

THE AUSTRALIAN

# christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 102 No. 11, 7 July 1999

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THE AUSTRALIAN



**Christian**

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA



Vol. 102 No. 11, 7 July 1999

# Editorial

## Demand and Commitment

DON SMITH

Overseas mission history has been reported in this paper for over 100 years. Our Overseas Mission Board made a beginning in India in 1891. Then followed outreach in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and China. Following World War 2 and with our involvement with Papua New Guinea, work began there in 1958. More recently, work in Fiji was developed and cooperative links established in Zimbabwe. This story fires the imagination and leaves a sense of achievement about the growth of the church. The sacrifice of missionary staff and



indigenous workers is monumental. \* India and the New Hebrides passed from colonial status to independence in our time. The transition for our mission work was comparatively smooth and non-violent. China was different. Our workers were withdrawn in 1934 because of the sheer problem of servicing a remote area and the increasing dangers from Communist persecution. The church has survived persecution and is active today. \* The experience for some "sending" countries has been different. In a 1964 visit to the USA I talked with Disciples mission staff about their work in the Congo. Losses of staff and children had been incurred over the decades through disease. There was questioning among church members as to whether the sacrifice had been worthwhile. In our "World Family" issue of 26 May we reported on the current chaos in the Congo, with civil war making contact with our US Disciples agency difficult and tenuous. \* Our churches have been spared the agony of such situations, China excepted. The 100 years has been a story of sacrifice, determination and passionate conviction among Australian mission staff, along with indigenous workers. \* The whole history of the growth of the church has been one of demand and commitment. The response of sending churches has not always been worthy of the sacrifice and service of our mission workers and the indigenous churches. \* The ingredients for growth in any church anywhere parallel the characteristics seen in our world mission ventures: sacrifice, singleness of purpose, passion and deep convictions about the Gospel. Searching our own lives and considering the cost of discipleship in other situations will challenge us about the way we live now. Think about it! \*



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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.**

### The Hallelujah Chorus?

To the Editor,  
I refer to Viney Longthorp's article "The Hallelujah Chorus?" ("AC" 9.6.99). I am not usually up between 4.00 and 5.30 in the morning, so I am no expert on early morning religious programs, but I think the person Viney refers to as Benny Hill is actually Benny Hinn.

Benny Hill was a third-rate British comedian who relied on crude slapstick and used to wear a handkerchief tied at the corners on his head as part of his routine. Benny Hinn is an American tele-evangelist who wears a white suit and is a bit more polished in his presentation but I can see the similarities between the two of them. I have about as much respect for Benny Hinn as I did for Benny Hill. By the way I am not usually a pedantic person.

—Chris Newland  
(Ascot Vale, Vic.)

### Worship Styles

To the Editor,  
Reading the letter by Robert Smith ("AC" 9.6.99) my immediate response was "Yes!" Thinking over worship spanning forty-something years, I realised positive experiences covered a vast variety of music styles.

I too, value worship that connects the worshipper with God and find variety can be inspiringly successful when its purpose is greater than simply trying to "keep everyone happy".

Planning, preparation and positive presentation to achieve clearly-identified goals seem very important in my experience, whatever the style.

Maybe even choosing a style to suit a particular situation and group of worshippers.

When contemporary worship styles were first used they were new and added variety. Now with more regular use they too can have the faults justifiably criticised in our traditional services. As always, God will accept our sincere humble efforts and forgive any imperfections. We seem to be much less forgiving of each other, particularly if worship style is the identified part of a wider agenda.

—Ron Hurren  
(Pakenham, Vic)

### Good Work

To the Editor,  
I write to express sincere thanks for articles appearing in *The Australian Christian*.

Recently our Pastoral Care Team took time to read and discuss Garry McIntosh's article "How to Live to be 100" ("AC" 25.11.98). We found it to be most interesting and extremely practical, with good ideas and principles for consideration.

I have just skimmed through the articles on "Relationships" ("AC" 9.6.99), which arrived today. I can see that we will benefit from studying and putting into practice some of the helpful input given us in this issue.

Keep up the good work! And thanks again to all who contributed the articles.

—Barry Benz  
(West Richmond, SA)

### Relationships

To the Editor,  
Thank you, and the contributors, for the "AC" issue on "Relationships".

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# Letters to the Editor

I am not too sure how to interpret the cover of the issue. It seems to be saying that there are far more broken relationships, than whole ones.

I have been reading again the Pastoral Letters—James, Peter, and John—and have been impressed with all they have to say about the subject. From experience, and discussion, I have come to the conclusion that Christian people do not know a lot about relationships.

We have taken the worst that the world has to offer and allowed that to determine our relationship, or lack of relationships. I know that it is far easier to be aggressive, dominant, intolerant, judgmental, than it is to be forgiving, accepting, encouraging, upholding and affirmative. But the fact of the matter is that we have reversed the Scriptural teaching on relationships.

It would be great if we could prescribe the Pastoral Letters to be read each month from now until the end of the year, and then discuss relationship again, in the light of that teaching.

—M.D. Keatch  
(Modbury, SA)

## Back to the Future

Letter to the Editor,  
It is one thing to use the term "post-denominationalism" as description of modern society, it is another to turn it into a normative model for the church.

Those who do so are inclined to subordinate doctrinal divisions within the church to superordinate goals such as "seeking the Kingdom of God" or "Kingdom thinking".

Jesus made it clear in John 3:3 that without being born again, we cannot even "see" the Kingdom of God, let alone engage in "Kingdom thinking".

An interpretation of John 3:5 is

that being baptised is part of the process of being born again.

All would not agree with that interpretation of course, hence there are doctrinal differences between Christians. The point is, we cannot separate our understanding of salvation from our understanding of the Kingdom of God.

On examination, "Kingdom thinking" often turns out to be a rationale for highly individualistic behaviour, and normative post-denominationalism turns out to be yet another Christian sect.

I believe that Churches of Christ are on the right track by consistently advocating predenominationalism.

—H.E. Hayward  
(Pymble, NSW)



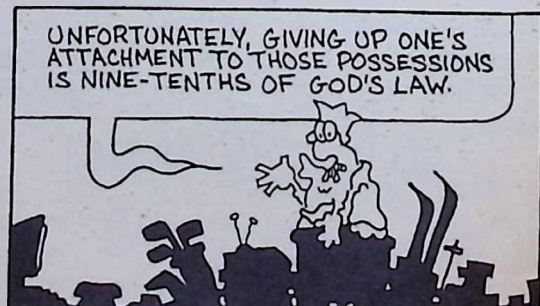
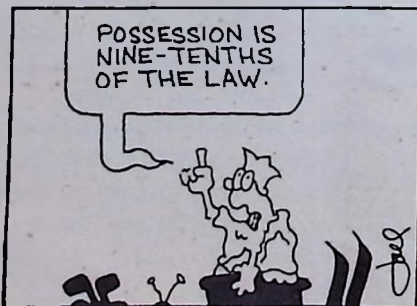
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## Update

Dear Readers,

Thank you to those who have already returned the Reader Survey form. Our Post Office Box has been filled with your envelopes each morning. We are delighted with the response so far. We need many more survey forms to provide a good sample from all states. If you require extra copies of the form for other readers, please contact our office. If you have set aside the task of completing the form, please locate it now and return it to us promptly. We have a large task ahead in processing the data, so the early arrival of your form will help. We have noted an error in the form on page 1, Question 2 regarding age. The box 40-59 should read 50-59.

In this issue we are pleased to be cooperating with the Overseas Mission Board. The Board has a great story to tell. This issue also includes the latest "Postcard from Trent". Trent seems to be enjoying his travels. One would hope his parents are not relying on our postcards to hear from him!

Several readers have contacted us about the missing issue of 20 July 1991. We already have one copy in hand. We need some

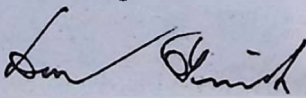
more if we are to complete the bound copies with state historians. We are surprised that some readers can so quickly respond to our request. Thank you.

Reports for our "Church News" section are always welcome. If your church does not report we would welcome your participation. A form which includes guidelines for reporters is available upon request.

Your advertising is also welcomed. Rate schedules are also available upon request. Advertising your coming events will let a broad audience know of your work. Business and Conference advertisements are also welcomed. Special discount rates apply to Churches of Christ related advertisers and regular general users. Contact Nigel Pegram for details now.

On page 10 reference is made to the International Summit in Birmingham. This is an important event for our whole future mission strategy. Individual and corporate prayer is invited.

Our e-mail address has changed and is now <editor.ac@churchesofchrist.org.au>.





## Christian Advertising

Unique advertising agency celebrates 25 years

An Australian advertising agency specifically set up to support churches and Christian organisations and welfare agencies has notched up 25 years of service.

In 1974 Tom Glynn, who is currently the NSW representative on the Board of *The Australian Christian*, decided to put his extensive advertising experience at the disposal of Christian organisations by establishing the Tom Glynn Advertising agency in Sydney.

As an experienced advertising executive who had worked in major Sydney, Singapore and London advertising agencies, he felt frustrated working with Christian groups on a voluntary basis, because he was only able to devote a little time to each.

Tom explained, "I could see that the principles of marketing and advertising could be used effectively by Christian groups and

that a leaflet or video was the easy part.

"The harder part was the long term strategy—the what, to whom, how and when of the communication process.

"So in 1974 I left the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, one of the largest in the world, and opened a one-man office, just six doors down the road in case the agency failed and I had to go back to JWT!"

Tom Glynn Advertising (TGA) started with two clients who retained TGA on a monthly fee basis; Scripture Union and the Anglican Home Mission Society (now Anglicare). Tom went on to serve a wide range of Christian organisations, along with significant commercial clients.

"This mix was essential to keep us professionally up-to-date and to pay the bills," Tom said.

Kenneth Harrison, who worked at TGA as General Manager for two years from 1977–1979, said "TGA was a pioneer in Christian communications.

"At that time there were few other agencies offering a specific service to Christian clients.

"TGA was one of the first agencies to specialise in fundraising." After fifteen years of successful operation, TGA was sold in July 1989.

Today Tom Glynn's clients include Compassion and Hope Healthcare.

He also has a publishing unit servicing churches, Christians and Christian organisations, sells advertising space in *Christian Woman* magazine, operates "Cause Communications", and is active in advising Christian groups on marketing and fundraising strategies.



Photograph Worldwide Photos

Tom Glynn

In 1996 Tom, the Rev Ross Clifford, former President of the NSW Council of Churches and now Principal of Morling College, and Phillip Johnson started New Age Mission, an evangelistic group organising Christian Community of Hope stands at New Age festivals.

Tom is also a member of the Fundraising Institute of Australia and a member of the executive of the NSW Council of Churches, and an elder at Northside Community Church, Sydney.

Australian  
Christian  
Postcards

Postcard  
from  
Trent



Dear Don,

My travelling experiences continue, and at the moment I have just started picking oranges. A lot of people here don't like the work, but I love it! Being out in the open air with four or five hours practically to myself, climbing up the trees and ladders is a great time of meditation. When I pick, I talk to God.

Unreal are the things that I contemplate atop my seventeen-foot ladder. Amazing is the presence of God as I empty yet another bag into the trailer or as I drive the tractor down to pick up a new bin. Awesome is the fact that he enjoys spending the time with me, and grateful am I to spend this time with him.

Four hours of hard work feels like twenty minutes and I'm extravagantly happy at that!

How did I survive a hectic Year 12 last year without this time of prayer each day? I can't imagine it now. But I suppose I don't have to, I just enjoy the time I'm having and the work I'm doing, taking "one orange at a time".

I love picking oranges!  
Signing off,  
Trent Harris

[“Trent”, not his real name, suggested he might send an occasional postcard on his great “learning experience” while travelling around Australia. He might even visit your church sometime.]

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## Community Care Directors

**Vic-Tas Community Care makes joint appointment**



*Cheryl Johnson*



*Gerald Rose*

The Board of Community Care in Victoria and Tasmania has made a dual appointment to the recently-advertised position of Director, Community Services. Over recent months a major review of Community Care activities has been conducted. The Mission Statement now requires the Director of Community Services to: "Work in partnership with local churches to facilitate the development and delivery of services for people in local communities, expressing the Spirit of Jesus

Christ". With this in mind, the Board announces that Cheryl Johnson and Gerald Rose will share this task. Cheryl will continue with her ministry at Williamstown, Vic, church and commence with Community Care immediately. Gerald will commence after an overseas trip, following his retirement from Southern Community church. Both of these people bring special skills related to the task of welfare and the development of community services in the local church.

## More New Churches

**Church planting proceeding at highest rate this century**

A further four new church plants are under consideration within the Victorian and Tasmanian Conference network.

Director of Church Planting, Milton Oliver says the Taylors Lakes Community Church will commence in October, with the official launch early in 2000. Gary and Jane Berry of the Clayton church will become the team leaders. The nearby Sunbury, East Keilor and Sydenham churches have given their enthusiastic support.

The Malvern Valley Community Church is an initiative targeting the lower end of the Gen-X age demographic.

The outreach will be a hi-tech multi-media presentation at the Hoyts Cinema complex. A group led by John Gibbs is working on the core values, a mission statement and building a small groups infrastructure.

The nearby Chadstone church has already expressed support for the initiative.



*Milton Oliver, Director of Church Planting for Vic-Tas Conference*

Details of the other projects will be announced as planning proceeds. Following the five new churches which affiliated at the 1999 Conference the rate of church planting is running at a rate far beyond anything previously experienced this century.

## 2000 for 2000

**2000 Aussies for Brisbane 2000**

It is expected that up to 2000 overseas visitors will attend **Brisbane 2000**, the World Convention of Churches of Christ, 2-6 August, 2000.

Australian Churches of Christ are aiming to match both the year and the number of overseas visitors, with 2000 Australians registered and attending.

With just over a year to go, Australian registrations are coming in and accommodation and tours are filling, and shortly church secretaries will have access to the final details of costs. Many of us have been to Brisbane, but none to the thrill and wonder of a Millennial Convention of our people from across the world.

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## Second Vietnamese Congregation

Vietnamese congregation begins in Springvale North, Vic



*Nathan Nhan (front left), minister of the new church, the Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong, Cr Naim Melhem, Chek Chia, Chairman of the Churches of Christ Asian Ministry Council, (back row) Bishop John Wilson, Southern Region of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, and the Federal Member for Bruce, Alan Griffin MHR.*

Victoria's second Vietnamese congregation held its inaugural service at the Anglican Church, Police Road, Springvale North on 13 June.

The chapel where services will be held was crowded with members of the new church and representa-

tives from other Vietnamese congregations in Melbourne, some of whom brought greetings.

Chek Chia, Chairman of the Vic-Tas Churches of Christ Asian Ministry Council, spoke of the strategic importance of the church plant in a community with more than 40,000 Vietnamese residents.

He emphasised the importance of the evangelistic task of the new church.

Leaders were set apart with the laying on of hands.

Bishop Wilson wished the church well and spoke warmly of the willingness of the Diocese and the local congregation under the leadership of the Rev. Geoff Harvey to make the facilities available to Churches of Christ.

Dr Hung Pham, secretary of the Richmond Vietnamese Church of Christ congregation, which is the sponsoring body, led the service.



### Churches of Christ Theological College

The Churches of Christ Theological College (an Agency of Churches of Christ in Australia), situated in Melbourne, Victoria, is seeking expressions of interest for the position of:

#### PRINCIPAL

- Dr Greg Elsdon is relinquishing his position as Principal of the College in December 1999.

#### EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

- The Board of Management of CCTC is therefore seeking expressions of interest from suitably experienced and qualified people for the position of Principal.
- In response to expressions of interest, an information pack will be forwarded, on the basis of which interested persons may choose to submit an application.

#### APPLICATIONS

- The successful applicant will have appropriate post-graduate qualifications as well as proven skills and experience as a teacher, administrator and leader within the Christian Community. A commitment to the ethos and mission of Churches of Christ and the College would be essential.
- The position will be available from the 1st of January 2000.
- Further information relating to the position of Principal and the application process is available from:

Mr Mark Butler  
Secretary - Board of Management  
Churches of Christ Theological College  
P.O. Box 629  
MULGRAVE NORTH, VICTORIA 3170  
AUSTRALIA  
PHONE: (03) 9790 1000 FAX: (03) 9795 1688;  
E-MAIL: <cctc@cctc.com.au> (Mark to Attention: Mark Butler)

#### APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON 13TH AUGUST 1999

- All initial inquiries will be treated in strictest confidence.
- The Churches of Christ Theological College is an equal opportunity employer.
- The College Board reserves the right to invite people to apply.

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## Report from Tirana

### Albanian churches report on their work with Kosovar refugees

In recent issues we have commented on the work of our Albanian churches among refugees from Kosovo who have gone to Albania.

The churches report that they are now working with some 5000 people, a number of whom are staying with local church families.

The Overseas Mission Board has already sent \$22,000, comprising a donation of \$10,000 from COCOA funds and the balance in personal and church gifts.

A recent report from the Albanian churches included the following comments.

"The Kosovo refugees sometimes say thank you with tears in their eyes and we pass that thanks on

to you who make the giving possible," reports the Refugee Crisis Committee of the Church of Christ, Tirana, Albania.

The Committee reports that currently there are 455,147 refugees in Albania, 68,909 are in camps, 91,323 are in collective centres and 305,592 are living with host families.

The Church of Christ is distributing boxes of food and other items to those who are living with host families.

A family of five receives the following items for two weeks: 3 l of oil, 3 kg of sugar, 1 kg of margarine, 1½ kg of cheese, 2 kg of beans, 2 kg of pasta, 3 kg of rice, 3 soup mixes, 1 can of tea, 3 bars of soap, 1½ kg detergent,

plus milk, nappies and personal items based on the needs of the family.

Each box is topped off with a notice stating the aid is from the Church of Christ and an invitation to church services and the WBS book "How to become a Christian and establish the Church of Christ in your community".

Two pregnant women who registered with the Refugee Crisis Committee gave birth to their babies last week.

A very special package was put together for these women, including traditional Kosovo cradles filled with baby clothes, nappies, baby shampoo and a beanie. For the mothers there was a nightgown and dress, personal items

and some flannel fabric so they would be able to make blankets.

The husband of one of the mothers was shot by the Serbs and she, along with her four-year-old daughter, for whom there was also a special gift, are staying in a local orphanage for two weeks.

Even though a peace deal has now been brokered the refugee crisis will continue for a number of months as peace is established and people start to move back home.

The Overseas Mission Board comments:

"Your gifts are still needed to assist these people.

All gifts to COCOA of \$2.00 and more are tax deductible."

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## Funding Christian Projects

### Funding for Leadership 2000 and ongoing training

How does Christian Projects manage to sponsor an overseas study tour every two or three years?

Graham Bagley of Christian Projects Trading is part of the answer.

Graham, an elder of the Engadine, NSW, church has given voluntary oversight to the trading arm of Christian Projects, which retails thousands of dollars worth of stationery and other church supplies to church organisations.

The small profit margin is turned over to Christian Projects to use for its leadership development programs.

Other income is from investments managed by Bob Pfeiffer of the

Doncaster church, Vic, the treasurer-secretary of Christian Projects.

Victorian ministers who have been assisted by Christian Projects have been funded by proceeds from the estate of Jessie Tallent.

Christian Projects has sponsored four overseas study tours. A new initiative is to assist ministers who have been on Leadership 2000 programs with studies connected with the Graduate Diploma in Church Leadership and Administration, offered by the Sydney College of Divinity through the Australian College of Ministries.

Christian Projects Trading can be contacted on 1800 242 904.



*Graham Bagley of Christian Projects Trading hands over a cheque for \$20,000 to Ted Keating, a director of Christian Projects and the coordinator of Leadership 2000*

#### Busselton Church of Christ

offers an exciting ministry opportunity. It is seeking confidential expressions of interest for the ministry position of

### Senior Pastor

The Busselton Church of Christ has an average attendance of 130 people at worship. A large summertime influx is experienced due to the strategic location of the church in a key tourist centre of the south west coast of WA.

Busselton is the fastest-growing shire in Australia and the Christian community evidences a diverse cross section of ages and interest.

The church has a large ministry involving a growing Christian school of 230 students (preschool – year 10), a youth pastor, craft group, Christian book shop and a number of cell groups, and a strong emphasis on mission work through its faith mission program. The church has an effective team leadership involving an Eldership and Diaconate

The church has commenced a significant building ministry involving the relocation of the church buildings adjacent to the school facilities.

The Church is looking for a Senior Minister who can work as a team member, providing the necessary gifts, skills and experience to lead the church into its next phase of maturity.

Enquiries marked "Confidential" to The Eldership, Busselton Church of Christ, 10 Rosemary Drive, Busselton WA 6280.

For further information telephone  
Cornerstone Christian Community School on (08) 97541144  
or e-mail <cornercs@netserv.net.au>.

**Applications close: 31 August 1999.**

#### Churches of Christ Care

Applications are called for the new position of

### Aged Care Director.

The Aged Care Director will be responsible to the Executive Director for the management and operation of the Aged Care Division of Churches of Christ Care.

The Aged Care Division consists of a range of aged care facilities and services spread over southern Queensland and consisting of 9 high care facilities, 14 low care facilities, 1 intermix facility, community care package programs, some HACC services, 3 Home Assist / Secure programs and a number of Retirement Villages (over 600 units).

The position will require a good knowledge of the present Aged Care legislation and of aged care practices. It will require outstanding management and leadership ability to lead and direct the Division.

The person for this position must have a strong Christian commitment with an ability to work comfortably with local Churches of Christ and local management committees.

Applicants should send expressions of interest together with a current CV and three referees and they will receive a document containing key selection criteria which will need to be addressed in writing together with some information on Churches of Christ Care and the Aged Care Division.

Expressions of interest should be received by 13 August 1999.

Address all expressions of interest to  
The Executive Director  
Churches of Christ Care  
PO Box 508  
Kenmore Qld 4069.





# Churches of Christ in Myanmar

## Report on Ross Wissmann's visit to Myanmar

In a recent comment received from Ross Wissmann, a Churches of Christ minister serving with our churches in the Philippines, Ross noted he had recently visited Rangoon the capital of Myanmar (Burma), to lecture to students associated with our churches there. The Editor invited Ross to forward some comments about his impressions of Churches of Christ in Burma.

Ross travelled to Rangoon on his

Australian passport and experienced no difficulties during his short stay. As he travelled around the city he noted billboards with messages such as "Oppose those relying on external elements acting as stooges holding negative views". This was the only aspect he found unfriendly during the week of lecturing.

Ross notes that Churches of Christ work, with its US Independent Churches of Christ ori-

gins, is the second-largest Protestant church in Myanmar, with a membership of 60,000. Most members are from the Lisu and Rawang tribes in the northern state of Kachin. Most states, however have a few churches. Big growth has recently taken place in Rankhine state where there are now more than 3000 members. There are at least four Bible colleges, each with 80 students. There are also a number of Bible

schools. Across the border in Thailand is another Bible college for refugees from Myanmar. The Myanmar Christians are taking the Gospel across their borders into China, Thailand and Bangladesh.

*These comments made especially for "The Australian Christian" need to be seen against the broader context of life in Myanmar and seemed appropriate to report in this paper. —Ed*

## UK Mission Summit

### Editor to go to International Mission Summit

The Editor has been invited to participate in the meetings of the International Mission Summit, with representatives from New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom.

The Summit meetings will be held in Birmingham from 13-25 July and represent a heavy schedule of discussions and a range of other meetings.

Included in the Summit will be visits to churches and mission-orientated projects in London, Nottingham and Sheffield.

The International Summit is a follow up to the meetings held at Stanwell Tops, NSW, in November 1998.

The implications of the Summit for Australian Churches of Christ and any wider issues of cooperation will be discussed at the meeting of the National Council

of Churches of Christ in September.

The Australian and New Zealand representatives will attend a two day "Link" conference for UK Churches of Christ leaders and also spend time in worship and fellowship with some local churches.

During the visit to the UK, the Editor will also be conferring with UK representatives who have raised the possibility of cooperation in a joint Australian-UK issue of an *International Christian*, with a view to some six issues in 2000.

Some cooperation with Vital Publications is also a possibility.

During the Editor's absence of four weeks Nigel Pegram will be responsible for the publication of issues of *The Australian Christian*.

## Huge National Events

### Awakening 2000 sets goals for Pentecost 2001

In a recent press release the Awakening 2000 movement notes that in the next two years Australians will see some of the biggest and possibly most significant events our nation has experienced. These include the turning of the millennium, the Olympic Games, the Centenary of Federation, the referendum about the constitution and whether Australia becomes a republic, and the ramifications of the proposed taxation changes.

Each of these events will have their impact on how Australians see themselves, what is important to them and the shape we want our country to be in. The Awakening movement is emphasising the role of the church in impacting the situation.

Goals set for Pentecost 2001 are: A grass-roots Australia-wide proc-

ess of reflection—the past faced, what is valuable explored.

A visible unified church that is comfortable in the community in every region.

A chance of every young Australian being invited into a process to celebrate the turn of the millennium and finding their own story in that context.

The church released into the community in such a way that the Christian message is experienced as warm and loving.

To invite the Australian church to find its place in global mission.

An AD 2000 Mission Conference, which will be held in Canberra in June, is seen as a key reference point for the agenda and goals noted above. Christian leaders and workers are invited to participate. Information is available from Awakening offices in each state.



## Evan Adermann OAM

### Nambour elder awarded Order of Australia

Included in the Queen's Birthday Honours list this year, Evan Adermann was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

Evan has been a valued member of the Nambour Church of Christ since 1972 and an elder for most of those 27 years.

Evan served in the Commonwealth Government for 18 years, during some very challenging and

controversial years, especially during the time Gough Whitlam was dismissed.

Evan was in ministry during the Cyclone Tracy tragedy and helped to rebuild Darwin after the cyclone.

He was Minister for Veterans Affairs at the time of Agent Orange and had to deal with the surge of Vietnam vets affected by the chemical.

His time in the House of Representatives started in the electorate of Fisher.

He moved to Fairfax after a boundary distribution.

"It was an interesting time when the Whitlam government was sacked.

"We went for lunch and came back to find the government had been dismissed," he said.

As Evan says, "Above all it was only through Christ who strengthens me that I could have managed to fulfil the duties outlined in the citation accompanying the award."



*Evan Adermann, awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia*

—Nambour Church of Christ

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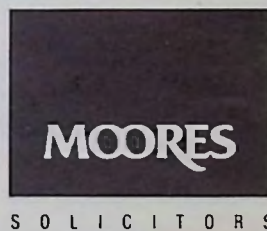
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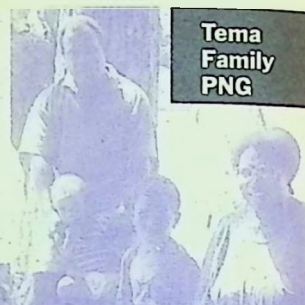




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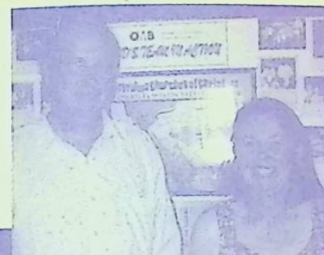
Jeff Weston



Lorraine Lewis

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# Missions

## Sharing the Word of Truth

JEFF WESTON

**A**ustralian Churches of Christ have had a commitment to overseas mission from their earliest beginnings. The Intercolonial Conference in 1889 passed a resolution that the conference was in full sympathy with foreign missions and that each state treasurer should receive donations for such. Following on from this, a number of states set up Foreign Mission Committees.

During 1890–1891 the Victorian Conference committee inquired about prospective fields for mission. India was

*In many of the countries where we work revival has broken out*

chosen, however no “brother” offered to take up the work. Milner Black, secretary of the Victorian committee, approached 30-year-old Mary Thompson of the Collingwood church who earlier had expressed an interest in missionary service. Mary accepted and was appointed to the Indian work of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society of the American Disciples of Christ.

A simple minute from the committee meeting of 8 April 1891 records the appointment of the first Australian Churches of Christ overseas missionary; “Miss Thompson goes to India with the idea of giving her life to the work”.

One hundred and eight years have passed since Mary Thompson went to India. Over that time many others have left Australian shores with a similar vision. As a result, Australian Churches of Christ have developed strong indigenous churches and Conferences

around the world. Despite the difficulties of increasing operational costs and the relatively small size of the Australian church, the work has maintained a vibrancy and freshness.

Today through the Gospel Outreach Fund we support expatriate missionaries in three countries, national pastors in five countries, training and development of national pastors and lay leaders, Scripture translation, Bible correspondence programs in three countries, new church development, and outreach programs.

A key feature of our work is the commitment to encourage an indigenous church to develop. This means a church that reflects its own culture and God’s desire as it begins reaching out to its own people. On our part this requires a surrender of control to our national brothers and sisters, supporting and resourcing them as they lead their church forward. It is often perilous and frustrating, with some decisions taking what seems like an eternity to be made. Sometimes mistakes are made and at times there is a temptation to seize control, but the results speak for themselves. In countries like Papua New Guinea there are over 5000 Churches of Christ members, and in Vanuatu, Churches of Christ members constitute almost 5% of the country’s population. Two of the countries where we have planted churches are now sending their own overseas missionaries out, in one case even to Australia.

At present we are being stretched with the opportunities that God is opening up. In many of the countries where we work revival has broken out, hundreds are seeking to

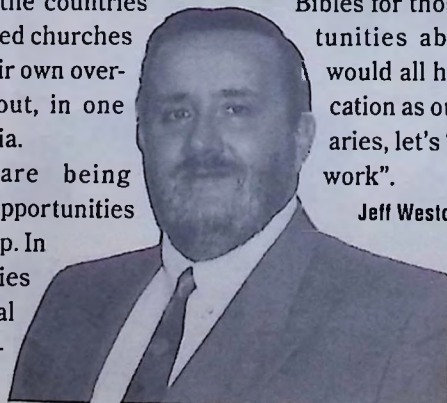
hear the word of truth. They have discovered that there is no life, no hope in their old religious practices, and they are questing after the one true God and the word of truth. Coupled with this is increasing openness to the gospel by Fiji’s Indian population. In only three months over 100 non-Christian people have requested information about Bible correspondence programs. In recent years, opportunity to rekindle our work in China has emerged and there is an open door to work in Vietnam.

The opportunities are exciting, but draining on resources. We need the Australian church to stand with us and enable us to go with the word of truth. I recently read how in WWII British people handed in their aluminium pots and pans to be made into aeroplanes. They were also prepared to endure rationing and other sacrifices in the hope of eventual victory. We need you to give the Overseas Mission Board the tools to spread the gospel and so secure the victory of salvation for those living in spiritual deception.

One of the hardest parts of our work is trying to explain to missionaries, local pastors and church leaders why we cannot offer more resources. Why there isn’t enough money to meet budget requests, provide a missionary, conduct a training program, or even to provide

Bibles for those seeking. Opportunities abound, if only we would all have the same dedication as our pioneer missionaries, let’s “give our life to the work”.

Jeff Weston is Executive Director of the OMB. He has served as a missionary in PNG and had ministries at Darwin and Hobart.





# Missions

## Served in an Indian Cup

BARRY WARD

**W**hen Mahatma Gandhi was asked how Christianity could become naturalised in India and part of its national life he replied with three points.

"I would suggest first, that all of you Christians, missionaries and all, must begin to live like Jesus Christ.

"I would suggest that you must practice your religion without adulterating or toning it down.

"You must put your emphasis upon love, for love is the centre and soul of Christianity."

(E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of The Indian Road*, p. 146-148.)

*Yet hopefully it speaks the heart language of the people with whom we have come to share.*

In Fiji we have made discipleship and whole-of-life Christianity a priority in the Churches of Christ work among the Indian people. To have a long-term and powerful impact on the Hindu and Muslim communities, we must see Indo-Fijian Christians who are lovingly whole-hearted, genuine and growing in holiness. Who will be interested to buy if they haven't seen the genuine article? The temptation is always there to "hit and run" and satisfy oneself with "Christianising" these people, to get them into church, to get a "confession of faith". Indians are a satisfying group to work with if this is all it takes. Fully-sold-out disciples of Christ who can share their lives as well as their words are a bit more of a slog. Our strategy has become very much dependant on

the few who are really sold out and serious about their own walk with Christ. These are the ones who will make an impact on their people, as the message and the messengers are inseparable.

Recently a group of such people met as our newly-formed leadership committee. At the meeting I floated the need for a full-time Indian pastor to work with us, and was asking how we should go about getting one. I was thinking in terms of advertising, approaching Bible colleges and so forth. One lady quickly made a suggestion, which was enthusiastically adopted by the wider group. "Let's fast and pray for a whole day every Wednesday for a month." The same lady has been challenging others on tithing and stopping gossip. She is sharing out of what is happening in her own relationship with Jesus. As she begins to live like Jesus (as Gandhi prescribes) church people, work mates and neighbours are beginning to be impacted upon.

The package in which the Word of Truth is delivered is also vital. Yes, the messenger but also the message (practised, unadulterated and complete, as Gandhi suggests). One of the most challenging things for us as western missionaries is to uncloak the Word of Truth to it's bare essentials, and then clothe it in Indo-Fijian attire. It is somewhat humorous, but very sad, to hear an Indian Christian speak in Hindi or "Indian English", yet pray with an American accent!

Sharing the Word of Truth sometimes requires denial on our part as western missionaries. I have to confess that the style of worship adopted by our churches here in Fiji is not my preferred style and the music is not my preferred music, and the vernacular largely eludes me. Yet hopefully it



speaks the heart language of the people with whom we have come to share. Recently, it was heartening to hear an Indian Christian leader who was visiting our service say how encouraging it was to see the "Gospel served in an Indian cup".

Sharing the Word of Truth in Fiji, as anywhere, is dependent on Gandhi's third suggestion to put "our emphasis on love". He went on to say "not love as a sentiment, but love as a working force". This has been borne out in our experience here. Where genuine acts of unconditional love and compassion are shown, it deeply impacts upon the Indian heart. A Gujarati friend recently returned from India quite restless and disturbed. He has found his own religion somewhat devoid of compassion and yet saw Christians so active in this way. A man devout in his beliefs yet now so open to the Word of Truth.

Demonstrated powerfully in changed people, dressed in Indian attire, and served up in love, it is our vision to see the Word of Truth permeate the Indo-Fijian communities of Fiji.

Barry and Sue Ward with their three children Ben, Sam and Rebecca are from Victoria. They have been working with the OMB in Suva, Fiji, since 1995.



# Missions

## Sports Mission

**SHEM TEMA**

**T**he importance and the value that sport has in the lives of many ordinary young Papua New Guineans today is amazing, and is increasing every year. It is a fact that according to recent statistical data more young people today are involved in sport than five years ago. This results in many young people spending more time on the field than in church buildings, or with their families and friends in bible study or prayer. With the increasing number of young people moving away from their faith involvement to sport, the PNG Churches of Christ have had to ask some serious questions. What can we as youth outreach workers do to help

these young people to draw back to God and direct their higher interest towards a positive and enduring ending? This challenge has prompted us to design what we call "Sport Outreach Church of Christ PNG" (SOCCPNG). This program has been designed to meet the young people's entertainment needs, but more highly as an outreach ministry and evangelistic tool to younger people who are very sport-minded, but have little or no interest in Christianity. The aim is to encourage and empower sport-minded Christians to influence a belief in Christ through the numerous opportunities that sport and recreation offer. The exciting thing is that with our last SOCCPNG program

we saw many young people make decisions to receive Jesus as their personal saviour—some for the first time on the field during matches! It is very encouraging to see how God is ministering to sport-minded young people who didn't have an interest in Christianity. This is not in the church setting, but in the setting where their interest is—right on the sports field.

The ministry potential of sports and recreation is becoming an effective tool for the church and a powerful vehicle for the Gospel.

Shem Tema with his wife Elizabeth and children Steve and Sheliza are from Vanuatu. They serve with the OMB as Youth Workers in Papua New Guinea.



## Longing for Truth

**JOSES SALI**

**R**ecently Barry Ward and I had the privilege of attending an evening prayer meeting with Indian pastors who have in their hearts a genuine desire to see their lost fellow Indians come to the truth. Every Friday of each month they meet for prayer, focusing on Indian evangelisation. Each of these pastors either has an Indian congregation or a mixed Indo-Fijian congregation. Recently two elderly men, both in their seventies, shared their testimonies with me of how they became Christians and the effect Christianity has had on them. One of them was Brij Bihary, the eldest member of our congregation at Vuci

South. Having been a farmer, he was converted from Hinduism.

For the last twenty-three years he was a Sadhu in his old religion, an itinerant teacher in the Hindu faith. He was highly-recognised by his own people and was respected by all. He kept and practised every requirement of a Sadhu.

He practised firewalking, pierced sticks through his hands and nose without bleeding, became a vegetarian, but said that all this was vanity.

He was still searching and longing for truth until he found Christ and invited him to come into his life. Since then he has found real peace and satisfaction in his life. After he became a Christian, his

books, worth more than \$8300 Fijian, were dumped into the Rewa River. All his idol gods and pictures were also dumped into the river with his books. He said that in Hindu faith he had a lot of gods so he needed to have a lot of books. But now since he became a Christian he only has one God and needs only one book, the Bible.

The exciting thing is that this is the same for most people in this country who have been converted from Hinduism to Christianity.

Joses Sali with wife Mina and children Gloria and Terry are from Vanuatu. They have served with the OMB in PNG and now in Fiji. The Sallis are working with the new outreach work at Nasouri, an outer suburb of Suva.





# Missions

## Story Telling as Mission

MIKE FOLLAND

**I**n Vanuatu the spoken word is more important than the written word, or even the electronic word. Almost all information is shared by word of mouth, rather than by print. This is the way chiefs, elders and parents have educated their children for centuries. As one who seeks to share the gospel within an oral culture, understanding the dynamics of story telling is vital. I see three main aspects to this.

**Writing yourself into the local story**  
Before someone can contribute within a new cultural setting, they need to be-

*The biggest breakthroughs came, however, after we had done something about which they told others.*

come a part of the local story. The first few months in Vanuatu were challenging for many reasons. Trying to communicate with a new language was a big part of that. However, what was harder was finding things to talk about. We were just not a part of their stories at first and we did not know theirs. Slowly we began learning who people were, whom they were married to and what village they were from. Then stories began to be shared about their daily lives, their relatives, their plans and their hopes. The biggest breakthroughs came, however, after we had done something about which they told others. Catching an extra-large fish, walking across the island to a remote village, entering a fun-run at the Independence Day celebrations, or eating a lot of the local food were just a few early examples. These incidents became part

of their local story and are often recounted. Now we had a common experience and the level of relationship deepened.

Writing yourself into the local story is critical. It cannot be an artificial procedure. Rather, it is a decision to become involved with people at their point of experience.

### **Interpreting the local stories**

Many early missionaries saw a clear distinction between their own culture and that of the people they came "to save". The first white missionary to Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides), John Geddie, wrote, "There is little about them to attract and much to repel. Their appearance is repulsive ... If ever such a people are raised from the depths of moral degradation into which they have sunk it is the gospel alone that can do it." (*Gospel and Culture in Vanuatu*, Randall Prior, 1998)

Appearance and dress, marriage and relationships, death and sickness, were all judged through Geddie's western cultural eyes—and devalued. There was little attempt, if any, to understand these cultural mores within their context. Geddie took the view (of his day), that the Gospel was against culture. The attempt to understand the Gospel within culture, or that as transformer of culture, views the local context with validity. Local stories are a part of this framework. Within the stories are found deep truths, values, ethics and meaning. By listening to the stories, respecting them, understanding them, and interpreting them, one can speak the Gospel.

### **Speaking the Gospel within the local story**

"The universal Word only speaks dialect". This means that to share the universal Word, in all its theological rich-



ness, we must understand the local dialect. We must know and participate within the local story and express the Word of life. We must be as salt within the communities. As we speak the Gospel within the local context, we both honour the present culture and seek to bring Christ's transforming presence. Sometimes this means challenging cultural attitudes that demean humanity or God's creation. At other times it means casting a new light upon established ideas. Wherever the light of the Gospel shines, it brings grace, healing and new growth.

It is no surprise to see that Jesus told stories and parables. Using the culture of his day, Jesus not only told stories that confronted, comforted and liberated, he wrote himself into the story of humanity in a brand new way. The story of salvation was a long and rich one already when Jesus joined the plot, yet the story has never been the same. The exciting thing is that Jesus has invited us to be a part of this story and to help involve new people join the journey. What role are you currently playing in this mission story?

Mike Folland is currently serving in Vanuatu under the auspices of the Overseas Mission Board



# Missions

## Why Cross-Cultural Mission

KEES RAVESTEYN

**G**od calls his people to fulfil his purposes. In fact whenever we pray our Lord's prayer and express our longing for God's Kingdom to be established, we really ask that his rule and authority be established over all creation. God's redemptive purpose is that this creation which is blighted by sin should be renewed.

*This mission is one that must never be engaged in paternalistically*

God intends that this purpose should be fulfilled by using his redeemed people, who have had an encounter with the risen, living Lord. He addresses us with a timeless commission: "Go therefore ...", the literal meaning here is "As you go ...". It is assumed that those who have met the living Christ will naturally want to share this wonderful "Good News".

In apostolic times the church grew because "followers of the way" were so full of joy, that each one gossiped the Gospel wherever they went. Note that as part of the Great Commission, Jesus sends his followers to the ends of the earth. Surely no clearer indication is needed that the Gospel is not the exclusive possession of one particular cultural group.

The question has often been asked whether we have the right to interfere in the lives of members of other cultures. Christians answer that we have a mandate from God, all are his people by creation and Christ died for the

whole world. Only when we go and tell the Good News can God's people accept Jesus by faith as their Lord and Saviour. However, our motivation for engaging in cross-cultural mission is not just that our Lord commanded us to do this, it is rather that his love that constrains us. We respond to his love by giving ourselves "as a living sacrifices", (Rom 12:1) out of gratitude for what he has done for us.

We must realise, however, that more is involved in taking the word of truth to the world than just saving souls. God is interested in all of life and wants to restore the dignity and wholeness of his image in the person.

Our mission, therefore, includes things like working to bring justice for the poor, exposing structural evil, helping to develop people's potential through activities like literacy programs, in which my wife and I are personally involved.

As followers of the Master, we don't engage in these good works as an end in themselves, but rather as an integral part of the Good News that we have the privilege to put into practice. This mission is one that must never be engaged in paternalistically, but rather in a way that brings wholeness, dignity and empowerment.

These principals are certainly utmost in our minds as we work towards enabling the target group in our area to become literate in their mother tongue, Rao. As a result, the way is now open for about 6000 Rao people to learn to read the Scriptures in their heart language, and rather than see their language replaced, to preserve it and their culture, group unity and sense of iden-



tity. To give the Rao people the opportunity to read and write their language, which makes them unique, is for us like bringing them greater wholeness and dignity in a way that will empower and enrich them. For the next few years this will be the special focus of our ministry in the Ramu area of PNG.

What is your mission? Is there something you can do to extend God's Kingdom that no one else can do? In John 20:21 Jesus says, "As the Father sent me into the world, so send I you." We need to follow his wholistic approach. He not only preached the good news, but also went about doing good.

This commission is not an option, it is for all of us, wherever we may be. He seeks faithfulness in being light and salt. Whether in the urban jungles of our cities or the tropical jungles of PNG, we are all called upon to be cross-cultural missionaries to a greater or lesser extent. Operating in the front line of Christian service can be costly, but faithful servants "count it all joy" because that is what God has called them to.

Kees and wife Pietsie are from the Noarlunga Centre Church of Christ, SA. They are literacy workers with the OMB based at Chungribu on the Ramu River, PNG.



# Star Wars: Forcing the Issue

NIGEL PEGRAM

**S**tar Wars, it's certainly a topic on many a reviewer's list at the moment. If you want a review of the movie itself, you can find it in many places, secular and religious, including two comments on "Shoot the Messenger" <[www.shootthemessenger.com.au](http://www.shootthemessenger.com.au)>. However, I'm using the froth and bubble surrounding the film's release to examine some of the wider issues of our approaches to our culture and our role within it.

There are those who believe that Christians should have nothing to do with *Star Wars*, some describ-

*Society has no obligation to listen to us, we have the obligation to communicate with them.*

ing it as "satanic", yet there are others who have no problem at all with it.

As you read the reviews in the current religious press, you'll find

the same sort of division. The recent review in the Sydney Anglican newspaper *Southern Cross* tries to be a bit of both, but essentially seems to view the movie with a fair degree of suspicion. For those of you on the web, a useful page to visit is "The Ultimate Force" by Alexander Wilson <<http://www.ashland.edu/~awilson/jc/jcsw.html>>.

Much of the problem people seem to have with the series is that while it may allude to Christian images or issues, it is not completely Christian. I agree! But what do you expect?

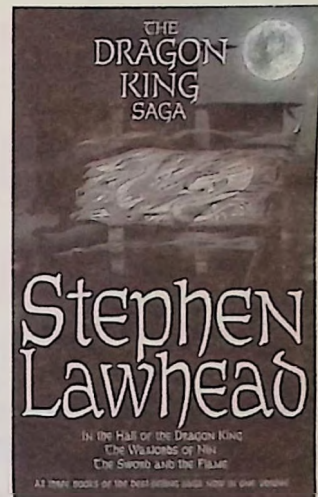
It is not written by a Christian, nor is it written for Christians or for Christian ends. But does that mean we should have nothing to do with it? No. Let me explain why I say this.

I believe very firmly that Christians will have nothing to say to our culture unless we first understand our culture and can speak in its terms. (This is a basic principle of overseas mission work that also needs to be a part of local mission work.) *Star Wars* has been such a phenomenon that some suggest it has shaped the thinking of a generation in the same way World War 2, Woodstock and JFK's assassination did

for an earlier generation. It is important to note that the very references to religious themes that some decry actually give us points of contact with our culture where we may talk in their terms (good and evil, dying for others).

To some extent, the cries that the film should be more "Christian" are based on the belief that our society is obligated to follow our values and traditions. This may have been so when the Emperor was a Christian some 1500 years ago, or when the church was a major focus in society some hundreds of years ago, but in our society we have to earn the right to be heard. We cannot just be yelling across the playground at others with whom we have no association that they shouldn't be naughty. Society has no obligation to listen to us, we have the obligation to communicate with them. A book came into our office for review that illustrates some of the points admirably.

Fantasy is an extremely popular and rapidly-growing area of fiction. Some have suggested this is because people want to escape from the real world for a while (for whatever reason). In this literature you often encounter worlds with gods, heroes, magic, monsters and quests. Instead of just abusing such literature as either sub- or non-Christian, Stephen Lawhead has written his own fantasy novels, recently released in a single volume. *The Dragon King Saga* is a good read (I had to fight my wife for it so I could finish it for review). It has mystery and suspense, the obligatory battle between good and evil, and the unlikely hero on a quest. What's different is that it is undoubtedly Christian (if you have eyes to see it). Yet, it does not bludgeon the reader with it. Jesus, the Bible, the cross and Easter do not get mentioned. What Lawhead does is



to take common fantasy themes and challenge them on their own ground. The multiplicity of gods are challenged by the power of the unnamed god who loves and is interested in his followers (something the capricious other gods are certainly not). The life of faith is presented honestly, including its struggles with doubt and constancy.

The result is that a non-believer is not assaulted with ideas and terms that are unfamiliar, nor are they told that they are evil, bad or stupid. They are taken from where they are on comfortable and familiar ground, to a place where they can see that there is a better possibility. Further, the earthiness of the life of a believer which is presented is much more beneficial than the triumphalist rubbish that leads some to fall away as soon as trouble strikes. In my opinion, if you're into science fiction or if you or your friends are into *Star Wars* (especially if they're not Christians), see the film. Even if you don't like it, you'll have something to talk about that concerns good and evil, and maybe even the virgin birth (if you don't understand what I mean, see the movie).

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

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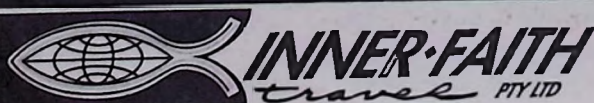
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# Thinking Biblically The Midst of Chaos

**WAYNE BETTS**

**J**ames 5:11b uses Job as an example of patience and perseverance. "The patience of Job" is proverbial. Yet when you read the book of Job, a rather feisty character emerges who hardly qualifies for the description "patient"! The first and last parts of Job are prose (1:1-2:13; 42:7-16), while the vast majority of the



*"Some help",  
you might be  
tempted to  
think.*

book is poetry. It's the prose sections which present the proverbial picture of Job's patience in suffering. Throughout the poetry, Job verbally wrestles with himself, his friends and God. He knows he has done nothing to deserve his lot and is not going to take it passively. Job is convinced that God is being unfair, and lets everyone know it! He even uses legal language to demand that God appear and defend himself.

Interestingly, Job's comforters provide all the "correct" theological answers to Job's predicament—exactly the kind of theology that is espoused in other books such as Proverbs: "You must have done something wrong", "God is wanting to teach you something through this", "This complaining is proof that you're proud—God must be trying to humble you". Job won't have a bar of it. He knows that God is the only one who can provide an answer and he won't give up until he gets it.

Well, God eventually appears, but doesn't answer Job's ques-

tions directly. Instead he gives Job a God's-eye perspective on creation. "Some help", you might be tempted to think. However, it's enough for Job. And, funnily enough, though Job "repents" (42:6) God says to Job's friends that Job has spoken of him what is right (42:7), in contrast to them. Can it be that Job's heart-wrenching struggle of faith is closer to God's heart than pious platitudes?

So what's Job about? First, it demonstrates that faith and patience are far more "gritty" than passively lying back and taking whatever life throws at us. Second, pious formulas don't always answer every situation. Finally, it reminds us that in the apparent chaos of life, we don't always get answers to our questions, but can, in the midst of the chaos, encounter the One who is The Answer. Strangely enough, like Job, that can be what we really need.

## Think

The future leaders of the new church will need above-average ability to communicate with the spoken word.

—Peter Corney



# Terrorising the Teletubbies

ADRIAN VAN LEEN

**F**ounder of the now defunct USA group, Moral Majority, conservative Baptist pastor, Jerry Falwell, has always sought publicity for his expressed views—but not a few Christians are wondering if Falwell's kind of publicity is what Christians re-

*This is the kind of extreme and flawed thinking that leads to Christians being ridiculed*

ally want or need.

Falwell has warned his followers to beware the evils of Teletubby, Tinky Winky! According to Falwell, poor little Tinky Winky was a homosexual, and was undermining children's morals through his TV appearances with the other Teletubbies!

Under the warning: "PARENTS ALERT ... PARENTS ALERT Tinky Winky Comes Out of the Closet", Falwell went on to state:

"The character, whose voice is obviously that of a boy, has been found carrying a red purse in many episodes and has become a favourite character among gay groups worldwide.

Now, further evidence that the creators of the series intend for Tinky Winky to be a

gay role model have surfaced. He is purple—the gay-pride colour; and his antenna is shaped like a triangle—the gay pride symbol."

Apparently it was news to most homosexual groups that Tinky Winky was the "favourite character among gay groups worldwide"—"a gay role model". It seems that, until Jerry Falwell made the news public most homosexuals had not been aware of it. Later it became a great joke for the general homosexual community to claim poor Tinky Winky as its own, thanks to Falwell.

Falwell claimed "evidence" of Tinky Winky's sexual preference because "He is purple—the gay-pride colour". Again this was news to the homosexual community which claims pink, not purple as its colour. Purple is also known as a "royal" colour and an ancient symbol of wealth. Does that mean, therefore, that poor Tinky Winky is actually a wealthy royal homosexual?

Falwell claimed further "evidence" for his contention on the basis that Tinky Winky "whose voice is obviously that of a boy [therefore he must be a male], has been found carrying a red purse". He argued that since no red-blooded American boy would be seen dead carrying a purse (especially a red one!), ipso facto Tinky Winky is homosexual! Of course, Tinky Winky and the other Teletubbies

(bright red, yellow, and green—all attractive good children's fun colours) are aimed at very young children. Child-care workers and kindergarten teachers all know that little children like carrying handbags and putting things into them (as Tinky Winky does), and given a choice they would select bright colours such as red, purple, green and yellow.

Tinky Winky and the other Teletubbies come from Britain and the European context—not the USA or Australia. In Europe it is not uncommon for men to carry large purses with hand straps, or even masculine shoulder bags. Most of these men would definitely not be homosexuals. (In Burma and other parts of Asia, where men don't have trousers or clothing with pockets, shoulder bags are very common. Furthermore, among Indian men (even policemen) it is common for them to walk along the street holding hands, and it definitely does not mean they are homosexuals!) It can be so convenient to be ignorant of cultural differences in order to push certain hobby horses! In addition, other "evidence" for Falwell that poor little Tinky Winky is a homosexual is that "his antenna is shaped like a triangle—the gay pride symbol"—but the homosexual symbol is a pink triangle patch, not an empty purple wire triangle. Of course, triangles have been significant symbols for many groups and religions, including Christianity, symbolising

the Trinity. One wonders what Jerry Falwell could do with the other three Teletubbies' head-gear of a twisty, a circle, and a straight antenna.

In spite of lacking any real support or evidence for his claims, Falwell declared: "These subtle depictions are no doubt intentional and parents are warned to be alert to these elements of the series."

This is the kind of extreme and flawed thinking that leads to Christians being ridiculed and receiving unwanted publicity. The vast majority of thinking adults, including Christians, would regard Falwell's claims as reading into something what cannot be supported by evidence and reasoning, but accepted on the basis of emotional appeal. Some would regard such comments as Falwell's as inappropriate ranting and raving.

While many children in Britain, Australia, Singapore, the USA and elsewhere love the Teletubbies, there are some adults who don't like the Teletubbies—because of their lack of proper speech and other child developmental concerns—not because of colours and shapes that can be interpreted as wrong or dangerous by people who want to read evil into everything they don't like. Adrian van Leen is Director of Concerned Christians Growth Ministries Inc. Article first published in "Take a Closer Look", March–April 1999, used with permission.

teletubbies



## CHANGES

**HOWRAH, Tas**—Church telephone (03) 6247 8713. All correspondence to the Elders.

**CLUN, Louis**—48 Church Street, North Hobart Tas 7000. Phone (03) 6234 8281.

## BAPTISMS

•Sarah Bourke, Janis Bourke, Suzanne Geard, Heather Smith, Sue Vincent, Hobart City, Tas •Jeff Finger, Julian Finger, Matthew Halls, John Rochford, Warragul, Vic •Luke Shippen, Magill, SA •Katelyn Savill, Leis Deuble, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld •Michelle Dunkley, Beth Holden, Kate Giddings, Mildura, Vic •David Maru, Roxburgh Park, Vic

## MARRIAGES

•Jackie Grantham and Andrew Eldridge, Happy Valley, SA •Laura Harris and Tim Cannon, Warragul, Vic •Clarissa Johnson and Andrew Leach, East Keilor, Vic •Rosita Otto and Adam Hardy, Janelle Sperling and Damian Byrne, Tracey Scott and Philip Eastment, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld •Merryn Beasy and David Cox, Mildura, Vic

## DEATHS

•Judy Digance, Happy Valley, SA •Ada Caddy, Fremantle, WA •David Fife Allan, Dalby, Qld •Maggie Mok, Hobart City, Tas •Neil Hutton, Essendon, Vic •Dennis Haseldine, Magill, SA •Annie Grylls, Swan Hill, Vic

## OBITUARIES

**Obituaries are limited to 100 words**  
**HUTTON, Robert Neil**  
(31.5.99) Neil will be remembered, particularly by members of the Essendon, Vic, church, as a man with a ready smile. A faithful member and worker, and a blessing to all, he and Gwen (Kemp) were married in the Essendon church 54 years ago. He served the church as Sunday School teacher, secretary, treasurer and elder over many years, and was honoured as elder emeritus. For almost twenty years Neil gave voluntary service to the Anti-Cancer Council. To Gwen, their daughter Barbara and her family loving sympathy is expressed. The Essendon church was filled for a thanksgiving service 2 June, conducted by the writer, Paul Kingston, Essendon minister, and Ross Bourdon.

—Bruce Alcorn

## QLD

**DALBY (Tony Ochse)** Helpful budgeting workshop by Rick Whittle ... Ed Nash, Barry Miller & Rick Whittle speakers during minister's holidays ... CWM dinner raised \$129 for Bibles for Peru. Steve Davies (Bible Society) speaker at dinner & also on Sunday ... Men's ministry fishing trip to Fraser Island enjoyed ... Church family "Farewell to the Farm" BBQ held at Miller's farm, which has been sold.

**TWYFORD ST, BUNDABERG (Bruce Roberts)** Wonderful youth service at which Lars Johnston (Katrina & Steve) dedicated. Kenton Erb featured on keyboard, Kellie Bignill soloist & Shane Foley speaker ... Elder Shane Foley resigned due to work & family commitments ... Damaskus (Youth for Christ) visited ... QCWM presidential visit by Lyn Parry & Bev Grenfell ... Son Hayden for Michelle Robinson ... Coral Knights visited central region churches & Emu Park retreat as women's representative

**HUME ST, TOOWOOMBA (Dale White, Ross Savill, Darren Robinson)** New ministry SMASH (Singles, Marrieds & Still Hopefuls) commenced in April ... 160 youth involved in weekly Friday night youth programs ... Coffee Shop held with band "Jeremiah" ... Morning services averaging nearly 500 in attendance this year ... Vision seminar & elders retreat held ... Mission statement developed & presented to congregation ... Evening for Christian Health Care workers held with Dr Arul Ankatel from Sri Lanka.

## SA

**HAPPY VALLEY (Andrew Ratcliff)** Church AGM held 3 May. New elders elected—Juanita McCallum & Ray Rawlings ... Church supporting George, Margaret & Bianca Digance since death of their daughter & mother, & also Sharon Patrick since her mother's death ... Food donations given on first Sunday of every month for Community Care ... Mark Riessen & Fiona

Goodwin entered Mulgrave college this year.

**MILE END (Barry Benz)** 3 members of Russian family, new to Australia, confessed faith & baptised. Witnessed by parents, grandmother & great-grandmother during service ... A further street prayed for & visited with offers of help, literature & Jesus videos ... Church members participated in small-group leadership-training seminar conducted by Graham Wheat ... Ladies' singing group & band contributing to morning worship.

**MAGILL (Keith Ridge)** Pentecost Sunday celebrations led by "New Connections" (am service) & "Steppin' Out" (pm service) ... FAB visit by Len Wallam & Avon Moyle. Reconciliation focus included ... Quilting & patchwork group formed ... 5 Bible study groups commenced ... Ron Holmes led pastoral care sessions ... Church shocked by sudden death of Dennis Haseldine ... Marj Dredge spoke on WCCC & received church square for Convention wall hanging ... Youth work growing under leadership of Leigh Cunningham.

## TAS

**HOBART CITY (Clinton Wardle, Andrew Tonkin)** 5 baptisms recent months ... Numbers jumped again both services ... Mother's Day speaker Ann Foot excellent ... Church involved Doulos visit. Several OCF Uni students port helpers ... State women's camp great ... Open membership vote passed almost unanimously ... Budget \$2760 passed ... Elders working toward new vision ... Young people on fire for God. Easter camp, "The Factory" Launceston, & Youth Alive Burnie, excellent.

## VIC

**MONTROSE (Harvey Clark)** Wonderful service when Montrose Uniting joined us to celebrate Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ... Ladies busy recently catering for Conference Mission

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# Church News

Summit & other functions, raising approx \$1,900 ... Hymn singing & morning teas with intellectually disabled growing. 18 friends & carers from surrounding areas joining us monthly ... Members voted in new constitution ... Ministry team from BCV shared items, testimonies & interviews.

**ESSENDON** (Paul Kingston) Cool Yule Dinner 19 June, Essendon, North Essendon & Strathmore participated. \$600 presented for Romanus Mphandi Mission ... Don Ferguson in Fred Cambridge House ... Large crowd attended thanksgiving service for elder emeritus Neil Hutton.

**PYRAMID HILL** (Bill Sharrock) Church AGM held recently. New chairman Paul Parry, secretary June Smith & treasurer John Searle ... Joint worship service held at Durham Ox with Boort & Pyramid Hill churches meeting together. A large complement of talented musicians made worship very meaningful. Combined lunch followed ...

Country Gospel afternoon held on 27 June at Durham Ox enjoyed by all.

**WARRAGUL** (Bill Vassiliou, Anne Prime) Gandep Work Party—Ray Earl, Ben & Bruce Harris, Allen Ronalds, Robert Wreith & Ben Richards (Hartwell) leave 26 June for PNG ... Successful Gippsland Gathering. Presidents' reception held at Warragul ... 161 witness baptism of four young men at recent worship service ... Successful Alpha dinner held at conclusion of first Alpha course. Another course due to start soon.

**HORSHAM** (Julie Trinnick, Rod Morse) Rod & Maureen Morse welcomed to interim ministry ... Country Women's Association held church parade ... Youth Alpha course under way ... Quarterly pleasant Thursday musical afternoons attracting good community support ... OAC cooperating with 5 Horsham churches, conducted meetings for children, youth, men, women, seniors, schools & home

groups over 2 weeks. Much appreciated ... Music-worship seminar conducted by Chris Sharpe.

**SWAN HILL** (Roger Risson) Church supported World Vision 40 hour famine & Kosovo crisis ... Minister attended training day on "How to Drug-Proof Your Kids", prior to conducting a seminar in July ... Annie Grylls passed away 6 June ... Church family camp, Halls Gap 11-14 June. Guest leader Gil Cann encouraged us to see our work-school-home as a place of ministry.

**MILDURA** (Simon Risson) Paul Hammat to commence in team ministry in 2000 ... "Dare to Dream" stewardship program culminated in a celebration dinner & thanksgiving service ... 2 successful cabaret worship services held ... 50 youth & leaders participated in State Youth Games ... Doug & Alys Beasy commissioned for forthcoming term as Rotary District Governor.

held. For winter, OASIS will have monthly "Movie Madness" days ... 5 members attended Worship Summit '99 ... Alpha is finished & starting again ... 40 young people attended State Youth Games ... Youth service saw many young people coming forward for prayer & commitment.

**FREMANTLE** (Garry Cowley, Bob Fairman) Joyous congratulations to mark 100th birthday of Mabel Pilling. A week of celebrations ended with huge surprise party & being featured in Channel 7 News ... Pastor Garry & wife Cynthia settling in well. Garry looking forward to extending outreach of church ... Saddened by death of Ada Caddy, active member for 54 years, also earlier member Nola Lindsay (Whelan).

**EASTERN HILLS-MT HELENA** (Errol Kirk) Beatrice Noble, Jan & Phil Bailey & Noeline Barnsley welcomed into fellowship ... Properties Board purchased property in Stoneville for future outreach in area. Pastor Errol & Coral Kirk moved into manse on property. Dedication function held 26 June ... Boys' Brigade under Capt Charles Lithgow tripled numbers. Girls' Brigade under Capt Christine Farr has 22 girls. Kids Club, Sunday School & youth groups in healthy state.

## WA

**NORTHAM** (Jason Hemsley) After over 50 years in fellowship in Northam, Claude & Mollie Roediger have moved to Safety Bay ... OASIS Celebration

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# Exploring the Day On My Knees

JANET THOMPSON

I kept on thinking about prayer after writing last month's column, and I found that an illustration from a favourite children's book kept popping into my head. You probably remember the same one.

The picture of Christopher Robin kneeling by his bed is still the image many of us have of prayer ... the last moments of the day, when we are freshly-washed, comfortably-sleepy, and about to commit ourselves to the Sandman's tender ministrations ... and the doubtful safety of our dreams. A last goodbye ... and please watch over me until I can take charge of my life again in the morning. Zzzzzz...!

Kneeling (preferably on a cosy bedside mat) with folded hands is touching, innocent and nostalgic. Childhood memories may surround the picture, but it's not very realistic.

How long is it since you actually did it? Within our churches it is not standard practice to kneel for prayer, and some of us tend to feel a bit awkward about doing it that way.

But physical position can help to shape our thoughts and our feelings. I used to make a point of kneeling by my bed occasionally, long after my childhood had departed, just to reestablish the peculiar emphasis on physical obeisance that is only found when I am in a vulnerable position.

My thoughts are focused by the touch of tradition, the limited view, and the minor discomfort. (It's a major discomfort now,

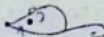


and counter-productive, so I don't do it—but it does help me if I remember the feeling.)

Do we make it clear that kneeling in spirit is also a reality? Disabled people don't have a lot of choice.

One of my favourite prayer times is when I am hanging the clothes on the line. Just imagine if I had to do it on my knees! Prayer happens when mind, soul and spirit reach out to God. Jesus didn't always kneel to pray. It's the same as the conversational prayer I talked about last month—there are no rules.

But I can't help wondering what would have happened in my cell group if I had suggested that we all kneel down for our prayer time instead of sitting around the breakfast table. It does make you think!



## The Last Word

**No human being can reach you where it really matters.**

*Do I have a good memory? I even remind elephants.*

*I'll say he's old! At his last birthday, the candles cost more than the cake.*

*King Midas had a guilt complex.*

*Words of Wisdom  
I don't have an attitude problem.  
You have a perception problem.*

*I'd explain it to you, but your brain would explode.*

*My school was so tough, the school magazine had an obituary column.*

*I hated my maths teacher. He did everything to embarrass me. One day he even asked me to count to ten—from memory!*

*Dad, can I have an encyclopedia? Certainly not. You can walk to school like all the other kids.*

*Secrets are things we give to others to keep for us.*

## Late News

### Tanna, Vanuatu, Report

Church planters David and Marilyn Bule at Middle Bush on Vanuatu island of Tanna, where there is an active volcano, report good response in an isolated tough-going situation, amid people with a primitive lifestyle, ancestor customs and strong John Frum movement cargo cult. Prayer requested.

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