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Christmas



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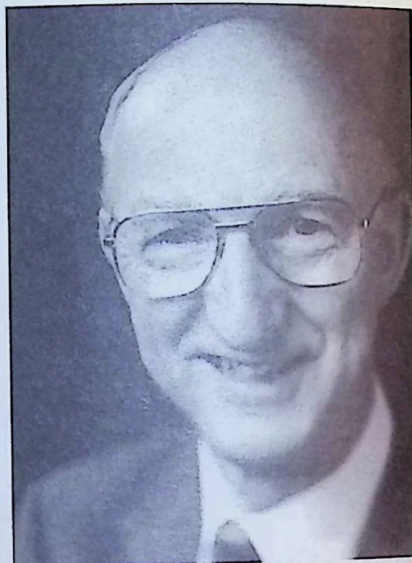


Editorial

Looking Ahead

DON SMITH

Within days of reading this issue, 1998 will be behind us. Our attention will then be firmly fixed on 1999. Given the imminent end of the century, our interest will be all the more focussed on the future and what the new century and the third millennium holds for us and our world. Since boyhood, I have looked forward to and been fascinated by what the year 2000 would be like. Hopefully I shall find out! * As Churches of Christ in Australia we stand on the edge of a new paradigm. A paradigm has been described as a pattern or a model to enable us to grasp a state of affairs that by its



nature is complex and difficult to understand, or in musical terms, we are listening to the overture, where the great themes to follow are being announced. * We shall progressively be hearing more of the implications of the International Summit on Mission and the commitment by leaders of Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom churches to becoming a missional church. We shall be living with the old paradigm values and ideas, alongside the new. It will be an interesting experience! There may be anxiety, we may feel threatened about the tide of change and the new initiatives and ways of thinking. * It was ever thus with any movement which chooses to redefine itself for a new age and task. The new paradigm will probably threaten our "institutional life", the new paradigm will demand new responses from leaders at all levels of our corporate church life. Looking hard at the church in the western world, let's face the options. In human terms, one option is to move by a process of gradual dissolution and weakness to extinction or irrelevancy. The portents of such a fate are already evident in parts of the Western church. Our leaders have chosen a commitment to becoming a missional church of the new century and millennium. * This paper, about to begin its 102 year, enthusiastically embraces the commitment made by our Australian leaders to redefine ourselves as a missional church movement. We acknowledge our heritage with respect and thanksgiving. It challenges us about destiny. Now our commitment is to a new vision and future. *

Christmas

Our second Christmas issue ranges from Christmas in Zimbabwe to looking forward to starting a new year.

<i>It's About Giving</i>	14
<i>Mission: Messiah</i>	15
<i>Christmas in Zimbabwe</i>	16
<i>Christmas in Action</i>	17
<i>A Year 2,000 Bug</i>	18

News

<i>Polish CBI Record</i>	5
<i>Significant Events</i>	6
<i>Good Start for the Year</i>	6
<i>Presidents' Conference</i>	7
<i>Wigney and Warne</i>	7
<i>Exceeding Expectations</i>	8
<i>Naval Veteran Dies</i>	8
<i>New Training Opportunity</i>	8
<i>Shaping Things to Come</i>	9
<i>New Theology Lecturer</i>	10
<i>Time to Move On</i>	10
<i>Christmas Expectations</i>	11
<i>Bundaberg's 75th</i>	11
<i>Alive and Well</i>	11
<i>Mounties Planning Ahead</i>	13
<i>Ten Years</i>	13
<i>Gandep Work Party</i>	13

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.

The Manifesto

To the Editor,
I was delighted to read the Manifesto from the leaders at the Summit at Stanwell Tops, NSW, and its expression of unity of purpose and mission of Churches of Christ in the UK, New Zealand and Australia ("AC" 25.11.98). I was even more delighted to see that it was also an expression of oneness between the leaders of all of the Australian states. It was not always so! But the Holy Spirit has been at work among us and, as the Manifesto states, at the Summit too. We seem to have come to the place where our leaders accept our diversity and are comfortable with the concept of unity in diversity. The Manifesto even refers to it as "God-given diversity". No


doubt some of our diversity has been God-given, but a lot of it was the result of our own "cussedness". However, God accepts it and works along with it (and sometimes in spite of it) and it seems that we will too. Of course the great principles implied in the Manifesto need interpreting for our sort of world and working out in action at the grass-roots level of our churches. So I hope that our leaders across Australia will not only meet again, as the Manifesto says, but meet regularly until we all become involved as significant, relevant, Christ-like people. Maybe the starting place for all of us is in the sort of expressions of repentance, reconciliation and healing, where apparently our leaders ended their Summit.


—Gordon Stirling
(Boronia, Vic)

Worthy of Support

To the Editor,
As one who attended the Victorian-Tasmanian President's Reception 16 October, I would like to express my appreciation for the hospitality of the International Christian Community church. Chek Chia continues to give us enthusiastic leadership in his role as president. On the night it was good to have Judith Turner taking a prominent part, representing as she does, a smaller country church and CWF. Lynette Leach kept up her usual high standard in her planning and in her challenging remarks. It was good to hear news of some of our older churches experiencing real growth and to share with others who are "remaining faithful" in difficult circumstances. These times of fellowship and learning are worthy of our enthusiastic support.

—Alan Rackemann
(Croydon, Vic)

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Letters to the Editor

Free Drugs

To the Editor,

Congratulations to Federal and State police for recent success in arresting drug dealers in Queensland and Victoria and confiscating millions of dollars worth of drugs. Despite these great successes, people are still calling for free access to heroin for addicts. I understand their argument regarding crime and safety, but it does not stand up to any realistic scrutiny. If free heroin is to be supplied to addicts, is there to be an age limit? Will we give free heroin to fourteen-year-olds? Will their parents be told? If only addicts are receiving free heroin, will casual users accelerate their usage and declare themselves addicted to obtain free access? Will free supply for addicts condemn users to a life controlled by drugs?

What about ecstasy and LSD? These drugs are now widely available and used by teenagers. Will we offer them free as well? Will there be an age limit?

Do we really want a society where drug dealers make millions of dollars destroying the minds and bodies of our youth, and our pathetic response is to give free drugs to those at the bottom of the barrel?

Only when drugs become unavailable will our young people become drug free. It is pointless

spending millions of dollars on anti-drug campaigns while drug pushers rule our streets, schools and entertainment venues. Let's get serious and allocate more money to apprehending drug dealers!

—Barry Kearney
(Park Orchards, Vic)

Here and There

Vision for Romanian Orphans
World Vision and the Romanian Orthodox Church have formed a strong partnership to care for neglected children in the country's orphanages. Romania, under Communist domination for 50 years now, has a desperate situation with children in state orphanages. Neither the state nor families could care for the thousands of children born in situations where any attempt at family planning was forbidden. Poor families abandoned children they could not support to orphanages, which saw children deprived of even the basic necessities of life. Many were infected with HIV and condemned to a slow death. World Vision in association with the Orthodox Church is seeking to remedy a stark situation through a range of programs. (MARC Newsletter)

Update

Dear Readers,

Our chairman Keith Aird, Board and staff members join in expressing greetings at Christmas and our good wishes for 1999.

This has been a great year for the paper.

We thank readers for their many positive comments. We also note with appreciation the suggestions made about new possibilities.

The paper is backed by a group of enthusiastic contributors at various operational levels. Their enthusiasm is the strength of the paper's ongoing ministry.

The cartoon found on this page is by Martin Gillespie.

Generous expressions of financial support have also been welcomed. Your gifts have strengthened the financial base of the paper and will definitely contribute to new developments.

Greetings have been received from our Polish churches. A copy of the paper is eagerly read in the Warsaw office. Michał Weremiejewicz says the gift subscription from one of our readers is really appreciated.

Readers have recently commented that the Stanwell Tops Manifesto which appeared on the cover of issue 20 has been well received.

One church displayed the Manifesto on an overhead projector for worshippers to read as they prepared for the service.

Others have distributed copies through church news bulletins and reports. It is important to

keep the vision before church members.

We have finished this issue with an overload of material. Four extra pages have been added to cope and advertisements are still coming to hand as final copy is prepared. First reports from the World Council of Churches Conference in Harare have also been received.

Our forward planning includes comment on this event early in 1999. Not every item sent in recent times will fit. We do our best and try to ensure representation from all states where copy is to hand.

This issue carries an important advertisement regarding a logo for Churches of Christ in Australia. Please draw this to the attention of potential designers known to you.

Several corrections are noted from previous issues. On page 10 of Issue 20 the name of the Board chair of the Darwin church should read Bev Wilson. In the review of Ian Sproule's book *Australian Partisan* Issue 21 page 15 the reference to the advertisement should read page 7.

We hope that all readers will subscribe again in 1999. Your support strengthens the paper. Invoices will be forwarded in January. New initiatives and features are planned for 1999. Close of copy for Issue 1 of 1999 is 28 January. The cover date is 10 February.

Sam Smith



Polish CBI Record

Record enrolments for Polish college



First-year students at the Christian Bible Institute in Warsaw, Poland

We waited with anxiety for the beginning of the new academic year. One question concerned us

all the time. Who will be the new students at our Institute this year and how many will there be? We

were aware of the growing number of similar schools to ours, the financial cost for students and the competition from secular universities promising great careers and good future salaries for their graduates. How many young men and women would be willing to come to our Institute to study the Bible? The reality surprised us once again. Despite our high criteria for admission, we have begun the new academic year with the largest number of students in our history.

Two hundred and fifty five students have begun the new academic year at the Christian Bible Institute in Warsaw. This does not include twenty students who commenced a Family Counselling Course in October, which brings our overall total to 275. This is a

30% increase in enrolments on last year. Students will study in three programs: Correspondence Bible Studies (154), Advanced Certificate Studies in Practical Ministry (68), and Training for Family Counselling (53).

It is amazing how many Polish men and women want to study at our Institute so that they will be able to serve as full or part-time workers, or as volunteers in the church. God has given us this great privilege and responsibility to equip them for service.

[This is an edited version of a report written by Michał Weremiejewicz appearing in the autumn *Voice from Warsaw*, the CBI bulletin. Note the number of young adults in the photo of first-year students. This must augur well for the future —Ed]

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Significant Events

States report on significant events for 1998

We asked each State Conference to nominate their most significant events for 1998.

They said ...

Queensland

Sunstate 98 Convention, with live-in accommodation, national and international speakers, electives and ever-increasing attendances. Kenmore College introduced accredited courses for overseas students in Christian Studies and English. Sixty students enrolled. Arana Hills church using the theme "God is a God of rescue" recreated the *Titanic* ballroom scene as a successful outreach venture.

Department of Church Development and Education held successful state youth games and initiated new camping programs across all ages.

Overwhelming support for new partnership with Kenmore and Carlingford Colleges to form Australian College of Ministries.

New South Wales

Formation of new training partnership between Carlingford and Kenmore Colleges in Australian College of Ministries.

Church consultancy program trained 24 adults for local church consultations across a range of specialised areas

Face-to-face representation by Conference Executive members initiated for country and suburban churches.

Church Planting Task Force formed to plan new strategies and initiatives, making 2000-2010 a decade of church planting.

South Australia

Revitalisation and development of churches at Prospect, Hewett, Munno Para (church plant).

Appointment of Tim Clark (with

Sarah and Michael) as State Youth Minister.

Initiation of networks for rural ministers, ministry mentors and team leaders.

Launch of Magarey Institute for Ministry Education and Formation.

Creation of the Strategic Planning Task Group.

Western Australia

Three new church plants welcomed into Conference—North Coast (Merriwa), South Coast (Kwinana) and Serpentine.

Revival among Aboriginals in northern Pilbara area.

Acceptance of Wanneroo Council's invitation to manage Warwick Sport & Recreation Centre with 5000 users each week.

Centenaries of Kalgoorlie, Harvey and Subiaco churches.

Growth of groups for ministers under leadership of Barry Ryall, Ministers' Pastor, growth in relationships and significant events.

Victoria-Tasmania

One hundred and forty ministers at annual Ministers' Summit in newly-designed format.

Chek Chia appointed Conference President, recognising his Asian Ministry Council leadership and the contribution of local Asian churches.

Youth Vision & Kidsmin, wide range of ministry, leadership development, continuing growth of state youth games and camping.

New affiliations: Matthew's Party, St Kilda, South Yarrowonga. Sunbury's new facilities seating 600+, plants at Eastgate, Nillumbik, Taylors Lakes, and Sri Lankan and Russian Jewish churches.

Good Start for the Year

Successful Body Building Conference again in January

"We felt we were really stretched, blessed, encouraged, challenged and saw our relationship with God enter a new dimension."

This was the honest response of one of the delegates at our last Body Building Conference. On one hand I find the comment a bit humbling. On the other, I can't help pausing for a moment to say thanks to God.

Obviously the Conference is not about building physical human bodies, but about building the Body of Christ. I guess we just want to help Christians to have a greater impact for Christ back in their own church. We try to do this by making some of the best speakers in the nation available for them. Many folk seem to find it a positive experience:

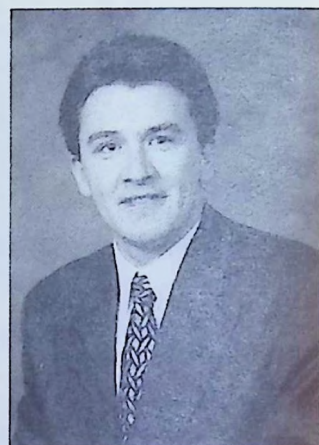
"I was thrilled at hearing so many top-line speakers, I just soaked it up like a sponge."

"From the testimonies of some of our people ... the conference had some real and life-changing impact on them."

"I will remember this experience for a long time."

This year's Conference is entitled "No Turning Back" and addresses the theme of discipleship. (see the advert on page twelve for details). We are privileged to have two outstanding speakers. Bruce Hills is best known for his ministry with Youth Alive. Jeff Crabtree is an outstanding Christian musician and performer.

There is a tremendous sense of God sovereignly orchestrating the Conference for his glory. Next January's Body Building Conference will once again be a truly inspiring time. Folk will get as much



Bruce Hills, one of the key presenters at the Body Building conference

out of it as a previous delegate who commented that, "I had a ball over the weekend ... In fact I really felt I couldn't have had a better start to my year ... I was encouraged, challenged, blessed and inspired in so many ways."



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Presidents' Conference

Leaders meet for wide-ranging discussions



Back Row Kevin Bray, ACT, Robert Leane, Australia, Steve Baigent, NZ, Dick Menteith, NSW, Trevor Hoyle, SA.

Front Row Dan Yarnell, UK, Chek Chia, Vic-Tas, Peter Overton, Qld, Barry Ryall, WA, Bob Smith, Australia.

During the International Summit on Mission, held at Stanwell Tops, NSW, Churches of Christ Presidents of the three nations and Australian state Presidents and representatives met for informal

discussions on matters of common interest.

A deep spirit of unity prevailed during a wide-ranging discussion, which lasted considerably longer than originally anticipated.

Mildura Church of Christ

is seeking a full-time minister to commence early to mid-1999.

Expressions of interest are invited from ministers who would like the opportunity to be involved in team ministry in a major regional centre, with exciting opportunities to develop strong pastoral care, small groups and outreach into the wider community.

All inquiries will be treated confidentially.

For further details, please contact Simon Risson or Doug Beasy (03) 5023 1201.

Wigney and Warne

Comings and Goings at CCTC



Graeme Wigney, retiring as registrar after ten years



Graham Warne, commencing as registrar in 1999

Graeme Wigney retired in June after ten years of outstanding service as honorary registrar at the Churches of Christ Theological College, Mulgrave, Victoria. The college has appreciated the dedication, energy and competence with which Graeme has pursued his duties. He has not only been a competent and careful administrator, but also a friend and confidant of students, faculty and staff alike.

Graham Warne is the new registrar of CCTC, commencing in January 1999.

Graham has been on the faculty of Kenmore Christian College, Qld, since 1983, serving as Vice-Principal from 1987-1997. Prior to that he ministered in churches in NSW, and also served with Overseas Mission Board for six years as Principal and Acting Principal of the Banmatmat Bible College in Vanuatu.

Graham brings a wealth of experience in ministry, mission, theological education and administration to the College.

—Dr Greg Elsdon
Principal

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Exceeding Expectations

Huge numbers visit Hedland church service

The Aboriginal church in Port Hedland, WA, decided to invite the other churches in the town to meet with them for the evening service on 22 November. Members thought it would be a good idea to also issue invitations to Christians from the Aboriginal communities in the Pilbara Region.

In preparation for supper, the Hedland ladies baked three large dampers and four cakes. Five hundred people turned up for the service! There was not a spare space in the chapel for another person, while the car park couldn't take another vehicle.

The various communities brought items and testimonies. Ross Norling eventually brought a message and then the ladies tried unsuccessfully to make the eats go around.

That's the first time any church in the Pilbara has had a congregation of that size and is an indication of the ongoing growth of the churches among the Aborigines of the region.

It represents a source of great encouragement and major chal-



Ross and Helen Norling, seeing revival among north-western Aborigines

lenge as the discipleship program continues and the new Christians are nurtured. Meanwhile, we can rejoice that God is moving by his Spirit in such a dramatic way. How would you feel if 500 people unexpectedly turned up to your next evening service?

—Avon W. Moyle

[This outreach is subsidised by National Home Evangelism, the Federal Aborigines Board and the WA Church Development Board.]

Naval Veteran Dies

Previously featured World War I veteran dies

Roderic Mafeking Clarke died 7 November in Melbourne. Readers with a good memory may recall that a news report appeared in the issue of 20.4.96 about Rod, a veteran of the 1914-1918 war.

He served on *HMAS Yarra* in the Mediterranean during the war, having enlisted as a boy seaman in 1915. Rod died just days before the commemorations marking the 80th year since the end of the war. His name and a brief service

record were included in a special feature in *The Australian* published on Remembrance Day. In more recent years, he had been associated with the East Kew, and Richmond, Vic, churches. He died at the age of 98 in a nursing home, where his second wife Doris who is 99 years old is still cared for. His story was noted by the historian Geoffrey Blainey when we published it and he subsequently discussed it with the Editor.

New Training Opportunity

Graduate Diploma of Ministry details now available

Details of the new Graduate Diploma of Ministry (Leadership and Administration) being offered by the Australian College of Ministries of Churches of Christ are

now available. Call (02) 4226 5022 for a copy of the 1999 program or view the program on the Internet at www.magna.com.au/~wgongcoc.

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Shaping Things to Come

Forge, an emerging, innovative church-planting training network

There is little doubt among key mission strategists that church planting is by far and away the most effective way of extending the Kingdom of God—statistics bear this out again and again. The National Church Life Survey reports conversion growth in negative terms against population growth—in other words we are seriously on the back foot in Australia. We now know that movements and denominations grow primarily through the new churches they plant.

But church planting is not just some quick-fix solution trumped up by church growth technocrats in an attempt to address the malaise of the church in the West. On the contrary, considered missiologically, it is possibly the most apostolically-consistent means of advancing the Kingdom of God because it always aims at establishing new worshipping communities that are culturally-relevant and evangelistically-driven. This is the formula for effective and responsible mission in any context, whether it be the first, or the two-thirds world.

If church planting is an obvious solution to the decline of Christianity in the West, it is also a largely unexplored one. It is just about impossible to find leaders and Christians willing to respond to the challenge of church planting. And when such rare creatures can be found, they feel totally unprepared for the task. A telling statistic: of the thousand or so students studying at the various theological colleges in Melbourne, only about twenty-five to thirty of them will attempt to start a new church. This means that only about 3% of students training for some form of ministry will

take the challenge of mission at the frontiers of our culture! This must be corrected if we are going to have an effective witness for Christ in this country in the next century. To do this, we are simply going to have to construct leadership-development systems that focus on shaping up-and-coming leaders for this distinct missionary task.

The learning will in all likelihood have to take place in the actual context of mission—the church-planting projects themselves. It will, therefore, have to be an active, as opposed to a passive, form of learning. It will need to be based squarely on experiential forms of learning. It will take the form of an "internship".

It will have to be able to draw upon, and transfer, the expertise of key practitioners to the intern. So it will be built on a relational empowerment model of training, with lots of coaching and mentoring.

It will need to maximise learning, both in terms of the broader church and also translate it for the current training systems. The system will need approval from the denominations and accreditation from the colleges. The task is too big for one denomination and one college to do effectively. We will need to work together.

It will help the learner develop reflective abilities, to be able to interpret experiences through the grid of Scripture and theology, or else it will break down into mere pragmatism.

Forge Mission Training Network has been designed with the above criteria in mind. Forge brings together the best practitioners available, assigns interns to teams in key mission and church-planting



Forge director, Alan Hirsch, speaking with keynote lecturer, Michael Frost

projects, and then maximises the learning by connecting the intern with a theological college of their choice. Furthermore, Forge has been able to get significant denominational and para-church sponsorship for the network. The key sponsors are Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania, The Baptist Union of Victoria, The Wesleyan-Methodist Church of Australia, Christian City Church (Whitehorse), Youth With a Mission and Church Resource Ministries Australia.

Church planting and mission projects available for internships in 1999 include: Sunbury Community Church, Gateway Baptist Church, Pakenham Baptist Church, St Luke's Anglican Church, Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope mission, The Australian Navigators in Melbourne, and Celebrate Messiah Australia.

The colleges involved are Tabor College, Churches of Christ Theological College, Mulgrave, Kingsley College, Whitley College, and the Bible College of Victoria. Austudy is available to students accrediting with one of these colleges.

Alan Hirsch (network director) with the assistance of Michael Frost (keynote lecturer) supervises Forge Mission Training Network. Alan is currently Director of the Division of Mission and Revitalisation for Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania and pastoral team leader at South Melbourne Restoration Community. Michael is director of the Centre of Evangelism and Global Mission at Morling Theological College and is recognised as one of Australia's most able communicators and evangelists.

The core task of Forge Mission Training Network will be to help shape an emerging leadership for the primary tasks of evangelism, church planting and mission in Australia, and so forge a new path for Christianity in this land.

Interested? Only fifteen internship positions are available for 1999.

Further information from The Registrar, Forge Mission Training Network, First Floor, 77 Capel Street, West Melbourne Vic 3003. Phone (03) 9326 8900. Fax (03) 9329 0902. E-mail <foragemtn@earthling.net>.

New Theology Lecturer

John Rees appointed to faculty of Australian College of Ministries

John Rees has been appointed by the Australian College of Ministries as Lecturer in Theology from 1999. John's appointment is for three days a week. He will be based at the administration centre in Sydney, but will travel to other regions to teach.

John is a graduate of the College's Wollongong centre and worships at the Marrickville church in Sydney's inner suburbs. He is married to Lyn, and they live in Petersham. John entered ministry training in 1988 and was a student minister in Nowra and Launceston in the following years. After graduation, he worked on the ministry team of Wollongong church.

He and his wife Lyn have a special interest in living out the biblical mandate for social transformation. Since his Wollongong days, John has worked as NSW coordinator for Tear Australia, and with the Salvation Army as a community outreach worker in a homeless men's hostel in inner-city Sydney. With gifts in teaching, preaching and writing, John has been a lecturer at the School of Christian Studies in Sydney, a contributor to various Christian



John Rees

magazines (including *The Australian Christian*), and as a leader of Bible studies, camps and outreach events for various Churches of Christ. John has a Master of Arts degree in Early Christian and Jewish Studies from Macquarie University, and is currently considering further study opportunities. John brings to the College a heart to see people renewed by the power of God. His academic ability, mixed with his approachableness and humility, will endear him to students, while strengthening their experience of ministry training.

Mornington Church of Christ

Christmas Services

Come and join us for our special Christmas Day service at 9.30 am on 25 December. (Regular services at 9.00 and 10.00 am.) Preacher: Bronte Stanford. We meet in the Mornington Secondary College, Nepean Hwy, near Bungower Rd, Vic.

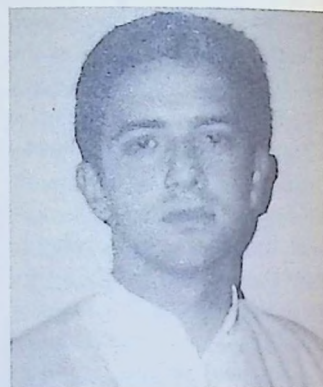
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Time to Move On

Mission intern returns to help development work in New Zealand

On 25 November I left the country. I have spent the last two years cleaning the shoes of the great Alan Hirsch (and trying to learn a bit along the way). These two years have been some of the most harsh and powerful in my young Christian life. I have learned what it means to trust in God and not the size of my bank account. I have learned the significance of community and I have learned (or at least am beginning to learn) what it means to be a Christian and minister to others within our increasingly-postmodern context. I came to Melbourne from New Zealand to do an internship with the Division of Mission and Revitalisation of the Vic-Tas Conference because I believe that was what God wanted, and I knew if I didn't I would simply be a nice minister of a nice church. I now leave as someone more focused, more able and more confident. The position I am to take up in New Zealand is that of a field worker in the area of church development based in the Manawatu region. The job requires me to spend 50% of my time with the Palmerston North Church of Christ developing it into what is known as a *significant church*.. The other 50% of my time is to be used as a resource person to the other Churches of Christ in the



Richard Black

area. My overall purpose is to stimulate vision, growth, and missionary activity and thinking within our churches.

I have a deep sense of being guided, shaped, and positioned by God. It is now time, however, for the boy with a lot of potential to prove himself. —Richard Black



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Christmas Expectations

Artist comments on our cover painting

Ray Drayton, the artist who painted the picture for our cover comments that our expectations are many, but one thing is paramount. God's gift overshadows all that we can give or receive. Christmas is learning to give and learning to receive. Peace on earth and goodwill to all is the gift. We have but to say "thank you". (Photography Ralph Petty, cover design Keith Smith.)



Bundaberg's 75th

Seventy five years of ministry celebrated

Alan Male (pictured right) was guest speaker at the 75th



anniversary of Twyford St, Bundaberg, Qld, church. His three addresses were greatly appreciated. Elsa Hamann, original 1923 member and oldest current member cut the anniversary cake. Paul Scully (left) who concluded his ministry that day led the communion service. Past members from many parts of Australia were present. A history of the church and their ministry to Kanakas (Pacific Island people) has been compiled.

Alive and Well

Celebrating 50 years of Girls' Brigade in SA

The 1998 Girls' Brigade annual State Church Parade was an occasion to celebrate 50 years of Girls' Brigade in South Australia. Members assembled and marched a 1.5 km route through the main thoroughfare of Adelaide to Maughan Church in the heart of the city. During her welcoming speech, the State Commissioner, Yvonne Lanyon (from Marion Church of Christ) made mention of the initiative, enthusiasm and inspiration of the leaders who commenced the first Company on 26 June, 1948 at the Henley Beach Church of Christ. "We go forward into the next 50 years with God as our helper," she said. Yvonne thanked the Brigaders for taking Girls' Brigade to the streets to show the people of Adelaide that Girls' Brigade is alive and well in South Australia.

Invited guests at the service included Tony Connelly, Graham Marks and Ken Sleeman (The Boys' Brigade), Colleen Evans, Rosie Otte and Jenny Bing (all



A group of Junior Brigaders with the balloons they carried during the street march.

former State Commissioners), Rev Lloyd Main (Baptist Union) and Trevor Hoyle (SA Churches of Christ Conference President).

**Horsham Church of Christ
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Inquiries to Julie Trinnick, Associate Minister (03) 5382 3877, or Marion Kitchen, Chairperson of Elders (03) 5382 3645.

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Monash City Church of Christ is seeking to employ a Creative Ministries Director to work three days a week (full-time negotiable).

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The Creative Ministries Director will need to be open to God's leading, gifted in music, effective in administration and be a team player.

Applications and/or inquiries to:

David Moyes
Senior Minister
Monash City Church of Christ
46-48 Montclair Ave
Glen Waverley Vic 3150.

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National Churches of Christ Logo Competition

Churches of Christ in Australia is seeking a new national logo. The present logo has served us well for approximately 20 years.

Competition guidelines

1. The logo needs to be contemporary and be able to serve us well into the 21st century.
2. The aim is to be contemporary, but not trendy. The use of Christian symbols must avoid the appearance of being too religious. It may be stylised, but not obscure. It may be symbolic, but not too formal.
3. It should carry the name "Churches of Christ".
4. It will be used primarily in one colour. If it is designed in two colours, the second colour would need to reproduce in an acceptable halftone.
5. Expressions of interest and inquiries to be received by 16 February 1999.
6. The winner of the accepted submission will be awarded \$500.
7. The logo will become the property of the National Council of Churches of Christ in Australia.

The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into once the decision is made. The judges will be of national representation.

Contact:

Mr R.V. Smith
National Coordinator
PO Box 55
Helensburgh NSW 2508.
Phone (02) 4294 1913.
Fax (02) 4294 1914.
E-mail <bobsmit@ozemail.com.au>.

Mounties Planning Ahead

Lower Blue Mountains church developments



Lower Blue Mountains, NSW, church has purchased the pictured adjoining property as the fellowship looks to the future. Further property acquisition is desirable for longer-term development and frontage to the Great Western Freeway.

Ten Years

Celebrating after ten years and committing to the future

One hundred and fifty people gathered for the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Mornington, Vic, church. Ian Cartmel, the foundation minister, described the church planting initiative which grew from discussions with Red Hill church elders and the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development. The inaugural service was conducted on 4 September 1988. The church started with 59 new members. Gerald Rose, senior minister of the Southern Community Church, was the speaker at the anniversary. As Conference President, Gerald also spoke at the inaugural service.

Allan Avery, minister since 1996, led the service and Bronte Stanford, associate minister, the communion celebration. Allan Avery reminded members where they had come from in recent years. One move was the establishment of a very successful opportunity shop over twelve months ago. The church has now banked over \$50,000 with the Properties Corporation. The second major move has been the employment of college student Bronte Stanford as associate minister. Under his leadership the church has developed Bible study groups and introduced a successful second service.

Gandep Work Party

Partnership sought in work for PNG Bible College

Warragul, Vic, church has planned a work party to go to Gandep, PNG, to assist with the work, at the Bible College. Currently, we have four tradesmen willing to go in June 1999. These are able to pay some of the costs involved, but will need extra financial support from their church family and friends.

As Warragul is not a large church and this will be a big project, we are seeking extra financial assistance from other churches or individuals who may be in a position to help our team.

Interested readers are invited to contact the Warragul church secretary, Ray Earl, PO Box 128, Warragul Vic 3820 (phone (03) 5623 2881), or Jeff Weston at the Overseas Mission Board, 180a Gray Street, Adelaide SA 5000 (phone (08) 8212 4446).

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Here and There
Islam

Archbishop George Carey, speaking at the recent international Anglican Lambeth Conference of Bishops, sought reciprocity from nations where Islam is the dominant religion. He observed that as Muslims are free to worship in "our" countries, Christians should have greater acceptance in those countries where Islam is the dominant religion. It was resolved to "request the governments of nations where such discriminations and harassment are common occurrences to affirm their commitment to religious liberty".

(Challenge Weekly)

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Christmas

It's About Giving

CATHERINE CLUN

One of my favourite sections of the *Reader's Digest* has to be "Drama in Real Life", though they have just dropped that title. So many of these true stories centre around deeds of self-giving and sacrifice in the face of dangerous and terrifying circumstances. (It must be noted that a lot of these "circumstances" seem to have big sharp teeth.) To me it is wonderful to see that people are still willing to put their lives on the line for others.

And when you cut to the nuts and bolts, that's what Christmas is really all about. Now, my daughter Rachel (8) ran up to me in September and said, "Guess what mum, Christmas is only twelve weeks

But through it all, I want my children to learn and know that Christmas is about giving.

away!" Her expectations are that there will be lots of food, relatives and presents. No need to guess which is her highest priority. Her four younger brothers and sisters just hear the word "presents". Anything else that Christmas is about simply doesn't seem to register. But that's exactly what I'm here to do.

My Christmas shopping is done. Christmas lunch for sixteen people is organised. All the trappings are ready. It leaves December for the most important job of all: to convey to my five small children the wonder, the glory, the sacrifice that is Christmas. To their ex-

pectations I want to add the truth of the Nativity. I want to put Santa firmly on the fiction shelf.

Some of it will be fun—baking biscuits and cakes, and making wonderful decorations. Some of it will be hard, like giving some old (and not so old) toys to the Salvation Army. Some things will be special, like setting up the nativity scene and reading the true story of Christmas. But through it all, I want my children to learn and know that Christmas is about giving.

Christmas all started 2,000 years ago when God gave us his Son, and that is the most special thing of all. He came as a tiny baby; to grow and suffer and die so that we all may know of God's boundless holiness and love.

He came—despite all expectations—into a stable, not a palace. Indeed, lowly shepherds were the first to say "g'day". Just as that innkeeper found room for Mary and Joseph, I want our family to find room in our lives for others at Christmas. In part, it will be our Compassion child (an orphan in Rwanda); in part it will be lonely people that we invite in over Christmas (like Leo Tolstoy's story of Papa Panov).

I need to train them to see with "Christmas eyes", the people around them and to respond to them.

Two thousand years ago the most sensational "Drama in real life" occurred. An event so wonderful and special that



Cathy and Lou Clun, and their five children (below)

it still makes me all mushy and weepy just thinking about it. I expect that Christmas day will be noisy and busy. Everyone will eat too much and there'll be more presents than the children will know what to do with. But hopefully, in the midst of it all—whether it is at the evening carols or in the early morning when all the church bells of Hobart ring out—hopefully, my children will get a bit mushy and weepy too. Then I will know that my expectations of Christmas will have been fully met.

Catherine Clun is a member of the Howrah Church of Christ.



Christmas

Mission: Messiah

NIGEL PEGRAM

It's Christmas, and one of the things that many of us think about is how Jesus' coming fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies. If, however, that's where we stop, we miss out on seeing the big picture.

The Bible is more than simply a witness to the coming of Messiah. I can almost hear some people getting a bit agitated now, thinking that I am denigrating Jesus' role and position. Far from it. Jesus coming as one of us is the core of our faith. My concern is that we see Scripture as proclaiming that—and more. Jesus' birth, death and resurrection is part of a wider story, the story of God's ongoing dealing with humanity and their situation. Rather than sim-

We do our Scriptures a disservice when we treat them purely as messianic proof-texts

ply searching the Old Testament for prophecies which are fulfilled in Jesus, we should be mentally standing back and trying to get a view of the whole picture, from Genesis to Revelation.

First, a quick Bible overview. We start with a declaration concerning God, creation and humanity's place within it (Genesis 1–2). Then, we move on to begin to explain why our world is no longer perfect and why people are not either (Genesis 3–11). Then we move on to God's ongoing plan to solve the problems just posed (Genesis 12 – Revelation 22). This third section is the bulk of our Scriptures. It includes the covenant with Abram and his descendants. It includes Jesus' coming and his sacrifice. It includes the coming of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the faith

through his work within the Church. It includes the assurance that in the end God will prevail and all that is wrong with the world will be put to right.

Jesus is part of the solution to the problem of a fallen creation. The Bible does not begin with his coming, nor does it end with his death. The final acts of God's solution to the problem of evil still have to be played out.

Even though we do our Scriptures a disservice when we treat them purely as messianic proof-texts, the interesting thing is, that we can still keep our eyes open for hints and references to Jesus' coming and his mission while keeping a view of the wider picture. Let me give a few examples.

Genesis chapter 3 is there to explain the origin of pain and evil in God's good creation. Yet, even Jewish commentators see veiled references to Messiah when the enmity between the serpent and the woman's seed is declared.

Beginning at chapter 12 of Genesis, we are introduced to God's covenant with Abram and his descendants. We are told that it is through his people that all other peoples will be blessed (12:3)—something only achieved through Jesus' life and work.

In Hannah's song of praise (1 Sam 2:1–10) we find another veiled reference to Messiah. The song is given in response to God's providing Hannah with the son she had prayed for after she had been childless for so many years. A son, Samuel, who plays a pivotal role in establishing the monarchy in Israel, especially David, who is often seen as illustrating many qualities we find in the kingship of Messiah. A king who also firmly established the people in the land promised to Abram.

In the second half of verse ten we find references to God's judging of the



whole world and giving power to make his chosen or anointed king victorious. Not only is the word "messiah" (anointed/chosen) used, but we have a reference to God's ultimate judgement of the whole world—part of the wider story that is yet to be unfolded. Some may note that I have not referred to some of the great messianic passages from the prophets such as Isaiah and Micah. The reason is that those passages are obviously messianic, they definitely refer to Jesus' life and ministry. Other Old Testament passages like these others, however, contain references to Messiah or provide information concerning his ministry or role in a veiled or oblique fashion, or as an incidental reference.

Are such passages Messianic? Well, yes and no. They inform us about Messiah, but foremost, they are part of God's unfolding story to us concerning his love and the solution that love finds for our world's predicament.

Nigel Pegram is a staff member of "The Australian Christian".

Christmas

Christmas in Zimbabwe

KINGSLEY DUBE

Christmas is the annual holiday most looked forward to among the twelve million inhabitants of Zimbabwe. Ninety three thousand of its people are whites of European extraction, while some 20,000 other citizens are of Asian origin. The rest, the majority, are indigenous Africans and people of mixed descent. The whites and Asians, except politically, wield significant influence especially regarding the industrial and commercial well-being of the nation. An estimated 80% of the indigenous people live in rural areas where most of them depend on small-scale farming. They usually manage to grow enough crops for their own food and some extra for cash, which enables them to take care of a few important needs, including education of their children. Until recently, most of the Africans in urban areas maintained their ties with the rural areas from which they came and where members of their extended families continued to live.

Christmas is generally regarded by Zimbabweans as the time during the year when people get together in an atmosphere of relaxation, peace and merriment. It is the time for family reunions, renewals of friendships and establishing new ones. Time for mutual well-wishers and "birds of a feather" to try to catch up with one another as to the things they have done since they were last together.

This is accompanied with much festivity, consisting of eating, drinking, music and, in many cases, dancing also. A lot of the merrymaking takes place in homes, halls, squares and other convenient meeting places. All this happens in both town and village in varying degrees.

People also travel a lot during Christ-

mas. Hundreds return to their rural or ancestral homes to spend Christmas Day or the entire holiday season with extended family members. The incomes of the majority of people are generally very low, but most of them save to splurge at Christmas. All kinds of gifts are exchanged and clothing and household necessities top most lists, as well as toys and other gifts for children. Christians account for 61% cent of the population, while traditional indigenous African religions have a total estimated following of 32.6%. Minority religious faiths include Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Adherents of these constitute 4 % of the population. They, too, down their tools and close shop on Christmas Day to enjoy this let-us-all-wish-each-other-well occasion, which thus increases the goodwill syndrome among most people and helps to promote peace, the commodity people want for themselves as individuals, families, communities and nations.

In the Zimbabwean towns, cities and other urban centres, homes streets, parks and squares are decorated during Christmas thanks to the influence of Christian missionaries. This kind of nationwide consciousness has been increasing over the past 120 years. Practising Christians are grateful to Almighty God for Jesus and the salvation they believe he brought into the world.

On Christmas Eve in the urban areas, Christians meet in churches

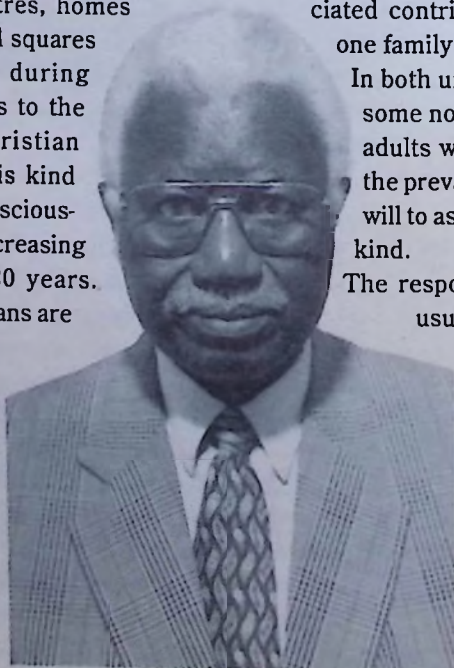
and other appropriate places, to hear or sing the traditional Christian carols. Then, in the morning, neatly dressed, most of them, attend church services. In most rural areas one does not see the glamour and glitter of the town and cities because most rural folk cannot afford the high prices of decorations as yet, and also due to the fact that our programs to electrify those areas are hampered by financial constraints.

After church services in rural areas people gather in different places to spend the day together as families, good neighbours, or as church followers in the same districts. They eat, drink and are entertained by singers and dancers, performers of plays and sketches, depicting religious events. They watch friendly sports competitions in games of soccer, volleyball, basketball, netball and athletics. Groups of young people will go from village to village in some areas singing and dancing to entertain the people free of charge as part of their much-appreciated contribution to we-are-all-one family spirit of Christmas.

In both urban and rural areas, some not so well off kids and adults will take advantage of the prevailing universal goodwill to ask for gifts of cash and kind.

The response of the public is usually positive, as people feel that this is an aspect of sharing the gifts one has received from God with fellow humans in need.

Kingsley Dube is a member of Churches of Christ in Zimbabwe. He lives in Bulawayo.



Christmas

Christmas in Action

CHRIS RUBIE

How often have we sung the words "Peace & Goodwill to All", or sent them in a card to someone without giving them much thought?

As I grow older, I find that I am starting to think more deeply about some of the Christmas traditions that are observed, both in the church and society in general.

All would agree that it has become a very busy time, surrounded by commercialism, and sometimes has not been the peaceful time we would have liked it to be. During this festive season there are times when we may feel we have an obligation to send a card or

We on the Central Coast have decided to put our faith and the message of Christmas into action.

give a present, which can often take the joy out of this wonderful tradition. And then there is the politics surrounding the decision as to whose place to go to for Christmas dinner.

What of those who have nowhere to go to for Christmas dinner or who cannot afford a card, let alone a gift? Some have difficulty making ends meet, not just at Christmas time, but every day. Many are alone and without family. Then there are those in war-torn areas or third-world countries who have never experienced joy at Christmas.

Christmas is becoming more and more a selfish indulgence in the Western world. Christians need to challenge this more actively. It is time that we did more than just tell the Christmas

"story". We as the church are called upon to not only proclaim the Christmas message, but to become the embodiment of it. As it says in James, what good is it if we wish someone well but ignore their physical needs! (James 2:16) How empty will the words "Merry Christmas!" be to those who will spend the day alone and hungry.

We on the Central Coast have decided to put our faith and the message of Christmas into action.

Our day will begin with a Christmas service which we have invited the community to and will include communion. The communion feast is offered to connect Christmas with Easter. Without the birth there is no death. Without the cross there was no need for the birth. (At Easter a Christmas tree is prominently displayed with all its decorations to drive the point home even more.) During the service the congregation is given an opportunity to pin an offering on a Christmas tree. This offering is then sent to a missionary family or towards a need in our local area.

Some of our congregation will then, having made a decision to forego Christmas lunch with their families, minister to the disadvantaged and "shut-ins" in our area. Together with other local churches, an old recreation club, (now used as a church), will be transformed into a banquet area for those who have nowhere to go to for Christmas.

We will host a dinner (fit for a king) for those who would otherwise have no one with whom to share their Christmas meal. At the time of writing over 30 Christians have responded to the call to serve in this way. Each guest will receive a gift and will be befriended by members of each church. They will then maintain ongoing contact with



them in order to minister to them further.

Local businesses have been called upon to sponsor the event with food, and other para-church organisations are helping in other ways. Entertainment will also be provided.

It is hoped that this event will become an annual one. We have enough room to cater for up to 250 people. Whatever the numbers are each year, what a blessing it will be to draw alongside of those in need.

Our hope and prayer is that this day, for many, will become a turning point in their lives and our ongoing ministry to them will enable them to become fulfilled in every way.

"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear Children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:17,18

This Christmas is there someone in need who you could befriend?

Chris Rubie is minister of the Berkeley Vale church on the NSW central coast.

Christmas

A Year 2,000 Bug

HEATHER JAUNCEY

Year 2,000! Well, almost ... only a few more days until 1 January 1999. I have a real yearning to welcome in the year 2,000, and that I plan to do! I feel a sense of privilege and excitement in being part of a generation entering the new millennium. But I cannot live in 2,000 yet. I have to live each moment of each hour of each day of the year 1999 first. I have to live the present, before I live the future.

The first of January 1999 will bring a feeling of "newness", with the passing of 1998, the passing of the old year. The new year is unblemished, without any sadness, without any hurts, without any

But I have to be patient and I have to live in the present and delight in the success, achievements and happiness of our sons.

flaws. When I was at school I used to delight in having a new exercise pad and I kept my writing neat with carefully ruled lines, and clean from smudges and errors. I tried, but it did not stay like that for the whole year, yet that old exercise book held much of my best work and I learnt from the mistakes and eraser smudges. I guess I could have kept my exercise book beautifully clean and never written in it, but what value would that have been?

Every day of my life I think of our two sons who live far away from Canberra. One is an occupational therapist in the USA, the other is a stockman in the Northern Territory. Each has established his career and each is economi-

cally and socially independent. Every day I miss them and I long for the day when they return, be it on holidays or to live closer. I long for and I plan "homecomings". Christmas/new year is a homecoming time for many families. Maybe our stockman will be home for Christmas? Maybe next year we will all be together? I long for the time when we will be reunited again. But I have to be patient and I have to live in the present and delight in the success, achievements and happiness of our sons.

Last year Darren was home for six weeks. Ian joined us for four days, and we four had a wonderful time together. Sadly, it was soon over and cherished memories of happy and precious times are left. We had to pull ourselves together and get on with living the present. Old years are like that. We ponder on what lies behind, learn from the bad decisions and experiences and look back on the good things, but knowing we cannot go back to them. We then stop, do what we have to and get ready for the next year.

At this stage of my life it is easy to "count the days" to retirement from full-time work and to look forward to the future. I anticipate my husband and I volunteering more time at the Radio for the Print Handicapped. I want to help in my church "Op Shop" and in other ways that I find I presently do not have the time; tend my garden; pursue my

The new year is unblemished, without any sadness, without any hurts, without any flaws.



hobbies and maybe one day visit Latin America and be able to converse with the locals in Spanish. All these would, of course, be interwoven with more frequent visits to parents and our sons and their families. But I have to wait, live each day to the fullest while I broaden my horizons in planning for the future. I have to remember that today is tomorrow's yesterday. I have to remember that in looking too much to the future I may not enjoy, love and live in the present. I quote a dear, now departed, friend from one of his sermons, "Be at ease with yesterday for it is gone; work like a beaver today for it is yours and look forward to tomorrow for it will be new". This New Year can be a time to rejoice, to reassess, to reallocate, to rejuvenate and to live to live each minute of each hour of each day of 1999 as if it were the first minute of the best of your life.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Heather Jauncey is a member of the Ainslie, ACT, church.

The Media at Christmas

VINEY LONGTHORP

When David Gill, of the National Council of Churches, commended the Christmas Bowl appeal this year, he wrote in, *In Unity*, "Our churches are bracing for their annual battles with rampant paganism, otherwise known as the festive season". No wonder that we will hear again many sermons address the theme: "Put Christ back into Christmas". Rightly so.

The following tongue-in-cheek verses by a reader of *The Australian* expresses similar sentiments. The writer called it, "Christmas for Kids".

*Jesus born in Bethlehem?
It made the small boy frown;
He'd seen him just this afternoon,
At the Westfield shopping town!*

*"Mary on a donkey"
Was the carol singers' song,
He knew it was a reindeer,
They must have got it wrong.*

*Santa Claus and jingle bells,
That was the Christmas tale;
And after that was over
They'd have the New Year's sale.*

*What did Jesus have to do?
Whatever is a manger?
Why did he have to come at all
And make our Christmas stranger?"*

(Used with permission.)

One of our leading social historians, Humphrey McQueen, also has his concerns about the effects of consumerism on children, especially by means of television. Writing in the ABC's *24 Hours* he quotes an American advertising agent: "Television's first mission is not to inform, educate or enlighten ... its first mission is to entice viewers to watch the commercials. Com-

*Thus, with
Christmas, is
the world's
culture really
driving out the
genuine
meanings?*

mercial television, even for children, is just another business." He went on: "We have the future under control". McQueen added, "Do we want markets to succeed at their redefinition of play and daydreams?" Scary? Small wonder that the perceptive Bishop Bruce Wilson (NSW) wrote "The Australian community is looking for support from being taken over by commercialism"—and this includes Christmas.

Many are wondering whether this trend in the trivialising of Christmas is permanent. It could be a species of that trend noted by an advisor to Queen Elizabeth about the coinage of the realm; Sir Thomas Gresham gave his name to that economic law whereby "Debased money drives out good money". Thus, with Christmas, is the world's culture really driving out the genuine meanings?

An antidote to this may be discerned in one journalist's faith, Janel McCalman, when she recalled her school days at the Methodist Ladies' College during the 1960s. She remembers, "Methodism was a church of plainness, simplicity, emotional richness and endless kindness. The ethos of the school was remarkably unmaterialistic. A good life was a life of service to others". This is that "living simply that others may simply live". By and large, this was the temper of the churches in those days—and, at their best is the character of the churches now. This style of living is still an important part of our Gospel witness.

We have ready allies in this, for many voices in the media are telling us that the world itself is sick and tired of its own materialism. Here is scope for Christian leadership.



An example of a likely "ally" is the author of that book, *The Little Book of Christmas Joys* who promised "432 things to do for yourself and others that might make this Christmas the best ever". He gave us examples of "practical praxes" which can sustain much theological reflection. Thus: take a basket of goodies to someone notoriously grumpy; adopt a needy family over Christmas; discuss what Christmas is really about; even if you are a bit of a heathen, go with the family to a Christmas church service to find what its all about.

As John Smith of God's Squad once wrote, "Christmas is about truth, meaning, direction and finding reason to truly celebrate life ... it's all about who you are, how you operate, and who and what you live for"—all of which emanates from the reality of the incarnation.



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—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

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

Here and There

Perth Bible College Scholarships

Perth Bible College is offering two scholarships for full-time study as a result of support from Scarborough Baptist church. The scholarship will cover one half of tuition fees for one year. The scholarship is offered to WA men and women seeking preparation for full-time ministry.

Classifieds

BIRTHS

JONES-HUTCHINSON At Nepean hospital, NSW, on 10 December 1998. Brendan (ex-Box Hill, Vic) and Sharon (ex-Engadine, NSW) welcome twin daughters, Mary Grace and Chloe Joy, sisters for Samuel, Luke, Timothy and Hannah. "Gifts from the Lord" to Frank and June (dec) (Box Hill), and Bryan and Annette (Engadine).

WEDDINGS

DOW-BATTEN The family of Alastair Dow and Inga Batten surround them with loving support as they commit themselves in love and marriage 2.1.99, Uniting Church, Angaston SA 5353.

GOLDEN WEDDING

STEVENS Marj and Jack 13h/79 Moray Street, New Farm Qld 4005, give thanks to God for his unfailing love as they celebrate 50 years of marriage. Married by Alan Norling at Kedron Church of Christ (now Brisbane North church) on 15 January 1949.

DEATHS

ALDERSEA (Langley) Rene Passed peacefully into God's presence 2 December. Beloved sister of Vera and Frank Rogers (dec), much-loved aunt and friend of Gwenda, Eunice (Reidy) and family. Precious memories are ours forever.

HOLIDAYS

ASPENDALE, Port Phillip Bay, Vic. House swap/rent, January. Four-bedroom, large yard, cubby. Beach five minutes; train, shops ten minute walk. Possible car use. Richard (03) 9239 4423, (03) 9580 6941. E-mail: <rjb@darcsiro.au>.

HOUSEBOAT "White Heron" 8-berth. Moored at Blanchetown, SA. Phone (08) 8365 1153 or (08) 8540 5250 or write 7 Gameau Rd, Paradise 5075.

McCRAE, VIC Morning Glory bed and breakfast. Enjoy traditional bed and breakfast hospitality in a peaceful setting on the Mornington Peninsula. Bay views. Phone Tom and Julie Ede (03) 5986 8744. Also suitable venue for small-group day seminars.

Coffee Break Finishing Well

CAROL PRESTON

Thinking about the end of the year has made me reflect on the end of life, and the relationships which are significant at that time. So many older people I know are grieving the loss of friends and marriage partners, having long since said farewell to their own parents and older people who have been influential in their lives. The significant relationships they have are



What greater reward than to know we have this kind of influence on a young life?

mostly with younger people; children, grandchildren, younger people who they mentor, and those who care for them. I'm wondering if the quality of those relationships might be exceptionally good, because one has had so much practice at relating, or if they are poorer because there has been a slow withdrawal from relationships, with the decline in power and the accumulative experience of loss? I'd like to believe the former is true. I'd like to believe we could get better and better at relationship with practice and we could finish really well.

Having recently become a grandparent, I'm aware that I'm better in many ways at relating to this child than my own. I have more understanding, confidence and patience. I read recently, "Grandparents love grandchildren because they breathe". I think that's true, and I think grandchildren know when they are well-loved by

their grandparents. What a privilege to be able to give the best of ourselves to these precious ones. And what a blessing to be able to thoroughly enjoy these relationships. Reports affirm that grandparents describe their grandchildren as "a source of joy", "an inexplicable pleasure", and say their relationship contains "all of the good stuff and none of the bad". More important, a researcher has found that children with strong ties to their grandparents exhibit greater emotional security, they love old people, look forward to being old, have a place to go and someone to comfort them, listen to them and ask advice. They feel they belong and know their family can support them in the daily stresses of life. What greater reward could we want in relationship than to know we have this kind of influence on a young life?

If my grandchildren experience this in relationship with me, and I can also maintain a loving, co-operative relationship with my children, I will feel that I have finished well, that I have soaked in something of the love of God and been able to share it. I hope the end of the year is a time for you to reflect on how you want your relationships to be at the end of life and what you are doing about it now.

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BAPTISMS

•Judith De Graaff, Martin DeGraaf, Karl Lauritz, Glenn Valentine, Kylie Head, Samara Pamflett, York St, Ballarat, Vic •Pat Waldhuber, Wodonga, Vic •Alex Mattingly, Torrensville, SA •Norm Marshall, Chadstone, Vic •David Gleeson, Nerolie Gleeson, Luke Oliver, Di Parsons, John Anakotta, Jane Ang, Monash City, Vic •Rebecca Miller, Sue Desmond, Twyford St, Bundaberg, Qld •John Dingemanse, Launceston, Tas •Harold Leach, LaTrobe Terrace, Geelong, Vic

MARRIAGES

•Debbie Lowah and David Clark, York St, Ballarat, Vic •Yvonne Edwards and Barry Newton, North Essendon, Vic •Grace Grenville and Wayne Hupfeld, Torrensville, SA •Kerrie Elkner and Craig McCracken, Knoxfield, Vic •Selena Thwaite and Peter Emery, Twyford St, Bundaberg, Qld •Michelle Hiller and Jeffrey Green, Launceston, Tas

DEATHS

•Jean Potter, Wodonga, Vic •Margaret Gordon, York St, Ballarat, Vic •Mavis Thomson, Torrensville, SA •Robert Miller, Monash City, Vic

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
GERS, Clem
(23.8.98) Clem, born Broken Hill, NSW, 16.6.15, gave his life to Jesus aged fifteen. During over 40 years' service in the NSW Department of Education, Clem maintained an active faith. He held many offices at Lane Cove then Chatswood churches, including secretary, treasurer, welcomer, Sunday school superintendent, deacon, helper, reader and leader at the Lord's Table. Clem assisted the Woolwich Theological College, purchasing fruit and vegetables, supporting students and serving on the Board for a time. Clem had a heart for the needy and was a supporter of the Pendle Hill Crisis Centre.

Clem and Mona, were married for 54 years, had four children, Malcolm, Jennifer, Bronwyn and Glenyce.

—GCG

GORDON, Margaret

On 24 November, family and friends gathered at York St, Ballarat, Vic, church to pay tribute to the life of Margaret Gordon, remembered in our midst as a humble servant of God. Listing facts about her gives no indication of how we are saddened by her death. She was loved by those who knew her or received her encouragement and support. We have Margaret's example, and the fond memories we all share, sure in the knowledge of her eternal reward for a life spent in obedience and devotion to her Lord. Our hearts go out to Ken, Robert, Neale and their families.

—Bob Feary

LAWRIE, Margaret Emily

(6.11.98) Margaret, born 21.12.16, was the youngest of eight children born at Pinery, SA, to Tom and Alice Lawrie. At fourteen she was baptised, along with her brother Gordon and sister Kath, by John Turner. The church was always her first priority and singing in choirs was a special experience. At twenty she moved to Adelaide with her parents and brother Gordon. Margaret was involved in domestic work but also worked with YWCA for twelve years. She attended Nailsworth church for many years before moving to Modbury, and then finally to Roselin Court Hostel. This year, after a period of illness, she died peacefully in the Nursing Home.

—T. Lawrie

MORGAN, Linda Irene

(28.11.98) Preston Church of Christ, Vic, was a large part of Linda's life. A crowded chapel shared the service of celebration. She was born (22.3.10) in south Gippsland; the eldest of seven children to H. and E. Garth (North Fitzroy members). Linda was baptised in 1925. In 1939 she married Fol Morgan. They shared ministries at Invermay, Tas, Box Hill and Frankston, Vic, with CCES School Chaplaincies at Footscray and Preston, Vic. Linda was a leader in church life and witness: CWF President 1972; long service with Aborigines and Overseas Mission departments. To her children—Frank, Alan and Helen—she is blessed.

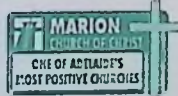
—GJC

POTTER, Jean

(9.11.98) Born Jean Kingston at Narrabri, NSW, on Christmas Day 1917, the sixth of eight children. Jean was converted at nineteen, and was baptised in a creek by P.J. Pond. She studied nursing at Brisbane General Hospital and also qualified in midwifery and infant welfare. In 1955 she met Ray Potter and married him at Nambour, Qld. They moved to Wodonga, Vic, where Ray and his daughter Val were active members of the Albury-Wodonga Church of Christ. Jean had been an organist prior to marriage and commenced what became 43 years of service until her death. Jean was active in church auxiliaries and a tireless worker for her Lord.

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TAS

NUBEENA (Keith Moulton) Four attended FEBC missionary meeting held at Copping, 26 Nov ... George & Elwyn Green from Launceston shared with church over two Sundays ... Three attended Geoff Bullock's seminar ... Combined churches service & barbecue held 29 Nov ... Denise Mundy from Hobart City church spoke at pm service 6 Dec ... "Kid's Own" & church involved in Christmas pageant 12 Dec. **LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison, T. Gray, S. Fitzallen)** Afternoon Fellowship entertained by the Three Tenors from the Salvation Army (Alfredo, Pedro & Guiseppe). Pantry gifts brought for the Army ... Church voted the appointment of Ann Fair to the ministry team on the basis of 2 days per week ... Auxiliary break ups have begun ... One baptism 6 December.

VIC

YORK ST, BALLARAT (Larry Galbraith) 420 packed church 18 October for induction of Phillip Day as children & families' minister ... Vision dinner well attended. Vision of "Building Relationship Bridges" for 1999 presented ... AGM re-elected Jim Oates as elder for further term & elected David Jolliffe to eldership ... Detail planning for Christmas outreach at Eureka well under way.

WODONGA (D. Oldfield) Jean Potter much-loved member & organist 43

years, aged 80, died 9 November. Church overflowing for funeral ... Church purchased house backing onto existing property. Part use for Sunday School ... Prayer meeting, young people's Bible study increased in numbers ... Marj Turrif & Joan Mangan moved to Tweed Heads. Lis Whiting to Frankston ... Members involved Christmas, new year Cheshunt youth camps.

NORTH ESSENDON (Mike Esbensen) 65,000 show bags packed in September, assisted by local churches. BBQ held for show bag packers 15 Nov ... Thelma Tootell & David Ploog recovering after illness ... Lynette Leach guest speaker 15 Nov ... \$703 raised at luncheon 22 November, including \$200 donation by Keilor Road, Uniting Church, for Indian children which congregation supports at Barramati ... AGM 29 Nov ... Uniting Church worshipped with us recently.

BALWYN (Rob Culhane) During November painting & repairs to two sides of our 70-year-old timber church were carried out by Mobile Mission Maintenance ... With 20% of the congregation born overseas, an international dinner to be held in December with testimonies & items as an outreach.

MONASH CITY (David Moyes, Craig Brown) John Bond challenged members to present the Gospel to others ... David Moyes shared the new vision of the church ... Graham Agnew guest speaker ... 75 people attended family camp at Marysville ... Lindsay

Croxford retiring as Seniors Care Coordinator at end of 1998 ... Support given to Gandep Bible College in PNG ... Rebekah Moran appointed Director of Youth Ministries.

CHADSTONE (Malcolm & Yvonne Lowe) 5 welcomed into membership, 2 dedicated & one baptism recently ... 36 present at Australian Church Women's service 1 Nov. Merryl Blair speaker ... Alison Peisley new treasurer. Thanks given to Helen Cole for past services ... CWF Christmas Dinner 7 Dec ... Blokes' Night at Dobbs' ... Band & choir busy rehearsing for "Carols on Lawn" 20 Dec.

TOOTGAROOK (Mal Giezendanner) 48th anniversary celebrated October. Speaker Liz Lloyd ... Margaret & Roy Hone moved to Frankston. We regret loss of 2 members who are missed both in church & community ... Annual meeting November. Membership now 107. Average attendance 95 ... Mutual market held in inclement weather netted \$2000 ... Craft class busy making Christmas decorations & gifts for sale ... Note of appreciation expressed to minister at annual meeting.

LATROBE TCE, GEELONG (David Jones) Harold Leach baptised & received into fellowship with 3 others ... Garage sale raised \$1,730 for youth

outreach ... 44 men & women enjoyed CWF break-up with \$110 given for Motor Neurone Disease Assoc ... Combined Churches of Christ held carol service at Grace McKellar House ... At volunteer Grace McKellar luncheon, ladies received 15 & 30-year service awards.

KNOXFIELD (Malcolm Gray, Elaine McLeod, Rohan Waters) Church conducted successful camp at Cowes with 87 present ... Malcolm & Jill will conduct a Churches of Christ camp at Banksia 17 January ... CWF active in organising donations for Royal Dilly Bags & Christmas hampers ... Elaine McLeod will be ministering at another church next year & long-standing office secretary Ann White will join husband Jack in full-time ministry at Ballarat.

WA

DIANELLA (Jennifer Turner) The first Sunday in Advent had special significance as Jennifer Turner was inducted into ministry at am service. Around 100 present. Family tea held at night, followed by fellowship hour ... A Christmas tree banked with food & gifts for needy families. 42 Christmas cakes baked by CWF ladies ... CWF Christmas luncheon 8 December ...

Senior Minister

The Bexley North and Beverly Hills, NSW, Churches of Christ are coming together to form a new church ministering in the St George area of Sydney.

This church, to be known as the St George Community Church of Christ, will officially commence on 14 February 1999. The combined eldership is seeking an experienced minister to lead the church and its ministry team.

We require a person of spiritual maturity, with the necessary gifts, skills and experience to give leadership and vision to this new venture. Commencement date would be negotiable, but early 1999 is preferred.

Inquiries to David West,
9 Gambler Ave, Sandy Point NSW 2171.
Telephone (02) 9774 5961. E-mail <davewest@bigpond.com>.



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1.15-1.45 p.m.

Lunchtime Service

For further enquiries, please ring (03) 9663 3884

Church News

Advent services involving families will continue until Christmas.

NSW

TWEED HEADS-COOLANGATTA (Bruce Warwick) Weekend celebrations 30th anniversary included picnic with spit-roast dinner on Saturday & special Sunday service conducted in mode of 30 years ago ... Through monthly gold coin offering, church supported our Russian pastor, \$2,500 to Drug Rehabilitation Centre and \$1,000 to OMB for Deaf Ministries in the Philippines ... Church honoured Jean & Syd Creek on 60th wedding anniversary & said goodbye to Sid & Peg Pearman who have moved to WA.

BYRON DISTRICT Church located 4 km south of Byron Bay township in Suffolk Park Community Hall, cnr Alcorn & Clifford Streets ... Playgroup averages 10 mothers plus children ... Sewing group assists mothers to make their family's clothes, thanks to equipment from Asquith church ... Church is small in numbers, but strong in faith. Visitors welcome.

QLD

TWYFORD St, BUNDABERG 75th anniversary celebrated November. A.C. Male speaker ... 5½ year ministry of Paul & Julie Scully concluded anniversary weekend ... Year 12 student Rebecca Miller & Playtime mother, Sue Desmond recently baptised ... Ladies active in raising money for missionaries Pam & Gary Hine in addition to Normanton/Mareeba money box, which exceeded \$2,000 ... AGM elected Ern Linderberg, Board Chairman, Roger Burt, Secretary & Dennis Trebbin, Treasurer.

SA

TUMBY BAY Eyre Peninsula Women's Conference held camp at Redcliffs, November. Members from Wudinna, Ungarra, Port Lincoln & Tumby Bay attended. Studies led by Sue Moore.

A weekend of fellowship & study ... Church tower reduced in height & restored due to deterioration of brick work. Church building painted ... Family day at Redcliffs campsite 29 Nov when churches of Conference come together. Conference president, Robert Branford.

TORRENSVILLE (Debbie Short) With closing down of Torrensville Nursing Home & relocation to Kiandra private hospital, we see an end of an era of

witness to residents & staff over the past 25 years ... Alex Mattingly completed discipleship classes & baptised ... Grateful thanks to Jenny Thomson for 20 years' long service as secretary to our Christian fellowship. Gold watch given in recognition.

ACT

AINSLIE (Paul Douglas) Ron Dawes, Leprosy Mission, spoke at service ...

2 baptisms ... Burdetts & Smalleys celebrated 50th wedding anniversaries ... First Alpha course completed ... Participation in Ainslie Community Fair worthwhile witness ... CWF ladies gave generously to Ashwood Hospital ... Combined worship service & luncheon held with Austral-Asian church with special presentation of Christmas music by Ainslie choir ... Local churches joined for Street Christmas Party.

COCOA brings HOPE



COCOA provides finance to develop food crops like this at Londua Training School in Vanuatu.

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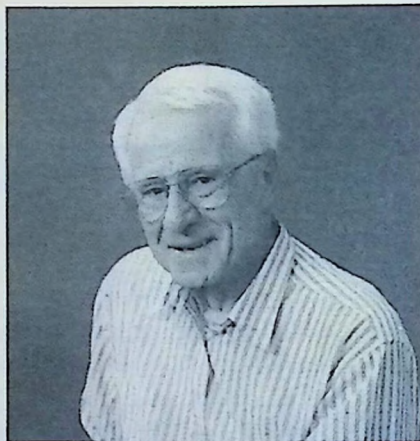
John Frum

GORDON STIRLING

John Frum is a mythical character influencing the lives of Tanna (Vanuatu) people since the twenties. They believe that one day he will come to them with great wealth if they stay loyal to "custom" (the old ways as opposed to the ways being taught by the former Presbyterian missionaries). When the Americans came during World War 2 with their show of opulence, cigarettes, Coke and hot dogs, they thought that John Frum had come. To their great disappointment, he hadn't. But at least they knew that he must be an American! So they are still waiting for John Frum. Some other Ni-Vanuatu were waiting similarly nearly 100 years ago. In the 1870s thousands of Kanakas from Vanuatu were brought to the Queensland sugar cane fields as cheap labour.

With financial support from Sir Joseph Verco of South Australian Churches of Christ, a John Thompson from Sydney began working as a missionary among them. Hundreds responded to his preaching, including a capable Ni-Vanuatu named Tabymancon.

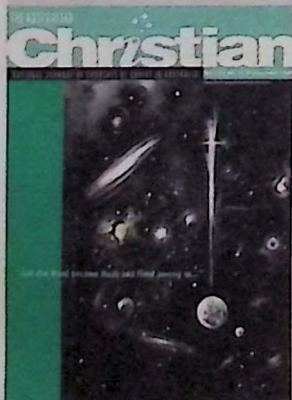
With the advent of Federation and White Australia in 1901, the Kanakas were returned to the islands. Tabymancon and other Christians arrived at Pentecost where he set up a Church of Christ and sent for John Thompson. In 1903 he came and within a few months 58 were baptised and 500 children were in school. But malaria drove John Thompson home, promising that Churches of Christ in Australia would



send a missionary to replace him.

In spite of the fervent prayers of the Ni-Vanuatu no missionary came. But Tabymancon was a practical man and told his people that it was no use praying for a missionary unless they built a house for him. Which they did, but no missionary came! So he said it was no use praying for a missionary unless they built a church building for him to use. Which they did, but no missionary came! Not dismayed, he reasoned that there was no point in praying for a missionary unless they got a baptistery ready for him. So they carved one in the beach side coral with running water flowing through it. Then, four and a half years after John Thompson's departure, Frank Filmer arrived to commence a partnership between Ni-Vanuatu and Australian Churches of Christ that has continued for almost a century.

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The Last Word

O Lord, you know how busy I must be this day; if I forget you, do not forget me: for Christ's sake.

—Sir Jacob Astley
(1579-1652)
before the battle of
Edge Hill in 1642.

At Christmas my father crossed a turkey with a centipede so everyone could have a drumstick.

Do you get people sending in funny jokes to your paper? All the time. Then why don't you use them?

Virus: a Latin word used by doctors and meaning, "Your guess is as good as mine."

The only thing I grow in the garden is tired.

Gardening is man's effort to improve his lot.

The bad news is I accidentally left my electric toothbrush on all night. The good news is I've never seen the bathroom looking so clean.

A refrigerator is the place where you keep leftovers until they are ready to be thrown out.

Never fall in love with a tennis player. To them, love means nothing.

Late News

Eastgate Growth

Church planter Simon Williams reports that after fourteen weeks the new Eastgate, Vic, church has 100 attenders, of whom one third are new Christians.