millennium.

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### Christian Fellowship Association

## Notice of Meeting

The annual meeting of the Christian Fellowship Association (CFA) will be held in the Board Room at

77 Capel St, West Melbourne

on

Monday 16 November at 7.00 pm

**Special Business  
Amendment to the Memorandum and  
Articles of Association**

**All members are encouraged to attend.**

Light supper to follow.

### Christian Librarians' Network

Librarians and Friends are warmly invited to a

#### Dinner

Tuesday, 24 November, 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. Presbyterian Theological College, 684 Elgar Rd, Box Hill North Vic.

**Speaker: Doug Down**

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# People

## The Real Work Comes After

MATT AND JENELLE ELDRIDGE

**O**ne year, three months and seven days ago, we promised to love cherish and obey each other till death do us part. In the nine months leading up to our wedding day we enrolled in not one, but two marriage counselling courses. We also sat through session after session with our minister, working through even our most minute differences. We had the attitude that a great marriage was one that functioned on the scale of perfection and no less.

*It's a hard road to making ministry, faith and a good marriage mix—and we've only just begun.*

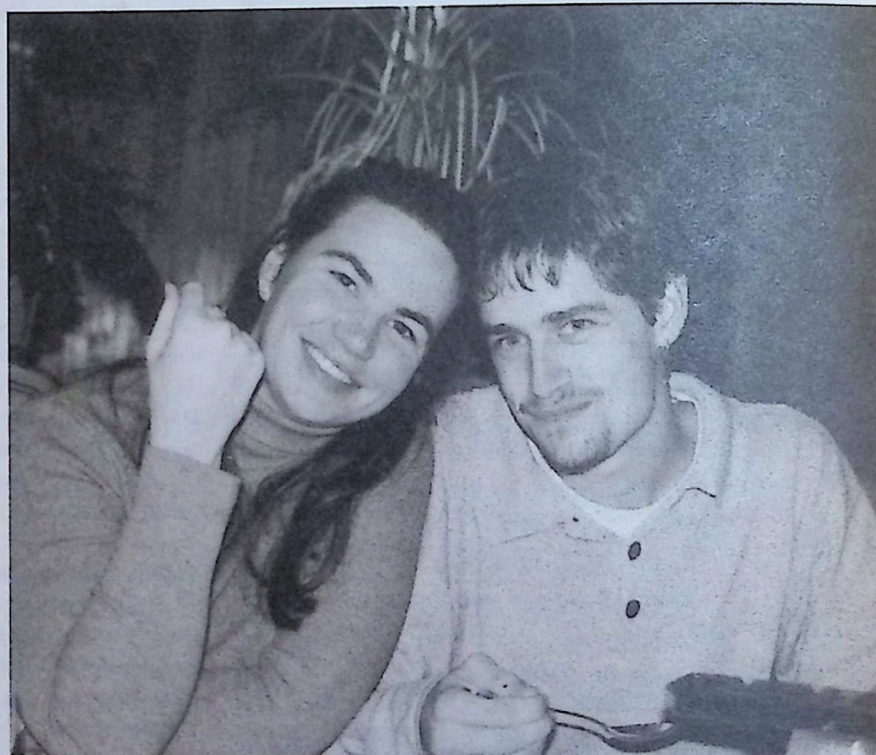
However, throw in a little youth ministry here and there and a touch of overwork wherever necessary, and in a flash your perfection theory vanishes. It's a hard road to making ministry, faith and a good marriage mix—and we've only just begun.

One of the things that attracted us to each other was our own personal faith.

We were both raised in loving Christian families who nurtured and encouraged our relationship with God.

When we met each other we connected on this spiritual level and identified in each other an important part of who we were.

Our faith gave us a common direction that helped to establish a strong foundation for our marriage.



About six months before we were married we started to work together. It was a rewarding experience that saw us isolating our strengths and weaknesses as a team rather than as individuals. We both became more involved in the band "Innhaus Fish", and consequently found ourselves travelling more and more over South Australia. We shared the highs and the lows of band ministry and youth—with the skills of time management becoming finely tuned! Although we have found our work immensely rewarding and we would do it all again, it has also taught us some strong lessons about what not to do. We have learnt that preparation doesn't count for everything in our relationship and we have also learnt the same is true for our faith.

When troubled times hit we often neglect to turn to the resources that we have. Praying together and reading the Bible often strengthens us just to make it through a spiritually demanding time, or a time in our marriage where we are neglecting to just be with each other. We have learnt that whatever effort you put in before you commit yourself to Christ or commit yourself to a life partner, the real work sets in after the commitment.

Matt & Jenelle work together as youth workers at the Happy Valley Church of Christ in South Australia. Matt also works in the Uniting Church Communications office which involves photography and production of the state news magazine, "The New Times". Jenelle is a newly-admitted solicitor who, like Matt, juggles work and youth ministry.

# People

## My Shepherd

KEITH MOULTON

**W**henever I read Psalm 23, I have a mental image of an elderly man quietly penning those words. The years have come and gone, and David sits reflecting on his relationship with his God. Only in his latter years can he truly say, "The Lord is my Shepherd", knowing what it is like to be cared for over the years by a loving shepherd, and so he writes his hymn of thanksgiving. As I read those well-known words, I realise that in my life I too have experienced the sentiments voiced in those lines and certainly in the past 2½ years possibly more than any other time in my life.

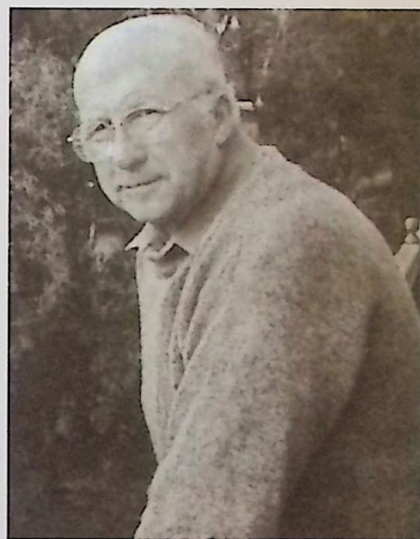
*My whole outlook of life was crumbling, my mind began to fog over and just making sense of anything was an effort.*

It becomes very personal when we can say, "The Lord is my shepherd". And over the many years that I have been a Christian, I have learned that he leads and guides to his places of green pasture and quiet water. The confidence David had in his shepherd was not acquired in a short time or from a single occasion. In my life too, I can see the leading and the guidance in the past was just a taste of what was about to come.

It was not until 28 April 1996 that I had really lived verse four, but on that day my Shepherd began to show me just what it means to have one who I could lean on very, very heavily for every need. On that Sunday I was a widower, having lost my wife Grace on 11 Janu-

ary, fifteen weeks before. On Sunday the 28th I learned my daughter Nanette and her two daughters, Alannah and Madeline had been murdered at the Port Arthur Historic Site that afternoon, and my whole life changed dramatically forever. Where else, and to whom could I go, but to my Shepherd! My whole outlook of life was crumbling, my mind began to fog over and just making sense of anything was an effort. There was an actual sense of a black cloud just over my head. To be able to describe this loss in a few words is impossible, but the words of Psalm 23 rose up in my mind, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil". "Lord, this is the valley of death that's around me, with its very heavy shadow that's overhead, and at sometime you will lead me to walk out from this valley with its shadow, but while I'm here, please have your rod and staff very handy, I'm going to need them."

In the following months, I was very aware of a close all-pervading presence in a physical and a spiritual way, so much so that I experienced the daily ongoing gentle restoration of my soul, as promised in the same Psalm. It is a wonderful experience to have that feeling that you are supported from underneath by the "everlasting arms", which keep you above the events, that at times would tend to swamp you. My Heavenly Father also arranged for friends and sometimes people I didn't even know, to be a wonderful support, to meet me in the street and quietly embrace me, words being superfluous. God's choice of instruments to do his bidding is wide-ranging at times! The fifth verse of that Psalm also is a marvellous experience, when after being led out from under the black cloud, God supplied the nourish-



ment my soul required. My Heavenly Father became so real to me that prayer was more like a conversation to a person present in the house alongside me. So definite is this feeling of a companion living with me, nearly all sense of living here alone is forgotten.

The only part of verse six I have not yet experienced is the latter half. His goodness and his mercy do follow me daily, for that I continually thank him, and the prospect of dwelling with him forever is a joy to look forward to. Yes Psalm 23 to me is a living word, a very real comfort and guide in times of tragedy, and a promise of eternal life with "My Shepherd".

Keith Moulton is the minister of the Nubeena, Tas, church.

*So definite is this feeling of a companion living with me, nearly all sense of living here alone is forgotten.*

# People

## Dark Valleys

HUNG PHAM

**M**y stomach suddenly knotted, an empty feeling overcame my senses, as if my body went into free fall. For one brief moment I could again see myself plunging towards what seemed like a bottomless pit, only to look up and become terrified at the mountainous mass of silver-topped wave about to wash over me. Then I opened my eyes. No, I was not back on the ten-metre boat being tossed about in the South China Sea more than fifteen years ago, this was just a bit of delirium brought on by a fever a week ago!

*I don't really have to be fearful of any valley of death, except, perhaps in a delirious moment of high fever!*

The sea journey of fifteen years ago lasted less than a week, but it certainly changed my life. It was not the only important event though. The year 1975 saw my family change its status. From being a rather affluent family we became dispossessed, having to fight to survive each day. My father was sent to a hard labour camp, along with thousands of officers from the army of South Vietnam. There he stayed for over six years, enduring hard labour, daily humiliating rituals and seeing his former colleagues succumb to illness, hunger and hopelessness.

His family didn't fare much better. It was only through my mother's amazing resourcefulness that I and my five siblings survived and managed to go to school. At the start, I was attracted by the banners, the drum beating and

marches and the blood red flags that the new regime brought to us. Then slowly but surely, our easily impressionable young minds became confused. How come our "eternal friend", our "closer than blood brother" neighbour China suddenly became a "new imperialist invading force" overnight? We sometimes struggled to know whether to praise or curse a party figure, let alone know the reasons behind such events.

Eventually, life was made so hard for us it was like darkness had fallen all around, bringing with it unseen dangers of persecution and suspicion. Our struggle seemed so futile that when by chance my recently-released father and I had an opportunity to get out of the country, we did so without so much as thinking twice about it. Sneaking out to the rendezvous point was not easy, but the Vietnamese Sea seemed to jealously hold on to the escaping people, thrashing us about mercilessly that night. Unknown to the crew, the anchor was knocked loose, the rope tied to it became entangled with the propeller and the engine died. The boat drifted helplessly in the angry sea. I remember the mechanic, who ingeniously constructed a small device to distil sea water into fresh water by using the engine's heat, bending over the engine and simply collapsing due to seasickness. When morning broke the cause was found, the propeller freed, the engine restarted and we continued our journey into the unknown, minus half our fuel supply and all our store of fresh water.

A few days later we made land on a small Indonesian island. Eighteen months later, I stepped down in Melbourne airport, jet-lagged, confused and shaking with the cold of a relatively



mild Melbourne spring day. A new life awaits me! In that eighteen months in the refugee camp I found my faith in the Lord through English classes and contact with a teacher from "World Relief".

This was no dramatic religious experience. Jesus was gentle with me. He guided me through the maze of suspicion, deception and the different philosophies of Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, which found their ways into my proud inquisitive mind. Jesus was firm with me when I was about to make mistakes and called me back from the depths of hopelessness and despair of a cruel and unwelcoming world. He won me over with his patient love and tender care. It is strange, but I only truly appreciated Psalm 23 when I settled into the peace and freedom of Australia. I guess my own passage through the valley of death was not so bad when I knew of nothing different and those around me were in the same situation. As for now, holding on to my faith, I don't really have to be fearful of any valley of death, except, perhaps in a delirious moment of high fever!

Dr Hung Pham, MBBS, FRACGP, Dip.Ob, RACOG graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1991. He is in general practice in Springvale, Vic, and is secretary of the Richmond Vietnamese church.

# People

## People and their Faith

DICK MENTEITH

I believe faith is a gift from God. Yet, I am convinced he provides the influence of many people to develop it in our lives. They can often be the most unlikely people, who contribute in unexpected ways. I am continually grateful for those who have contributed to the development of my faith.

### **Faith is nurtured in a caring church**

My introduction to the Christian way of life came when I was eight years old and my friend David asked me to join his soccer team at the Auburn Church of Christ, NSW. That association through church sport provided the ba-

*God's gifts to me of family, friends, church and ministry have provided the bases on which my faith has grown.*

sis for the church to nurture the development of my faith.

David's parents invited me to go to church with them each week where, influenced by their example and inspired by the lay preaching of Eric, my soccer coach, I accepted Jesus as Saviour at the age of fourteen. Looking back, I can see that the people at Auburn church provided Christian role models for me in my early years. These friends encouraged me to be involved in the church and led me towards a mature faith.

### **Faith develops through service**

As a young man, I was given many opportunities for service in the church, including leading in worship, reading the Scriptures, prayers, Sunday School superintendent, and Boy's Brigade cap-

tain. I was elected to the church board and subsequently to the eldership. My efforts were always appreciated, although I cringe as I recall some of them. The church was committed to doing things well and provided training and development for its people. I benefited greatly from this.

These opportunities ensured that the faith and abilities of the young people in the church were appropriately nurtured. Consequently, many of us are serving in ordained ministries, on mission fields and in the wider church. In some ways, this experience contributed to my recent appointment as Conference President in NSW.

### **Faith is tested in the world**

Incredulous work colleagues often tested my faith. Young Christians are greatly tempted to forsake, or at least question, their faith in the work force. Fortunately, God brought Neil, a devout Christian and my work supervisor, into my life at just the right time.

Neil kept me focussed on what it meant to be a Christian in the work force. His support helped me discover how important it is for mature Christians in the business world to invest time and energy in nurturing young Christians.

### **Faith is strengthened by a caring family**

In 1967, I married Pat and some years later our children Jo-Anne, Andrew and Jill arrived to complete our family. Like most families, we have experienced the normal challenges of family life. Yet, through it all, there has been a collective sense of support, of faith shared and of gratitude that God has given us each other. This support was particularly evident when both Pat's and my parents died recently.

Our children are now adults and are active in their faith in different



churches. I have learned that families not only keep you humble, they can also reinforce your faith.

### **Ministry is an expression of faith**

At one time, Pat and I contemplated training for pastoral ministry. It was at this time that God led us to Wesley Mission and the ministry of Dr Gordon Moyes, a good friend and an inspiration to my faith. Immediately it was clear that my professional training and experience placed me in an ideal position to serve the Lord at the Mission. God has used me in Wesley Mission, one of Australia's most significant churches, where he is constantly enlarging my faith and gifts as I witness wonderful things being done in his name. As I also move around Churches of Christ, in my capacity as Conference President, I am constantly inspired by the faithful ministry of God's people.

God's gifts to me of family, friends, church and ministry have provided the bases on which my faith has grown. Each force in my life, and the people who represent that influence, has provided a reason for rejoicing, a shoulder to cry on and good advice in moments of doubt or confusion. I thank God for them all.

# People

## Why Believe in God?

LEANNE HUNT

I belong to a generation characterised by the need to keep our options open—commitment seems fatal, RSVP dates are of no consequence, truth is what works and faith is seeing then believing. So then why would I, a 27-year-old single white female, choose to believe in God in 1998? Aren't there too many other interesting options out there for me? Can't I find fulfilment in my career, sport, travel, family and friends?

The society of "options" in which I live does not offer contentment. Rather, it

*The society of "options" in which I live does not offer contentment.*

simply leaves any choice you make seem insufficient when compared with the alternatives. I marvel at the money spent to encourage me to change every facet of my life to another brand, make, style or colour.

I started to discover God about the same time I discovered that you had to pray before you could eat dinner. After reading the adventures of Winnie-the-Pooh, I would open the story of Moses crossing the Red Sea and read of God, who saved his people. My family were Christians, so I was introduced to God as I was introduced to many other people and parts of life.

As I reflect, I had little trouble placing my faith in the God who was, for my parents, the source of direction, help, purpose, and most importantly, love. People may argue that I wasn't given another option having been raised in a Christian family—but I can tell you that this was not the case.

Nobody forced me to believe in God. Now as an adult I am shaped through my faith in God. Understanding that God created me just as he had designed me, brings an acceptance of myself which a face cream could never produce. I am able to hold a perspective that clears much of the confusion that comes with trying to sort out who the world is telling me I should be.

Knowing how much Jesus loves me, to the point that he died for me, places a value on my life that is beyond any salary I earn or possession I obtain.

Discovering the God-given abilities I possess sets a clear direction and purpose for my life, clearer than any "eight-step" book I could read or tape series I could listen to.

My faith in God is not an additive to life—to be placed alongside my new Nike shoes and worn when I think it matches my outfit. My faith, in God, is all consuming—it is my life. Why? Because as Jesus declared, "I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full". (John 10:10 NIV) When the alternative is discontentment and continual bombardment by quick-fix solutions to life, I don't believe faith in God is such a strange choice.

The contentment found in a life directed by God certainly does not equal a boring or predictable life. It isn't a life devoid of choices. I have found faith in God to bring contentment beyond imagination, and a life that even I could not have predicted ten years ago. A verse that has become very real to me is Ephesians 3:20: "Now unto him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." (NIV) Life with God has led me to teach in a third world country, to study in the USA, through singleness while my



friends are all getting married, a change in careers and my family being scattered across the world. I would never have been able to imagine or even ask for some of these things to happen, but I have known at every turn that God is a big God who has had my life in hand. The security this knowledge brings cannot be matched by anything the world offers.

At 27 I know I have many more challenges to face and, for each of these, a million ways of handling them. Only one, though, will work and that is the solution offered by obedience to God. I know I can strive to be obedient because my faith allows me to be "sure of what I hope for and certain of what I do not see". (Heb 11:1 NIV)

Leanne Hunt is Associate Pastor Youth and Sport at South Perth Church of Christ. She loves to play basketball, travel and dine out and was formerly a secondary physical education and science teacher.

# World Council of Churches 50 Years On

DR MARTIN ROBINSON

**T**his morning, as I sat down to write this appreciation of the World Council of Churches, BBC radio carried a news item which suggested that Konrad Raiser and other leading officers of the WCC were in some despair over the future of the organisation. The suggestion was that the World Council, which has 242 full-time employees and an annual budget of £31 million, has failed in its major goal of achieving widespread Christian unity, understood as organic union.

*For Newbigin, organic union which did not take mission seriously was a dead letter.*

This does not mean that nothing has been achieved. Major WCC programs dealing with social justice and reconciliation have certainly made a major impact, especially in Southern Africa. More than this, few can deny that the atmosphere of mutual distrust and even open hostility which was so often the hallmark of Christian denominations fifty years ago is radically different today. But the major goal of achieving organic Christian unity seems to have run into the sands in virtually every Western nation.

Even notable success stories of union in places such as India, Thailand and Canada, have resulted in united churches which seem moribund in terms of numerical growth. Instead, other newer denominations have

come into being which seem to grow more dynamically than the various united churches. Today, fifty years after the inception of the World Council of Churches, there are literally thousands more denominations instead of hundreds less.

What might we make of such a situation? Is it simply the case that efforts to bring about Christian unity need to be redoubled or does there need to be a wholesale re-evaluation of the whole unity project? Konrad Raiser and others who are entirely supportive of the ecumenical movement are increasingly suggesting that it is time for a major reappraisal. The intent is to ensure that the World Council of Churches, and the ecumenical movement more widely, enters the next millennium better able to serve the needs of the wider Christian family.

Surveys in every Western country indicate that Christians are less and less worried about the issue of denominational allegiance. Most want to emphasise their membership in the wider body of Christ ahead of their membership of a particular denomination. Worship style, lively programs and relational fit are seen as more important factors in choosing a church than the dogma's of a particular tradition. Denominational leaders increasingly work easily together in a range of cooperative programs and initiatives. Given this improvement in atmosphere and relationships, it might be hard to understand precisely why organic union seems increasingly difficult to achieve.

The late Lesslie Newbigin, who worked so hard to achieve the

creation of the Church of South India and who served the ecumenical movement in a variety of roles for most of his ministry, offered some creative insights in the few years before his death. He made two important points.

First, he was keen to emphasise that the World Council was given birth in the context of an urgent missionary concern. The first meeting of the World Council at Amsterdam in 1948 owed its creation directly to a series of initiatives which flowed from the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. The concern of the 1910 delegates was to encourage Christian unity so that the world might believe. Their immediate concern was to complete the Great Commission in the lifetime of those present by overcoming the obstacles to the best use of mission resources caused by the scandal of Christian disunity.

Newbigin, who was the General Secretary of the International Missionary Council for many years, worked to unite that movement with the World Council of Churches at New Delhi in 1961 in order to strengthen the missionary vision of the ecumenical movement. His constant concern was that this effort had failed and that the missionary content of the ecumenical movement had been lost.

Newbigin's second and related point was to note that the ecumenical movement in the west seemed more concerned with the horizon of reuniting Christendom than with mission itself. Such a concern was certainly understandable in the context of European Christianity. Many European Christians had felt that the two world wars were to



some extent the legacy of a bitterly divided Christendom. In short, there was a feeling that the recreation of a united Christendom might help to prevent a future carnage. Newbigin's return to Europe after many years of missionary service in India increasingly convinced him that this goal was mistaken. He felt that Christendom was now over and that the west as well as other continents now represented a mission field. For Newbigin, organic union which did not take mission seriously was a dead letter.

The new ecumenism which Raiser and others wish to see inevitably means that the mission agenda in the west needs to be taken seriously. This will mean a reconsideration of the meaning of organic union. All too often, organic union has come to mean only an organisational unity without a careful evaluation of how this might further effectiveness in mission. The coming century will challenge the structures of every denomination. Might it be possible to re-conceive both the nature of the church and so the nature of a future organic unity? Martin Robinson is a UK Churches of Christ minister and Director—Mission and Theology with the British and Foreign Bible Society.

## Classifieds

### GOLDEN WEDDINGS

**STEWART** Les and Vere celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on 6 November 1998. They were married at Thornbury, Vic, church by the late D.D. Stewart. Congratulations from all the family.

### DIAMOND WEDDINGS

**COLLYER (Chipperfield)** Max and Nell celebrate the 60th anniversary of their wedding conducted at Gardiner, Vic, church 29 October 1938 by the late Thos Hagger. (03) 9801 5310.

**COLLYER (nee Chipperfield)** Congratulations and much love to Nell and Max on the 60th anniversary of your marriage, celebrated at Gardiner Church of Christ, Vic, 29.10.38, from your family Bryan, John and Deni, Julie and Ben, Ruth (dec.) and Mark and Heather and your ten grandchildren.

**STANFORD-OWEN** Lois, Frank, Barbara and David give thanks and praise to God for his goodness, guidance and love to their parents over the past 60 years. The marriage was solemnised in the Bunbury Church of Christ, WA, 15.10.38, pastor Frank Fewster officiating. Present address: Unit 3, Rath Road, Robson Court, Harvey WA 6220.

### DEATHS

**ROSS, Alma** On 17 September 1998. Loved and loving wife of Neville (dec). Faithful member of the Hartwell Church of Christ, Vic, for over 56 years. Much-loved mother of David and Jenny, loving Nan to Paul and Gwenhaelle, and Tim and Gayle. Much-

loved mother of Diane and Neil Graham, loving Nan to Andrew and Kate. Much loved mother of Jim and Anne, loving Nan to Elise, Philippa and Andrew. With fondest memories of a wonderful life of loving and giving. With humility and love, we affirm our family prayer: "Dear God, welcome Mum, your loyal and faithful servant".

### HOLIDAYS

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### THANKYOU

**MORRIS** This is to inform that Alan Morris (Perth) has undergone acute by-pass surgery with some renal and lung failure. He's progressing well and is now back at home. He wishes to thank you for your prayers on his and Ivy's behalf and to thank those that will also offer their support in prayer. A big thank you from all the family.

## Coffee Break What is Fellowship?

CAROL PRESTON

**F**ellowship is a strange word, perhaps becoming stranger. And isn't this the story of our communities? We are more and more strangers to each other. This has been called the "elevator mentality", where we find we are crammed close with people we've not met, trying really hard not to touch each other, where nobody speaks or makes



*God has given us such potential to be a nurturing household*

eye contact. In the average street or shopping centre so many go about their own business, not getting involved with others, and even the most basic of human interaction is often difficult. We work in large impersonal institutions. Even where people have something in common, like at a rock concert or football game, people who've never met will sing and cheer and even hug each other like the best of friends, and then part without even knowing each others' names, let alone touching each others' lives in significant ways.

Could the church become like this? Or even our own families? The early Christians depended on their relationships with each other. They gave each other courage to make a reality out of the vision of the church. They grew together, encouraged, supported one another, helped each other to see what God was doing in their lives. They were the family of God. For many people

now, church is family, their only community. Yet we know that church can be a place people come on Sundays and leave to live out their week without connections to supportive, encouraging others. They especially need the church to be a home, a place of fellowship, where members get to know each other, care about what's happening to them and encourage them in their walk with God.

The church is far from perfect, but God has given us such potential to be a nurturing household, where people of all ages are valued and supported. We need to be intentional about fellowship, by whatever name we call it. We need to make sure we are not relating in the church the way many do in our society—behind protective masks and fear of being known, often called individualism, or behind isolation and pride that pushes away help, often called privacy or independence. God blesses us in fellowship, in community, as his body and we are to be a blessing to others. Consider your church fellowship this month. What quality of relationships are there? How intentionally are you building community? Something is missing in the heart of our society. Don't let it be missing in the church!



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## Two Anniversaries

VINEY LONGTHORP

**A**nniversaries are always with us. For music lovers the world over, this year marks two special occasions.

In 1798 Joseph Haydn, the renowned Austrian composer, gave the world his choral masterpiece, the oratorio *The Creation*. Many of us remember church choirs of yore giving joyous vent to the most famous of its choruses, "The Heavens are telling the glory of God". This is music one can sing along with!

*It was not until Strauss praised the "Enigma" that the English realised that they had a genius in their midst.*

Haydn once said of himself: "When I think of God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes leap and dance as they leave my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, I serve him with a cheerful spirit". *The Creation* is a living testimony to this confession of faith. Yet when Haydn returned to Vienna from London just before composing this work he was not a happy man. He should have been. He had a secure post; the world of music revered him, calling him "Pappa Haydn" for his pioneering the development of the modern symphonic form; in London he had been accorded celebrity status. However, in his middle sixties, which was old by the norms of that day, he was aware of the "creeping shades of mor-

tality", especially in his continued sadness over the death of his dear friend Mozart. Furthermore, he was beginning to wonder whether he had not exhausted his artistic muse.

But sometime in 1797 it was suggested that he write an oratorio. Haydn had been stimulated in London by the music of that genre of Handel. So he set to work assisted by a literary friend, Baron Gottfried van Swieten, who produced a text which combined parts of the Book of Genesis, some of the Psalms, and selections from Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

The work was simple, song-like, and warm, as many appreciative listeners will testify. It was first performed semi-privately at the Schwartzberg Palace in April 1798. The word of its greatness spread quickly and at its first public performance the Viennese took it to their heart.

In 1808, at a performance to mark its tenth anniversary, the aged composer responded to the acclamation by pointing upwards and saying, "Not from me, it came from above".

Another anniversary is that Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations* is one hundred years old. Now all music students know that in fact it was first performed in 1899, but lovers of Elgar's music won't mind me cribbing a year because it was in the year before that our composer was hard at work writing

it. That is the really important thing. This work proved to be Elgar's "breakthrough" as a composer of international standing. Some think it typical of the English that it was not until the eminent German composer, Richard Strauss praised the *Enigma* that the English realised that they had a genius in their midst.

The *Enigma Variations* is a set of fourteen variations on an original theme, supremely orchestrated by a master of this art, second to none. This was Elgar's preferred "instrument" and he used it to express nuance without number, evoking those mystical feelings of delight and mystery. Many composers both before and after Elgar have written variations on a theme. It is an oft-employed form which has resulted in much fine music. But here, Elgar did something which had never been attempted before. Its uniqueness lies in that each variation is a musical portrait of one of Elgar's many friends, including his adored wife, Alice. For example, variation twelve, with a prominent part for solo cello, pictures the character of cello-playing Basil Nevinston, "a very dear friend". For many, the greatest of the set is variation nine, the "Nimrod". It is a tribute to August Jaegar, the music editor of Elgar's publisher. Jaegar was the one who encouraged the forty-year-old com-



poser suffering a "mid-life crisis" not to give up. Jaegar related how Beethoven nearly gave up. Thus encouraged Elgar pressed on. Hence this variation is structured in the form of the slow movement of one of Beethoven's early piano sonatas. The variation also recalls the way Jaegar and Elgar went on long walks discussing all the while the beauties of Beethoven's music.

Only Elgar could have written such music. Jaegar wrote, "Here is an English musician who has something to say and knows how to say it in his own individual and beautiful way ... he writes as he feels, there is no affectation or make-believe ... warmth and feeling are his credentials".

It is very likely that next year there will be many performances and Broadcasts of the *Enigma*. Seek them out.

Elgar's music in general is a religious experience, not just specifically so as in *Gerontius*. Elgar was, in one sense of that pregnant phrase, "a man for others". This work especially allows it to be said of him, as happily it can be said of most, "I am a part of all whom I have met".

Both 1898 and 1798 were great years for music lovers, and all the years since have been great years as we experience music such as this.

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## BAPTISMS

•Amy Prentice, Caroline Brown, Emma Lay, Daniel Backholer, Andrew Backholer, Frankston, Vic •Anthony Collett, Michael Keen, Victor Harbor, SA •Craig Dearden, Kristie Burdekin, Kelly Willard, Kerrie Bubb, Jenna Bailey, Epping, NSW •Joyce Wilson, Dorothy Armstrong, Tweed Heads-Coolangatta, NSW •Karen Atherton, Alex Campbell, Irina Gishka, Alevtina Shaturskaya, Maylands, SA

## DEATHS

•Elma Brown, Swan Hill, Vic •Win Hine, Catie Grypstra, Frankston, Vic •Jean Heinrich, Victor Harbor, SA •Bill Varney, Happy Valley, SA •Kath Haslam, Tootgarook, Vic

## OBITUARIES

**Obituaries are limited to 100 words**  
**BARTLETT, Walter Nathaniel**

(4.10.98) Born 5 July 1902 in Strathalbyn, SA, Walter died at Parkrose Village. His wife, Gladys died 27.10.93 ending a marriage of 61 years. There were three children: Leita (Mrs Les Brooks), Jim and June, and Marlene (Mrs David Messent) who are all, with their partners, involved in church work. Walter graduated from the College of the Bible, Glen Iris, in 1930, then had ministries at Berri, Balaklava, Gawler-Williamstown, Croydon (21 years), Kensington Park, Dulwich-Rose Park Parish, and Unley. He was friend to many and a wonderful servant of Jesus Christ. As a minister he adorned his calling.

**RETCHFORD, Peter**

(28.5.98) Peter was born 10.6.16 in SA. In the last decade, he was in membership with the Toowoomba North, Qld church with his wife Beril. Beril and her children, John and Janine, gave thanks for his life and ministry. In the Depression years Peter attended a service at Annerley church and responded to the Gospel. He later studied at Croydon Missionary College, the

College of the Bible and Woolwich College. Peter and Beril were involved in ministries with the Merewether, Gilgandra, Sydney, Prahran and Croydon churches. He served as NSW state evangelist and led numerous successful missions. In his later years he was involved in business.

—DT

**TAYLOR, Amelia Rebecca**

Amelia Scarce was born in South Melbourne on 28.9.18. Her early years were spent in South Melbourne and Brunswick. Amelia gradually became aware of the wonderful gift God had given her in her singing voice. However she expressed genuine surprise and delight when she won the Sun Aria at Ballarat in 1941. She and Cliff Taylor were married 2.12.44 at the Lygon Street, Carlton, church, thus beginning a partnership of almost 50 years of marriage, and significant ministries at Brighton, Doncaster and Chatswood. She used her singing gift for God. Amelia will be greatly missed by her daughters Wendy and Heather, her son-in-law Chris, and her grand daughters Siobhan and Kirsty.

**YARDE, Mary, W.H.**

(23.5.98) Mary Castles was born at Swan Hill, Vic, 1912. She married Lionel Yarde at Swan Hill Methodist Church 1940. They had three children, Dorothy Morris (Swan Hill), John (Huntly) and Margaret Blades (Boreen Point, Qld). Baptised at Swan Hill Church of Christ in 1945 by K.A. MacNaughton, an old school friend. Together, Mary and Lionel worked their orchard, then retired to Hampton. She served as a church organist and used her cookery and craft talents. Lionel predeceased Mary in 1981. Mary moved to Tewantin, 1989, and was a foundation member Noosa Church of Christ. Interred at Cheltenham Vic. Steve Rose officiating.

—Dorothy I.W. Morris

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## WA

**CARNARVON (Gavin Law Davis)** Ladies encouraged by CWCI safari visit & speaker Val Stewart, NSW ... Ken & Shirley Birch making regular visits to Burringurrah Aboriginal community near Australia's largest rock, Mt Augustus, 407 km from Carnarvon, seeking ways to assist ... Men have planned overnight retreat at local sheep station ... Ian Blackbourne has resigned as teacher of Christian school for family reasons.

**WARNBRO (John Crosby, Neville Blachall, Leigh McIntosh, Dewey Michaels)** AGM considered building extension for youth centre. Planned giving program introduced & 4 new elders elected ... 11 decisions Bill Newman Crusade ... WAYJAM attracted 120 kids from 6 churches ... 70 ladies attended annual dinner ... 300 attended sports service with Dewey & Ricky Grace (Perth Wildcats). 14 teams received trophies ... MIB youth night, Glen Smyth challenged youth ... 82 people for prayer & commitments last 6 weeks ... Barry Austin appointed CEO, Cottesloe Council.

**ALBANY (John Spencer)** Speaker 19 August, Peter McDonough from Capernwray ... Conference President Tom Morrison spoke 16 August ... CWCI ladies events: frivolity night, breakfast at Beachside restaurant with Shirley Burton speaker ... Robert Hickling elected elder further 2 years ... 10 ladies attended camp at Serpen-

time ... Several members joined with St John's church celebrating 150th anniversary ... During minister's absence, pulpit filled by Ken Robinson, Valmay Sprigg.

## TAS

**NUBEENA (Keith Moulton)** Recent speakers have been John Powell, Phil McCredde and John Gilmore ... Baby dedication 27 September ... Minister interviewed ABC TV "Lateline" ... Shrubs & trees planted to beautify church grounds ... Suckling's cottage leased for community activities ... Phyllis Parker excelled in recent flower shows ... Church fair held 3 October. **LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison, S. Fitzallen, T. Gray)** While 2 ministers on leave, speakers have been Allan Harris, Bible Society, John Gilmore, CCTC, Mulgrave, & Dr Trevor Clezy, Gideons ... Afternoon Fellowship re-elected Coral Heier as president ... Refresher courses for readers, presidents & ushers held 6 & 10 October ... Building works begun at Canning St Children's Ministry Centre ... Jack Edwards (92) in hospital.

## NSW

**TWEED HEADS-COOLANGATTA (Bruce Warwick)** Proceeds for World Vision, \$1,859 ... Trash 'n Treasure raised \$3,700 for others ... First module on Sunday nights "Becoming a Contagious Christian" encouraging ... Randy Edwards, Stuart White, Justin Whitecross, speakers in absence of Warwicks. Justin also outlined work at Byron Bay ... Car rally concluded with BBQ at Treadwells-M'bah joining in ... TAG presented item in service at semester end ... Men's breakfast, Joe Isakhan speaker.

## SA

**VICTOR HARBOR (Graeme Rogerson, Suzanne Turner)** Choir enjoyed visit to Prospect ... Pastoral Care workshop planned with Ron Holmes ... Men's



**Yes  
Lord  
We'll  
Go**

A book telling of the Lord's provision to **John and June Tocknell in the Canary Islands**

Copies cost \$5.00 and are available from **John and June Tocknell, 14 Galleon Court, Safety Bay WA 6169.**

# Church News

Stuff meet fortnightly ... "Sermon on the Mount" being studied in preparation for Greg Elsdon's workshops in November ... Outdoor worship planned for October ... Junior CYF held concert in aid of Teen Challenge ... Scott Magann commenced studies at Adelaide College of Divinity ... Young adult study led by Suzanne Turner.

**HAPPY VALLEY (Andrew Ratcliff)** Many involved in 40 Hour Famine ... Rex Hudson celebrated 80th birthday ... 50s Plus continue to meet regularly ... 6 basketball teams played in grand finals ... Andrew Ratcliff's ministry extended for further 5 years ... Fiona Goodwin involved in discipleship development program ... "Grand Final Celebration" for Harold Baggs 50th birthday.

## VIC

**FRANKSTON (Tom Ede, Jason Potter)** Jason Potter will conclude ministry in December ... Janet Woodlock led well-attended women's ministry seminar ... First of our regular special Saturday night youth services held with a good reception ... David & Wendy Combridge have a baby daughter, Joanne ... Welcomed Roy & Margaret Hone, & Richard Vidaic into membership.

**SWAN HILL (Roger Rissan) Mitchell** & William, twin sons of Jane & Phil Barkman, dedicated on 13 September ... Ken Beggs welcomed into fellowship ... Youth group from Northern Summit Baptist in Adelaide, SA, visited during October & took part in services ... Seniors Chut & Chew group offering good opportunities for outreach ... Successful guest service 11 October.

**YARRAWONGA (R. Goodwin) Church** held 73rd anniversary 27 September. Members & friends returned to share in thanksgiving & reflective worship. Duet by Merry & Joy O'Brien. Message by former pastor Max Richardson was encouraging. Offering \$660. Luncheon followed the service.

**TOOTGAROOK (Mal Giezendanner)** Average attendance 89 over winter months ... Many members on sick list & away to Queensland & overseas ... 4 members joined work party to Red Centre organised by the UC to renovate mission property ... All auxiliaries in good heart ... CWF celebrated birthday with inter-church friends. Sister Carmel speaker ... Open door sent \$300 to NG tidal wave relief.

**BORONIA (Bruce Moore, Gordon Stirling)** Induction service for Brian Ricketts 18 October, church looking forward to Brian joining Bruce in team ministry ... Thanks & gift presentation to Gordon Stirling as voluntary ministry ends ... St Kilda Gatehouse members visited evening service ... Congratulations to Stephen Curkpatrick on gaining PhD ... Election day fete raised \$1,869 ... Ian Allsop, CofC delegate to WCC Assembly, Harare, spoke at morning service.

**BLACKBURN (David Ratten, John Rowe, Russell Croxford, Anne Spoelder)** David Fuller from God's Squad Motorcycle Club very welcome speaker at recent service ... Newly formed MOPS group held luncheon, with 40 ladies enjoying meal & discussion ... Mal & Maureen Wakefield celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with family & friends recently ... Hawthorn footballer Steve Lawrence guest speaker at a crowded evening service.

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# What's in a Name? (2)

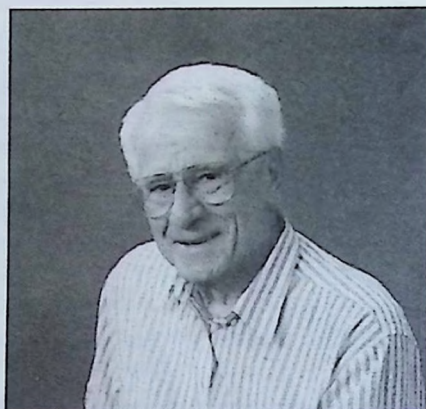
GORDON STIRLING

**T**he names we inherit or are given may affect us profoundly, for good or for ill. How would you have liked to have inherited "Haggard" for a surname? Maybe you would survive it. But what if your parents had given you the Christian name "Rice"? Rice Haggard!

Names are very important. That's what the original Rice Haggard thought. But he wasn't thinking of his own name. He belonged to a group of young radicals who broke away from the traditional American Methodists, calling themselves Republican Methodists. But he was not happy with the name. So at a meeting of Republican Methodists in Virginia he rose to his feet and holding up a copy of the New Testament said, "In this book we are told that the disciples were called Christians, and I move that henceforth and for ever, the followers of Christ be called Christians, simply". The motion was passed unanimously.

In 1804 Rice Haggard moved to Kentucky where he bought a farm not far from Cane Ridge and became associated with Barton Stone. Stone and his followers had been thrown out of the Presbyterian synod for mixing with other Christians in the famous Cane Ridge Revival. They had then set up the Springfield Presbytery as their governing body, but subsequently dissolved it with a meeting to read "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery".

At the meeting, Rice Haggard persuaded them to use the name "Christian" only. Barton Stone later wrote "With man-made



creeds we threw the Springfield Presbytery overboard and took the name Christian, the name given to the disciples at Antioch". He went on to write, "We published a pamphlet on this name, written by Elder Rice Haggard who had recently united with us". Twenty eight years later Barton Stone's Christians united with Alexander Campbell's Disciples (another biblical name). And in the uniting process no attempt was made to find a common name. Both names were used. Today in America churches of the Stone-Campbell Movement are variously called Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. In Australia we have followed our British churches and called ourselves Churches of Christ, although in the early days we were more often called Disciples.

What's in a name? I suppose it depends on how our lives reflect the name we wear.

## The Last Word

**You have given so much to me,  
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.**

—George Herbert  
(1593-1633)

*When everything's coming your way,  
you're in the wrong lane.*

*The teacher was giving a lesson about animals, but Cecil was not listening, so she asked him:  
"What's the use of the reindeer?"  
"To make the flowers grow," replied the happy little fellow.*

*"You can't resign," the circus manager said to the human cannonball. "Where would I get another man of your calibre?"*

*Judge to habitual defendant: "Is this the first time you have been up before me?" "I dunno yer honour. What time do you get up?"*

*Teacher: "Why are you always late?"*

*Robert: "Because you're always ringing the bell before I get here!"*

*"The doctor told me to take these pills for the rest of my life," said the patient. "What's wrong with that?" inquired his friend. "He only gave me half a dozen!"*

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## Pontius' Puddle

