

THE AUSTRALIAN

# Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 102 No. 17, 6 October 1999

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*Witness*  
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# Editorial

## Passionate Ministry

DON SMITH

If I had to select some books to take to the proverbial desert island, I long ago decided I would include Karl Barth's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Why? Because Barth's robustness stimulates me about the Gospel which Barth says must ever be received with "renewed fear and trembling". Paul is no gentleman scholar, but one seized with passionate energy for the missionary task. I like that as a minister because Paul's energy, passion and view of the Gospel is what sustains and encourages me about the task of ministry. \* Hans Küng,



another passionate scholar, warns that the church can become a prisoner of the image it makes for itself at particular points in history. It is like that with ministry too. Pastoral and teaching images are basic within the life of the established congregation. These can however become so comfortable for the congregation or indeed Conferences that differing images become uncomfortable. \* The evangelistic, prophetic and apostolic images are equally valid. The future missional church must see all five functions as interdependent. We must go well beyond mere recognition of these three values by welcoming, affirming and encouraging their development in our midst. \* It is always useful to move beyond familiar surroundings to see a wider picture. One of the learning experiences of my participation in the recent UK Summit visit was to see the fruitful outworking of these concepts in some significant congregations. \* Readers will note the news item in this issue of the enthusiastic reception by the National Council of Churches of Christ of the Birmingham Summit report. Included among important recommendations were issues relating to ministry and training. \* The recommendations are far reaching, with important implications for future training objectives. Our training bodies, together with state and national representatives, endorsed a process of review into all aspects of future training. The goal is to equip ministers for leadership in a truly missional church. \* New models of training, leadership development and reskilling are among the numerous recommendations adopted. 9.9.99 was a great day for the future of ministry in our Australian church. There is a big task ahead as we rethink the implications of the everlasting Gospel we receive with "renewed fear and trembling". \*

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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.**

of the whole world". For indeed, as Paul says in 2 Cor 5:19, "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them".

—David Allison  
(Cheltenham, Vic)

## Church Planting

To the Editor,  
In the "AC" issue of 7 July it was announced that "four new church plants" are under consideration. While we are congratulating ourselves that the rate "is far beyond anything previously experienced this century", we might take a closer look at church planting. Since 1990, some twenty churches have been admitted to the Vic-Tas Conference. Of these, three do not now appear in the 1999 report, and seven report less than 40 members. If we take out five rural churches, which could be considered acceptable, we are left with around twelve.

Our membership in Victoria from 1990 to 1998 has grown by only 46 in nine years. If the staffing and resources expended in church planting had been directed to building up churches adjacent to the plants, we would surely have produced a better result.

In these days when we all travel in cars, a few extra kilometres is not troublesome, and a larger church should result in better worship quality and teaching. Church planting also says something about our commitment to church unity, when we compete with established Christian communities.


—Max Collyer  
(Boronia, Vic)

## The New Must Replace the Old

In response to Roland Wilkie ("AC" 11.8.99), I read the early OT books not as "fables" but as "contrived" writings which aimed to unite disparate Israeli tribes. Hence the claim to be "chosen". But being of "a New Testament" body of Churches I am guided by, for example, Jesus' reply to Philip who asked to see the Father (John 14:9). "He who has seen me has seen the Father." And by John 1:18, "No one has ever seen God; the only son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known"; and verse 17: "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Also: Matt 5:38-48 and Luke 6:36.

Surely from their actions, Moses and David equate with Hitler and Stalin and that ilk. And surely we know Jesus would never have advised the former two to carry out the shameful acts of cruelty in Numbers 31 (Moses) and 1 Sam 27:8-12 and 2 Sam 8:2 (David).

In closing I offer this: "The Old Testament presents God as the killer of multitudes for the sake of one nation; the New Testament presents God, in Christ, allowing himself to be killed for the sake

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## Update

Dear Readers,

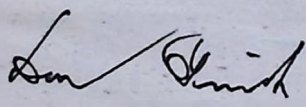
This issue includes our first reports on outcomes from the International Mission Summit held in Birmingham, UK, in July. Further comment will follow now that the report from the task group has been adopted by National Council.

In the last issue we invited brief comments from churches regarding their experiences with Alpha Courses. An issue on this topic is planned for 2000. We look forward to brief reports of your experiences so that we can select from among the material. No articles are required at this stage.

We have introduced the possibility of photos in the classified advertisement section. Rates are available on application. We are currently experiencing heavy demand for advertising space. Early planning with us helps. Your enquires are invited. Special discounts apply to church and Conference-related work and for regular advertisers. Readers will note the great response by the Castle Hill, NSW church for new subscriber enlistment. Sample copies of the paper can be supplied for promotional purposes. We encourage you as a reader to introduce someone in your church to the paper. Special introductory rates apply for new readers. It is also possible to take out a three-issue trial subscription. Melbourne readers report the late arrival of the last two issues. Australia Post advises this is due to reorganisation of arrangements with mail centres. Hopefully this matter will

be corrected. Comments on East Timor as noted in the last issue have been held over for a later issue. We currently have a large amount of news-report copy on hand which it is not possible to include in this current issue. Items will be dealt with as soon as practicable.

Finally, readers will note the invitation in this issue to assist with a gift towards the future development of our work. This is a very real issue as we try to build for the future. Your support will be greatly appreciated.



## Calendar Photographs Wanted



The National Literature Department invites the submission of colour slides for possible inclusion in the very popular Churches of Christ Calendar for 2001.

Photographs are needed from all states and territories of Australia, and from PNG and Vanuatu.

Criteria for selection include photographic excellence, variety of subject matter and the church year.

(Please include location of scenes.)

Forward to: National Literature Department  
PO Box 101  
Essendon North Vic 3041  
by 31 December 1999.



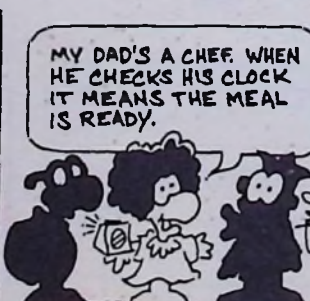
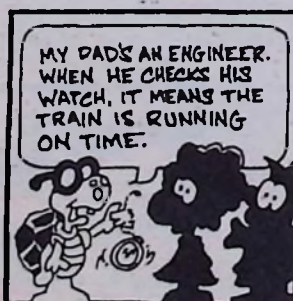
## Help Make the News!

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

—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

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

## Pontius' Puddle



## Competition Winner

**National logo competition winner selected.**



David Gollash, is a young married man from Canberra, who attends a Lutheran church. His design was selected as the winner for the national Churches of Christ logo competition from a very large range of designs submitted.

As to the concept behind the design, David says:

"I have made a stylised map of Australia to represent the Churches of Christ in Australia, but if you look closely the circle at the top of Australia is actually representative of God's head and the east and west coasts are his arms that are holding the world

in his hands. It's quite symbolic in that you can't always see God but you know he is there. This logo is quite modern and representative of what a lot of designers are doing now."

It may be used in colour, black and white, with text or without, with border or without.

National Council is interested in finding out what people think of the new logo.

Please send your comments to Robert Smith, National Coordinator, Churches of Christ in Australia, PO Box 55, HELENSBURGH NSW 2508.

### Cheshunt Christian Camp

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## Tassie Trek 2000

**A blast from the past**

One of the Churches of Christ's best-kept secrets is celebrating its 30th birthday this year: the Adventure Committee of the Vic-Tas Conference.

In 1969 Les Stewart led the first Adventure Committee Trek, which took over 60 young people through Tasmania's Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park.

Since then, hundreds of camps, activities and treks have been organised by the Adventure Committee, which has expert leaders in skiing, canoeing, rafting, rock climbing, abseiling and bike riding, as well as walking.

A recurring theme in the history of the Committee is the Tassie Trek.

Since the original 1969 expedition, seven further walks have been conducted through Cradle Mountain, while three treks have been completed through the nearby Walls of Jerusalem National Park.

For the more adventurous, the Committee has organised three walks through the Western Arthurs in south-west Tasmania, which is one of the toughest walks in Australia.

Les Stewart estimates that at least 500 people of all ages have trekked in Tasmania under the auspices of the Adventure Committee—and

Les re-

members most of them too! One of his enduring memories is sitting with a small group beside Square Lake with a perfect reflection of the peak above, quietly worshipping. Les knows many participants who have gone on to walk more closely and strongly with the Lord as a result of their Tassie Trek experiences.

In its 30th anniversary year, the Adventure Committee is now planning "Tassie Trek 2000", to take place 6–15 January 2000. Participants will choose between the famous Cradle Mountain "Overland Track" and the beautiful "Walls of Jerusalem" trail nearby. The two groups of walkers will converge north of Lake St Clair and complete the last stretch of the trail together. (For details, see advert on page xxx.)

Trek organiser, Graeme Woodhart, is looking forward to his sixth walking trip to Tasmania. Why does he keep going back? "It is just an incredible place to walk", he says.

For Graeme, climbing mountains is "very worthwhile when one can see the fabulous views of all the surrounding peaks and reflect on God's awesome creation".

No doubt hundreds of other Tassie Trek veterans would agree.

—Leanne Handasyde



*Mt Ossa, one of the magnificent Tassie Trek sights*

## Enfield Heights

**Celebrating 50 years**



*Founded in 1949, the current members of the Enfield Heights, SA church are looking forward to their 50th anniversary in November. The church has passed through the various stages of development, from a thriving children's and youth work, to what is now an older community. A coffee shop drop-in centre has been a part of later initiatives. "Some Things Never Change" will be the anniversary theme.*

### Is God Calling you to Merredin?

The Merredin Church of Christ, WA, is seeking a Bible-believing pastor. The congregation is a "vibrant diversity", having 28 members and 22 Christians who worship with us. We have a youth group, Sunday school and creche, Bible studies and prayer meetings.

If you have a sense that the Lord is calling you to this congregation, please write to Mrs Gloria Banks, PO Box 122, Merredin WA 6415, or phone (08) 9041 1230 for further details.

### Northcote Church of Christ Celebrating our Anniversary Home Coming

Services 10.00 am, Sunday 24 October  
(followed by luncheon—bring any old photos)

**Final church services at Northcote**  
10.00 am, Sunday 31 October.  
All past members and friends welcome.

As from Sunday 7 November, the churches of West Preston, Preston, Ivanhoe and Northcote will meet in the Northcote chapel as the Northern Community Church of Christ. Information and reply for luncheon, Pat Gluyas (03) 9460 3629 or (03) 9470 4846, or Joyce Huggan (03) 9489 8746.

## Dealing with Change

**Marion, SA, asks what is its purpose**

Over the last twelve months Marion, SA, church has experienced a number of changes; the conclusion of Graham Agnew's ministry after seventeen diligent years being the most prominent. To its credit, the Marion leadership has put these changes into perspective. They have not only seen change as a reality of life, they have also recognised the needs and challenges that lay ahead for the congregation. In recent months, the leadership has been proactive in ascertaining the church's identity and future direction with the same question being constantly asked: "What is Marion's purpose?"

A consensus around this question has placed worship, discipleship, evangelism and pastoral care as the four core values and areas of ministry. The leadership has also seen the need for Marion to progressively work at being both a local and regional-based community church. This challenge entails providing adequate ministry and services not only for people within the Marion municipality, but also for those who reside in Adelaide's southern suburbs.



*Ian Docker*

Marion's biggest challenge is to provide a relevant Christian community for everyone. Though the leaders recognise the validity of "if you try to please everyone you'll please none", they strongly believe that God is calling the church to be a community made up of people of various age groups and social backgrounds. Marion's challenge isn't simply to be "flexible" or "tolerant", it is to be a loving and gracious church.

There are changes happening at Marion church. This year and beyond will see a new-look ministry team and ministry format. Nevertheless the same time-tested Christian virtues and principles of love, grace, humility and service will still apply. —Ian Docker

### Church of Christ, Brighton 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Sunday, 21 November 1999

Guest speaker: Ian Allsop

"Thanksgiving for the past—Let's celebrate the future!"

Worship and Communion	10.00 am
Lunch	12.00 noon

Anyone intending to stay to lunch must advise us no later than 7 November.

Contact: Mrs Clare Skeat, 11 Durrant St, Brighton Vic 3186.  
Phone (03) 9592 6414.

## New NSW Subscribers

Ten folk sign up at Castle Hill

Stephen Kearns, a minister of the Castle Hill, NSW church, signed up as a new subscriber to *The Australian Christian* during a visit to the church by the Editor, Don Smith, and Tom Glynn, NSW Board representative. Stephen (right), pictured here with Don Smith, was one of the ten new subscribers that day. More new readers are anticipated from the church. If your church would like a visit from one of our representatives, please contact our office.



## What do you say when ... ?

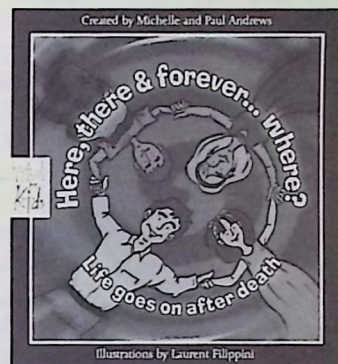
A matter of life after death

What do you say to a child when someone they love has died?

It's difficult enough for us to cope with our own pain, so finding words to explain the loss to our children can be doubly hard. Michelle and Paul Andrews recognised the difficulties for families when they had to tackle the subject with their own small children. Their new book from Vital Publications *Here, there and forever... where?* has been written out of that experience.

The book—the third in a series of Christian children's books produced by the couple—brings together Paul's graphic design skills, Michelle's talents as a primary teacher and the talent of illustrator Laurent Filippini. It was recently awarded a Commendation in the "Children's Book of the Year" category at the Australian Christian Literature Society's Christian Book of the Year Awards.

"The book is designed to bring up issues which can be difficult for children to identify and deal with on their own," Michelle explains. "By looking at death through the eyes of a child, it deals with the inevitable sadness and grief, while also introducing positive themes



such as life after death in Heaven and the legacies like happy memories which are left behind for us to enjoy."

While written in a Christian context, the book avoids religious language and imagery, dealing more with the process of saying goodbye, and recognising the contribution of their loved one to their own lives, and the lives of others.

"For us, death isn't the end," adds Paul, "there is a celebration and a 'passing on' of life which continues after death."

The book may be purchased from Vital Publications, for \$5.95 (plus \$1.00 p&h). Write to PO Box 101, Essendon North Vic 3041. Phone (03) 9379 1219. Fax (03) 9379 0015. E-mail <vitalpubs@churchesofchrist.org.au>.

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## Time Out

**Launceston adds minister to build on creative outreach**



As we moved closer to 10.00 am the sense of excitement grew. First would be a full-blown trial of our new seeker-oriented service called "Time Out". Next would be a time of worship and communion followed by the induction of Launceston, Tas's, newest minister, Mrs Ann Fair. This was to be followed up with a question and answer time to continue the repeated vision casting as to why we would do a church service that looks like nothing most of us are used to.

The Time Out team did a great job of presenting what God has to say about our priorities and getting things done in this over-paced lifestyle that most of us are caught up in. Vocal items, instrumentals, drama and the multi-media featuring Mr Bean getting dressed while driving his car certainly gave us all something to think about.

I must say that I was more than a bit nervous trying to speak to a predominantly Christian, educated congregation as if they knew nothing. Not to mention eliminating all the Christianese from the talk. (Seeker word for sermon.)

Paul Cameron did a great job of Ann's induction. She had many family and friends attend. Even

her 94 year old grandmother who flew in from Adelaide caught the last half of it. Ann has been employed part-time to produce "Time Out" and facilitate the building and care of the creative arts teams.

Continuing where the morning left off, we had a packed night service with Paul Cameron guest speaker. Paul is not often speechless, but the doctored up version of the Richmond (AFL) theme song performed by the big band and choir did set him back. [Paul is Richmond's chaplain. —Ed]

For the first time in our history over 1000 adults and children enjoyed a variety of worship experiences during the day. Even more exciting, over 60 adults attended our church for the first time.

We are sure that as we began a new chapter in Launceston on 19 September that God was more than with us. He is behind, ahead and alongside us. We look forward to the adventure with him continuing. —Craig Spaulding

## NSW Ministers' Wives Retreat

**Foot baths, neck massages, romantic videos! What more could you want?**

We had a really inspiring communion service and great speakers as well. All this and more at our weekend away at Stanwell Tops, NSW, 23-25 July. Over the weekend three of the women shared some of their life stories and faith experiences. Jan Holt, speaking on "God the Defender and Deliverer", challenged us to consider our "life's picture". Sometimes the picture needs to be put back into perspective, then restored, reframed, retimed and revered. Jenni Gainer inspired us with her topic, "God the Creator". Jo-Anne Berthelsen reminded us of "God the Comforter and Empowerer". She suggested that as well as ministering to others in the church, we should accept their love and help and also allow them to minister to us.

Another highlight was having time to spend alone with God with the focus on "Growing by Know-



ing God". A great innovation was to have prayer intercessors available all weekend.

Many more attended than last year, due in large part to the enthusiasm and excellent organisation of Melissa Adamson and Christy Parker.

### New Zealand Tour — 2000 — 19 Days Departing 3 March, returning 21 March, 2000.

Travel with the Australian Christian Touring Party in association with Kirra Tours and enjoy a comprehensive coverage of both Islands of New Zealand, including the Bay of Islands, Auckland, Waitomo Caves, Rotorua's thermal area, Maori concert, Wellington, Marlborough Sounds, Franz and Fox Glaciers, Queenstown, Milford Sound, Mt Cook, Christchurch. The world in a nutshell—South Pacific paradise, high-class accommodation with private facilities, all dinners and breakfasts included.

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### Here and There Church in China Grows

The Reverend Deci Su, principal of the East China Theological seminary in Shanghai and the general secretary of the China Christian Council, claims that the Protestant church in China is among the fastest-growing churches in the world. It has somewhere between ten and twelve million members, 17 times more than it had five decades ago. The greatest need in the Chinese church is leadership. There are about 1,600 ordained clergy for almost 12 million Christians.

MARC Newsletter

## Listen to the Spirit

**Mission report enthusiastically endorsed by National Council**



*Mission Summit team and representatives. (l-r) Don Smith, Lynette Leach, Milton Oliver, John Gilmore, Keith Farmer, Barry Ryall, John Bond, Bob Smith*

Around 40 key leaders from each state conference, national agency and several state agencies met with members of the National Council of Churches of Christ in Australia at Stanwell Tops, NSW, in September.

The first day of the Consultation 9.9.99 was given over to the International Strategic Mission Task Group (ISMTG).

This is a group of people chosen at last year's International Summit on Mission entrusted with carrying through the decision of the Summit to pursue the process of seeing Churches of Christ redefine itself as a truly missional church.

The one thing that the members of the ISMTG were not prepared for was the overwhelmingly enthusiastic response of the participants in the National Consultation.

One member of the ISMTG reported that she felt that the Consultation participants were actually pushing the ISMTG to lift its

sights even higher, rather than vice versa.

The Consultation accepted all the recommendations of the ISMTG report and referred them to the National Council for confirmation. National Council, having done this, then asked the ISMTG to continue to meet in order to flesh out the recommendations and bring an action plan to its next meeting in February 2000.

It is difficult to convey the feeling of a meeting by means of a report like this.

However, the overwhelming impression of those present at the end of the day was that something very important had happened and that we were witnessing an unprecedented spirit of unity from every part of our national family of churches, centred in our common commitment to pray for and be what we have always said we want to be—a movement for mission.

—Bob Smith  
(National Coordinator)

## New Church in the Making

**Melbourne's north gets it all together**

Four of Melbourne's north suburban churches—Ivanhoe, Northcote, Preston & West Preston—are combining to become the Northern Community Church of Christ.

The new church will hold its first official worship service and annual meeting at 10.00 am on Sunday, 7 November. The Northcote Church of Christ will be their base until a more permanent worship centre is found somewhere in the northern suburbs.

The properties of the four churches will eventually be sold. Mid-week activities will continue to be held in those buildings until that time.

The new church has much pleasure in announcing the appointment of Phil McCredden (presently with the Doncaster, Vic, church) as its ministry team leader. Phil is expected to take up his position early in the year 2000.



The combined congregations are excited about the new venture. A great deal of work over the past three years has gone into bringing the four churches to this point. Their vision has unlimited potential for witness in Melbourne's northern suburbs.

The individual churches have planned services to celebrate the past and to prepare for the formal movement into the new church on 7 November. See the advert on page 10 for details.

## Senior Pastor Role in WA

The Nollamara Church of Christ is seeking applications from ministers in the 30-45 age group, who will be able to provide visionary leadership to the church from early in 2000 onwards.

The church has had a vital ministry over 40 years and is entering a growth phase, with an increase in young families. The person we seek will be able to relate cross-generationally.

Nollamara is a suburb north-east of Perth, approximately 10 km from the city. The morning congregation averages about 100 people in worship each week, with about 60% participating in home groups and has a long-term proven commitment to missionary support.

For a profile of the church please contact:

Mr D.G. Parker  
24 April Rd, Dianella WA 6059.  
Phone (08) 9349 4402.

Written applications, including a resume and referees, should be forwarded by 15 October 1999. All inquiries will be received in the strictest confidence.

## THE ISRAEL/JORDAN AND OBERAMMERGAU EXPERIENCE TOUR

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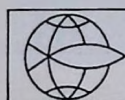
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## Northern Community Church of Christ Final Celebration Services

The participating churches in the Northern Community Church of Christ, Vic, are planning the following celebration services:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Ivanhoe      | 10.30 am, Sunday, 31 October 1999<br>Celebration Service: Speaker—Alan Niven<br>Contact Ian Rumble on (03) 9499 2884.                                      |
| Northeote    | 10.00 am, Sunday, 24 October 1999<br>Homecoming Service<br>10.00 am, Sunday, 31 October 1999<br>Final Service<br>Contact Neil Ratcliffe on (03) 9470 6938. |
| Preston      | 10.00 am, Sunday, 24 October 1999<br>"Back to Preston"<br>10.00 am, Sunday, 31 October 1999<br>Final Service<br>Contact Nancy Garth on (03) 9478 0409.     |
| West Preston | 10.00 am, Sunday, 31 October 1999<br>"Celebration of West Preston"<br>Contact Bob Robb on (03) 9478 1531.  |

Past members of these four churches are  
invited to attend these final meetings.

We invite everyone to pray for the Holy Spirit's  
continued involvement in this new church.

## Associate Pastor

Annesbrook Church is a church with a calling and a will to reach the City of Nelson for Jesus. We currently meet in a local school hall and have attendances totalling 450 to 500 at our Sunday Services, and have a vision for 1,000 committed members in 3 years. We have a building program with a first stage that should see us moving into a \$1.5m complex in the third quarter of next year.

Our current staff includes Senior Pastor, Youth Pastor, Children's Pastor, Administrator, Receptionist, and Community Counsellor.

We invite applications for the position of Associate Pastor. This position requires a person of appropriate ability and experience to assume responsibility for the pastoral care of the church. This requires the planning and implementation of strategies to ensure the integration of new members, effective discipling, teaching, and pastoral care.

Applicants will need to fit easily into a team leadership role and be able to teach, motivate, and mobilise leaders and others at all levels.

Enquiries to: +64 3 547 7371

Please send applications to: Annesbrook Church, PO Box 2184, Stoke, Nelson, New Zealand

Applications close end of October.

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<[www.churchesofchrist.org.au/victas/adventure/](http://www.churchesofchrist.org.au/victas/adventure/)>.

**Applications close 21 October 1999.**



## OMB News

### News from various locations where the Overseas Mission Board is working

The crisis in Kosovo may be coming to an end but the number of refugees crossing into Thailand from Burma is on the increase. This year the average influx of new refugees into camps along the Thai/Burma border is approaching 2,000 per month. The Burmese Border Consortium reports that their caseload is now 117,442. This is a record high representing an increase of 5,609 this year alone. The caseload figure does not include people living outside the camps which receive assistance with local Thai authority approval, which together total another 6,000 or so. The full current food caseload is therefore over 123,000. New refugees tell the same old stories of village relocations, SPDC patrols, rape, pillage and forced labour. Unless this stops the flow of new arrivals will continue. Your support of COCOA is assisting to feed these desperate people in Thailand.

Pastor Gordon Lala is working at Sauriki village in south-west Santo. This is a new area which was visited last year by Mike Folland and the Banmatmat Bible College students. Gordon was able to baptise four people. On Sunday 4 July he dedicated the first deacon and deaconess for the new church. Would you pray for Pastor Gordon as he is now working hard in building a house to live in and also building a new church congregation.

Kaiwgu in Papua New Guinea is a place where a new church is being developed. Pastor Inakuri is working in this village in the Sogeram area. Good progress is being made with 33 candidates having been prepared for baptism on 15 July. Pastor Inakuri is from the Tumba area and the church at Tumba is supporting the development of this new church at Kaiwgu.

—Jeff Weston  
Executive Director

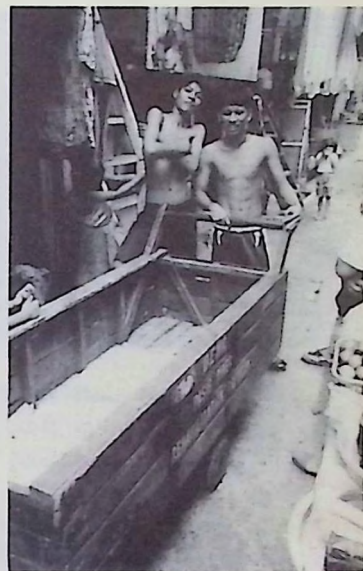
## Compassion

### Philippines—a place of jarring contrasts

Paul O'Rourke, a former suburban and regional daily print journalist who recently joined Compassion Australia, spent 16 days in the Philippines looking at child-development mission work. Pictured here are two youths winding their way through narrow lanes with their cart. They are part of the slum life of metro Manila.

O'Rourke says the slums are endless kilometre after kilometre of the most appalling homes squashed together in the shade of freeways choked with traffic. The poorest of the poor live by the roadside, taking shelter in the dirt, protected by concrete overpasses.

Compassion Australia has an extensive ministry in child-care support and work with young people. The Philippines is a land of jarring contrasts. The rich live side by side with the poor. There is poverty and depravity, and yet there



are also unashamed public displays of faith. A neon sign with letters 4m high, "Jesus alone saves" rings out from a multi-storied building bordering a main freeway. Similar sentiments are displayed on every other tricycle, truck and jeepney travelling through town

### Ministry Opportunity

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Inquiries or applications to Chris Hitchcock  
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Phone (03) 5341 8012 or church office (03) 5330 1637.  
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# Ministry

## Minister Wanted!

DAVID BROOKER



**M**inistry appointments are not simply a matter of filling a vacancy, but are about seeking the best possible partnership. How can a congregation, or its appointed leaders, ensure that the decision they make is the right one? They can't! However, here are some questions a ministry search committee should ask:

### **Prayer and hard work!**

This is not a question! There is no easy way to make ministry appointments. Prayer is essential—after all, it is God's church, not ours, and we're actually seeking God's will for this appointment. The whole congregation (and other congregations in the area) should be called to prayer. The search committee, which should be representative of the congregation, will have to accept that their role deserves their conscientious participation. The committee should spend at least one day together in prayer as they commence their task.

### **Do we need an intentional interim minister?**

This should be one of the first questions considered. Intentional interim ministry is more than filling-in between appointments. It is "intentional". A trained and gifted person is engaged to help identify and address any dysfunctional aspects of church life and to help prepare for future ministry. An intentional interim ministry may be particu-

larly beneficial following a long-term ministry, following a ministry that has ended suddenly, following a ministry that has concluded due to a breach of ministry ethics, or when the church recognises that the time has come for sea change in their patterns of operation.

### **What are our mission goals and priorities?**

Ministry appointments should be made with goals and priorities in mind. It is a cop-out for the committee to say, "Let's wait until we have a minister so she can help us set our goals". Determination of goals and priorities is essential to clarification of expectations. Any new minister will want to hear the expectations the church has of its minister. State Ministry Committees can help leaders develop a "church profile".

### **What qualities do we seek in our new minister?**

Consideration should be given to preferred characteristics and qualities, such as models of leadership, specific gifts and abilities, age, gender, family stage, theological perspectives and the like.

### **What process do we establish for our ministry search?**

Should we advertise? Should we work in partnership with our state ministry committee? Should we pursue our own networks and maybe "head hunt" the best available candidate? A combination of these options may produce the most satisfactory result. In any case, it is important to work with the state ministry committee. Their experience will be valuable. This is especially important to ensure compliance with the code of conduct for ministers.

Churches will often be in the position of selecting a new minister from at least two or three possible candidates. Con-

sideration of multiple candidates can help to fine tune the search process, but it is important to avoid a comparative process where each candidate is played off against the others. It is appropriate to have a preliminary conversation with a couple of the candidates, and to follow that up with a more formal interview with one of them. Reference checks should be made prior to the formal interview as this will help provide a framework for the conversation. State ministry committees will have resources to help local committees conduct appropriate and effective interviews.

### **What does our church offer this minister?**

Remember, the church is being assessed by the minister just as much as the minister is being assessed by the church. Terms and conditions for appointment are one aspect of this, but ministers will also be keen to hear about the challenges and opportunities presented by the appointment, and about any added value the minister and/or family might derive from ministry with that church.

### **A final word.**

The ministry search committee should be mindful that having a minister is a privilege, not a right. People offering themselves for ministry do so with a sense of call to serve God. All conversations and negotiations should be infused with a spirit of generosity and grace, with an attitude of love and prayer.

This will help ensure that the mission partnership that is commenced between minister and congregation stands the best chance of making a difference for the Kingdom.

David Brooker is the State Minister for South Australia.

# Ministry

## Keep On Keeping On

DALE WHITE

**S**ome time ago a paint company advertised their product using the slogan, "keeps on keeping on". This is my goal as a local church minister, and yet I know that many people with similar goals have struggled to maintain a ministry amidst opposition, rejection or personal failure. In this article I am not so much giving advice, as sharing from my own experience some of the things that help me keep on keeping on.

### Calling

During my ordination service some ten years ago, I sensed God's confirmation

*I know it's subjective, but this call was very real to me.*

upon my call to ministry. It was an incredibly powerful spiritual experience. I sensed God's Spirit in me and upon me as Churches of Christ leaders (some of whom I didn't even know) laid hands on me to commission me for ministry. I know it's subjective, but this call was very real to me. I had to fight back the tears as I took to the pulpit in response to a sermon from Jeremiah 20:9. Wendy and I experienced similarly amazing confirmation upon our invitation to the church here at Toowoomba. This sense of call is a tremendous motivator. When I doubt my ability to succeed in a particularly situation, it sure helps to remember that it wasn't just my idea to be in local church ministry—it was God's call.

### Balance

I have always loved reading Proverbs. They help me understand that God wants me to lead a balanced life. I have learned (the hard way) that I need time



out. If I don't get that one-day-in-seven to rest with my family, I die emotionally!

God must have known my energy and adrenaline cycle when he ordained the Sabbath. I don't mind working 10–12 hour days, and having to work on weekends, as long as I know that there is that day of rest around the corner. For me it's Tuesday—and it's a holy day! Similarly, we have a policy that we will never have a holiday at home.

### Relationship

Positive relationships have a huge impact on the level of joy experienced in ministry. Wendy and I have always enjoyed spending time with church friends, and we have been very committed to the people in our home group(s). It pays off, too! Just recently our home group decided to organise a breakfast in the park for our birthdays. It was a pleasant surprise! The old wisdom—don't make close friends in your church must have been designed either for pastors with short-term ministries, or for ministers without emotions.

Our marriage relationship strengthens us for ministry, too. Wendy and I are a team. There are times when my wife's prayers have literally inspired me to persevere through difficult periods.

Her encouragement and support is wonderfully beneficial, and I don't know how I would "keep on keeping on" without her!

### Passion

I am a somewhat emotional, feeling-oriented person. I don't think I could continue for long periods in ministry without that spiritual passion; that spark; that passion for God and for his people. There are dry times, but even these can be helpful in leading us to a real thirst for God.

Daily prayer is helpful, but I find that it is special events such as prayer summits or spiritual retreats that keep me fresh. Worship experiences in other churches also help. I also benefit from personal worship times at the piano with no one else around when I can sing, pray and make music in my heart to the Lord (Eph 5:19).

### Optimism

Yes! I get discouraged at times. But I have made it a policy never to make big decisions when I'm feeling down. That is a recipe for disaster. I aim to make major decisions when I'm feeling more positive and thinking more rationally. I find it helpful to remember that God isn't finished with me yet, and that he is probably not in a big hurry to do so! The Bible says that, "God, who began a good work in you, will carry it on to completion" (Phil 1:6). It is easy to become negative, critical or pessimistic when we face pressure or opposition. Yet I believe that a Christian is, by definition, an optimist. I remind myself that God can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.

Dale White is Ministry Team Leader at Toowoomba Church of Christ, Hume Street. He has been married to Wendy for fifteen years and has three children—Christopher, Joshua and Madeline.

# Ministry

## Facing Misconduct

LYNETTE LEACH

**O**ne spiritual director describes the work undertaken by those appointed by the church to deal with professional misconduct matters as "Attending to the wounds of Christ". There is no question that misconduct causes deep wounds in the lives of all involved—victims, ministers, families, congregations. As misconduct is brought to light, it becomes possible for the journey of healing to commence.

Over recent years, church authorities have recognised the importance of de-

*No longer can the church sit in silence on these matters.*

veloping codes of ethics and protocols to deal with misconduct. Appropriate processes are necessary to provide safe boundaries within which misconduct can be declared. No longer can the church sit in silence on these matters. Ministry has a public profile. The public expects that ministers will live by the standards that they preach. Integrity in ministry and leadership requires that our deeds match our words.

To be a healthy community of faith, the church needs to deal with these matters firmly, sensitively and with pastoral compassion for all involved. The impact of misconduct is experienced widely. The victim may experience confusion, a lack of trust, shame, guilt of overwhelming intensity, sometimes for years. The victim's family, if the misconduct is known, is affected. The perpetrator may face the suspension or termination of ministry and the likelihood of meeting the costs of compensation for the victim. The perpetrator's spouse

and family become secondary victims, sometimes swinging between defensiveness and anger, and may need professional support to cope. The congregation is deeply affected, grieving the loss of integrity. Administrators and those who serve on panels to investigate complaints are impacted upon as they participate in the processes.

It is important that the church acknowledges the courage of victims when they come forward with complaints, and affirms their right to raise such matters. Some people have difficulty understanding how discipline in the life of the church is related to grace and forgiveness. The criticism has come at times, "Aren't you being judgemental? God forgives." But grace is not cheap. Its outworking is part of justice and of setting things right. The church needs healing as well as being an agent of healing. It is important that processes for investigating complaints of misconduct are not punitive or vindictive. Processes should enable complainants to experience advocacy and justice, and to know that they will be taken seriously and heard. The respondent must be treated fairly and without prejudice.

The church needs to be proactive in maintaining ethical standards for ministry and leadership. We need to affirm those in ministry and leadership who exemplify integrity in the way that they live. Training needs to be provided for those involved in panels and committees overseeing processes. Care of the soul and spirit of each person in ministry and leadership means paying attention to healthy relationships, relaxation and meaningful work. The church could take a lead in promoting an understanding of human sexuality and how power has the potential to be abused in relationships and in human



groups. Ministers need to ensure that they put safe boundaries around hours worked, and around visiting and appointments for counselling and pastoral care.

The Victorian-Tasmanian Conference Board, through its Ministry Professional Standards Committee, has worked hard over recent years to ensure that processes are carefully administered in dealing with misconduct. Professional consultants are sought for advice and participation in panels. Counselling for victims and perpetrators is recommended. Other states are doing the same. But, there is still more that can be done, particularly in the area of education for ministers and leaders about boundaries. Despite efforts that have been made, the church has not always got it right. Over the years, some have left the church, taking their stories and their pain with them.

Where is wisdom? Where is justice? They must be expressed in all of the processes and systems of the church. We are all created in the image of God, therefore we need to respect the dignity of others. When that is denied, it is not what God wants in right relationships. When that happens in the church, it needs to be pulled back to the path of justice, integrity and dignity. The wounds of Christ cry out to be healed.

Lynette Leach is Vic-Tas Conference Executive Officer and Chair of the Ministry Professional Standards Committee.

# Ministry

## Training and Preparation

JOHN GILMORE

**T**here has never been a better time to undertake training and preparation for ministry. Ministry is about the life of the whole church. All are called to ministry. Therefore all must prepare for ministry. Well-equipped lay people and ministers are vitally important for the future of the church.

All people benefit from training and preparation. In the past the stress on the "call to ministry" was preached and expressed as being about a call to formal ministerial leadership. Today we

*All are called to ministry. Therefore all must prepare for ministry.*

need not only those who are called to "the ministry", but we need those who are called to leading local churches. The future health of churches will be as dependent on educated and equipped lay people as it is on the level of education and preparation of people in ministry. Both calls to leadership are equally valuable and needed. We must value those lay people who prepare intentionally for leadership and service in the church.

In the future many of those who serve local churches as ministers will be drawn from educated and experienced lay people. Such people will prepare for "the ministry" while continuing to serve in their local church. Colleges already know this to be a growing reality, therefore the process of preparing for ministry needs to be as flexible as possible.

More than one style and system of ministry training is a necessity. Contrasts

between colleges and training bodies are important ingredients in the church. Colleges that intentionally explore the breadth of Christian understanding are as important as those that have a more specific focus.

There are increased options available within Churches of Christ for ministry preparation. The Churches of Christ Theological College (CCTC) has been part of the establishment of the Magarey Institute in South Australia. CCTC and the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM) work together with the Western Australian Conference in their Ministry Training Centre. ACOM has a campus in Western Australia, as well as those it has in New South Wales and Queensland. Beyond Churches of Christ, there are even more choices available for people wanting to develop their skills and gifts.

Specialised training is available for people preparing for a particular ministry. The Forge program launched this year in Victoria has as its goal the preparation of people for church planting and frontier mission. The Sir Douglas Nichols training program in Gippsland prepares indigenous people for church and community leadership. The Gospel Ministry Course being offered by UNOH is a way to prepare for ministry in specific contexts among the poor. Other initiatives are being taking in urban mission in SA.

Both CCTC and ACOM offer a wider range of courses than ever before. In the past, one method of preparing people for ministry was offered. Today most people do all or some of their course part-time. Subjects are taught in local church settings. Students undertake their whole course of preparation for ministry within their local church setting. Many now commence with lit-



tle idea of preparing for formal ministry appointments and during their course sense a call to ministry and change direction. Local churches are taking initiatives in preparing people for ministry. Examples may be observed at Wollongong Church of Christ, NSW, the River Community Church in Albury, NSW, and Belconnen church in the ACT.

Ministers and lay people alike have opportunities to continue learning. Choices for further education are so numerous that the only question need be which option, not whether or not to do it. This challenge is not about increased qualifications, it is about ministry and preparing to express gifts in the life of the church.

In all of this change and contrast, the call to be Christ's church takes on a new meaning. There is no space in such a church to make claims, no matter how well argued, about the superiority of one college beyond that of another. The test of the effectiveness of the whole endeavour of preparing all of God's people for ministry will be seen in the ways in which people enter into and explore their potential in Christ.

John Gilmore is Director of the Ministry Division for Vic-Tas Conference.

# Ministry

## Contemporary Ministry

BRIAN HOLLIDAY

**T**he September issue of *The Australian Christian* on the International Year of Older Persons started me thinking about current cultural changes and the implications these have for contemporary ministry. **Contemporary** brings to mind something which is new, radical, and relevant to today's generation: whatever is loud in sound, colour and ideas, clashing with the old ways of yesteryear. However, something of this image is itself a part of yesteryear.

*Today, however, is the postmodern era and the meaning of contemporary has altered.*

The purpose of ministry is to enable the church to grow (both through addition and nurture) by communicating and living out the essential aspects of the Gospel within a particular community. Ministry is about mission: God's unchanging mission in the world. What does change, however, is the character and style of ministry within different cultures and time frames. For example, church preschools and craft groups would not be relevant forms of ministry in all cultures, and Sunday Schools do not have the same place in ministry today as they did fifty years ago. How ministry happens in Australia today, then, will partly depend on what it means to be contemporary in our current society.

In the modernist era (especially in the 1960s and 1970s), contemporary meant those things which were new, radical and relevant to the **now** generation. It



*Brian and Glenys Holliday*

implied that the past, the church, and the elderly (those over 40, or was it 30?) were seen as largely irrelevant. Today, however, is the postmodern era and the meaning of contemporary has altered. Certain sections of society view the past itself as contemporary, and regularly indulge in journeys of nostalgia. My teenage daughters think they are "with it" when they play 1960s music, which was certainly not contemporary in the 1970s and 80s. To other postmodern people, spirituality is contemporary, and they are willing to take a leap of faith to explore such issues as life after death. To be compassionate about the suffering in the world is now very acceptable, while to be passionate about the environment is no longer the sole domain of hippies. What lies behind these changes is the resurfacing of the belief that an individual can make a difference in the world, an idea scornfully rejected in the dark, despairing days of the atom bomb and the Cold War.

My point, then, is that there is more than one way to be contemporary in the postmodern era. But is the church stuck in a mono-focussed view of what it means to be contemporary? Take Christian music for example. Recently, I was talking to a group of young people and they assured me that the con-

temporary Christian music we sing in church is very different in style and sound from the contemporary music listened to by most young people. We emphasise the new in church, but to whom is it contemporary? Christians? Modernist Christians? What about the people for whom the past is contemporary? After all, contemporary ministry is about mission, God's mission, and not about maintaining a particular Christian image.

Surely we could have churches which beat out the nostalgic music (not necessarily hymns) of the past. These churches would be missional rather than the last resting place of those who cannot cope with change in the church (a modernist's view of those who love the past). For these churches to be in mission means they would develop ministries (including music) and strategies to intentionally grow the church through addition and nurture, reaching that cross-section of people for whom the past is contemporary. Such ministries would not replicate the past so much as use it and reinterpret it for contemporary society.

Then there is the music which appeals to those seeking spirituality, which would probably be different again from those passionate about the environment. And what about the music young people actually listen to today? Is there a place for it in the church? We haven't mentioned ethnic groups, people from different religious and musical backgrounds, rural people and Aboriginal communities. Today, contemporary embraces them all.

The multiplicity of contemporary in the postmodern world—what a paradise for ministry and mission!

Brian Holliday, from WA, has a Doctorate in cultural and Australian studies.

# A Good Beginning ... but the Challenge remains

AVON MOYLE

**S**ome weeks ago our Prime Minister, John Howard, in the House of Representatives moved a Motion of Reconciliation ... what he called an "historic resolution that goes to the issues of the spirit and the heart and the character of our country in a way that many others do not". The Motion consisted of seven sections. That it was put at all is testament to Mr Howard's determination to address the need for reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

## Reaction to the Motion of Reconciliation has been mixed

Reaction to the Motion of Reconciliation has been mixed—predictably. Some say it didn't go far enough. Others, that the "words" are not the appropriate

ones. Some, I fear, have tried to politicise the whole matter, while others can't see the need for such a motion at all.

As I've noted the reaction of indigenous Australia, the prevailing theme appears to be, "It's a good beginning ... but the challenge remains." There is a sense of anticipation that the nation is moving towards genuine reconciliation, but that some things still challenge our very soul as a nation. These include:

1. The need to say "sorry" rather than to express "regret".
2. The need to acknowledge the wrongs and injustices and to ensure that these aren't written out of our history any more.
3. The recognition that the results of those past injustices impact adversely upon indigenous people to this day, and
4. The need to take positive and practical steps to bring about genuine reconciliation, not because our national leaders encourage us to do so, but because as individuals and as a part of the church, we seek to be agents for such change.

At the recent annual general meeting of the Federal Aborigines Board, members were addressed by Sir Ronald Wilson of the HREOC, a man passionate about the need for genuine reconciliation. He drew attention to the fact that there is an increasing ground swell of support for reconciliation among non-indigenous Australia. It is his contention that reconciliation will come not so much because of the actions of national leaders, but rather as the result of a "people's movement" and that Australian churches will continue to play a significant part in advancing that movement.

Our National Council together with each state conference has already offered a sincere apology to indigenous people for past practices which have resulted in hurt and marginalisation.

All committed themselves to working towards genuine and lasting reconciliation. Robert Leane, immediate past president of our National Conference Council has been especially recognised for his contribution in this area.

The FAB has appointed a sub-committee charged with compiling a list of practical suggestions that our churches and individuals can do to further the process. These recommendations will be received in November.

We can be thankful for "the good beginning" but we must take up the challenge to pursue and implement genuine reconciliation with our indigenous neighbours. It will be a true test of resolve to move forward in unity.

Avon Moyle is Executive Director of our Federal Aborigines Board.



### Motion of reconciliation

I move that this house

(a) Reaffirms its whole-hearted commitment to the cause of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians as an important national priority for all Australians;

(b) Recognising the achievements of the Australian nation, commits to work together to strengthen the bonds that unite us, to respect and appreciate our differences and to build a fair and prosperous future in which we can all share;

(c) Reaffirms the central importance of practical measures leading to practical results that address the profound economic and social disadvantage which continues to be experienced by many indigenous Australians;

(d) Recognises the importance of understanding the shared history of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians and the need to acknowledge openly the wrongs and injustices of Australia's past;

(e) Acknowledges that the mistreatment of many indigenous Australians over a significant period represents the most blemished chapter in our national history;

(f) Expresses its deep and sincere regret that indigenous Australians suffered injustices under the practices of past generations, and for the hurt and trauma that many indigenous people continue to feel as a consequence of those practices; and

(g) Believes that we, having achieved so much as a nation, can now move forward together for the benefit of all Australians.

## Property Officer

Due to the imminent opening of our new 700+ seat auditorium, Swanston St Church of Christ, Melbourne, is looking for an experienced Property Officer. This position will look after all the Church's property, including the new auditorium worship space. The officer will have the overall responsibility to provide and maintain a worship complex which will glorify God and extend his Kingdom.

### Major duties will include:

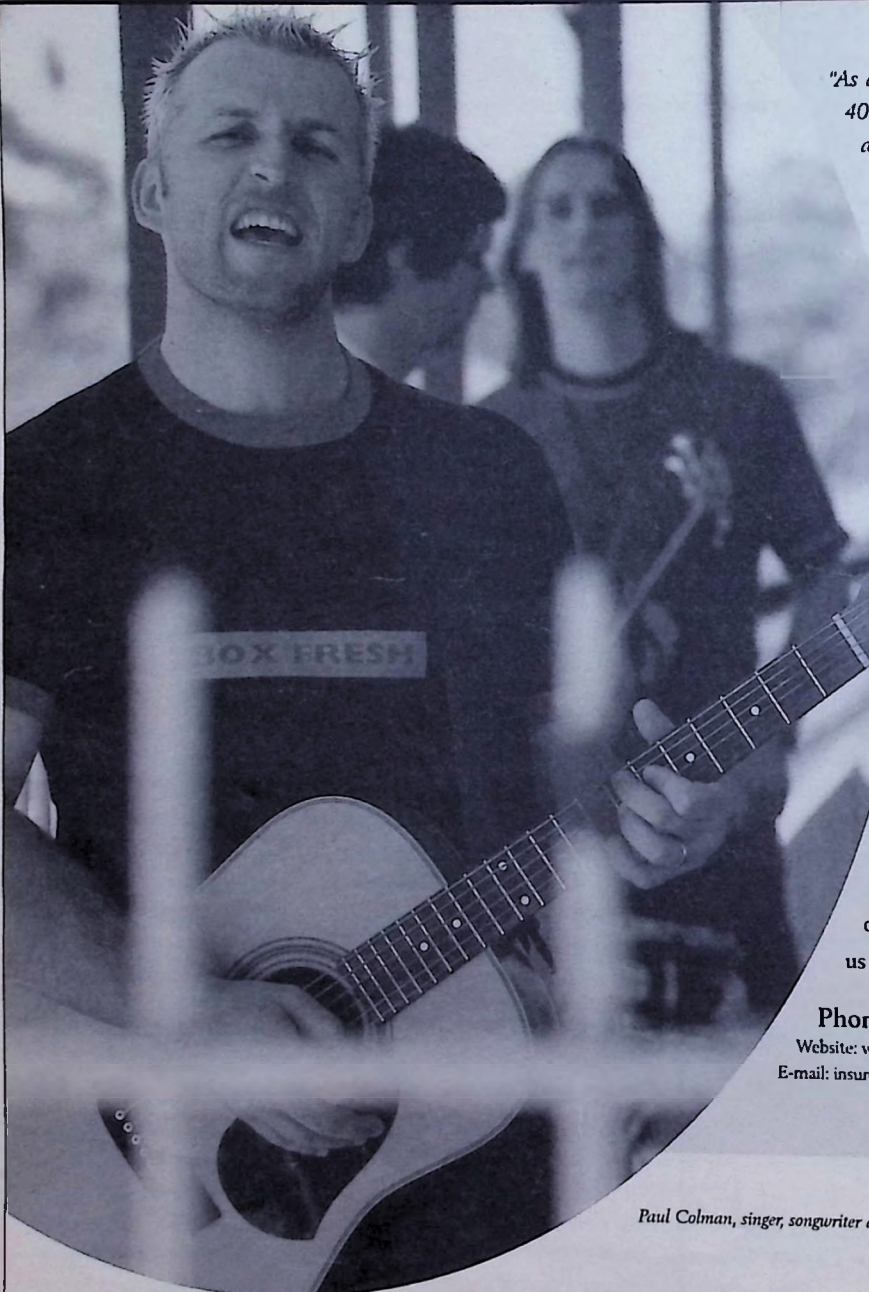
- 1 Maintaining an appropriate spiritual atmosphere;
- 2 Looking after all physical and technical services;
- 3 Maintaining appropriate quality standards;
- 4 Marketing, booking, opening and maintaining of all properties; and
- 5 Responsibility for cost control and cost recovery of all budgets relating to property.

This position will be an important part of the ministry of Swanston St Church of Christ, and therefore spiritual integrity and beliefs consistent with the church's values and objectives would be expected.

The officer will be self-motivated, be able to motivate others toward the Swanston St vision and market the facilities for broader usage. The position will be full-time. However a part-time start-up leading to full-time can be organised.

For further information and a detailed position description, please contact one of the pastoral team or the church office on (03) 9663 3884/5.

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*Paul Colman, singer, songwriter and musician.*



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# Churches and the Knowledge Economy

VINEY LONGTHORP

*The following article appeared in the magazine "National Outlook", an Australian monthly dedicated to Christian perspectives on contemporary issues. The writer is Keith Suter of Sydney's Wesley Mission. We felt that it was such a significant statement that it deserved the widest possible readership. It is reproduced with permission.*

In the first week of March, I was rapporteur at an international seminar in France on the knowledge economy. It was a secular gathering (financed by the European Commission) but there are some implications from it for churches.

## *They do not necessarily see Christianity as the obvious response*

"Knowledge economy" is one term for the new era into which the world is moving. The two previous eras were based on the agricultural (post-Ice Age) and industrial revolutions (AD 1750); the new one is based on information.

Wealth in the agricultural era was based on land; in the industrial era it came from machines; now it comes from ideas.

Time magazine (19 April 1999) reported that Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft, was worth US\$100 billion, more than the gross domestic products of Israel and Singapore, and on the current rate he will overtake the UK's GDP in 2005.

There are mixed implications

here for churches. The new era is one of fresh challenges, not just waiting for the stability of the 1950s to return; that has gone.

1. All revolutions are violent affairs. Charles Dickens, who wrote about the British industrial revolution, would feel at home in South Korea or Taiwan today. No country has yet managed a smooth transfer from one era to the next.

As in the previous era, governments (at least in the English-speaking world) do not see themselves as directing the change, merely responding to it. People feel confused; the changes have taken them by surprise.

Pauline Hanson and the "politics of anger" are manifestations of the desire to have simple answers to explain it all. But conventional politicians only say what people want to hear; not what they need to know—hence the popularity of unconventional politicians.

In this environment, churches could be important both to convey a sense of hope and to explain what is happening—as inspirers and educators. They can also convey a sense of tradition, permanence and continuity in an era of great flux.

2. Technology reconfigures society. The knowledge economy is not just about computers but about the way that knowledge is created, communicated and consumed. Old barriers are down: eg, PCTV (personal computer television); home computers as home organisers; and Radio 2GB's broadcast through the Internet (which we could listen to in France).

Are today's standard Sunday services still "culturally" appro-

priate? This is not an ethnic question but one about the new tastes of existing groups. "Knowledge workers"—armed with computers and mobile telephones—operate anywhere, anytime (rather than being, say, at a lathe Monday to Friday, 9–5). In a West Australian mining town, weekends have now been abolished; there are seven equal days of work for which people may be rostered. The idea of Sunday as the day of worship and recreation may no longer be culturally appropriate.

Are the problems of church attendance due partly to the new tastes which no longer give the same significance to Sunday?

3. Knowledge technology fragments society. There is a loss of shared values and meanings. We are moving, in mass media terms for example, from "broadcasting" (small number of transmitters communicating to many people) to "narrow-casting" (large number of transmitters communicating to few people). This is coinciding with the secularisation of western society and religious pluralism.

Churches are now just one set of organisations and advertisers competing for general attention. Just as there is a declining number of people who remember, say, Queen Victoria, so there is the risk of Jesus being similarly neglected.

4. The new era is high-tech and high-touch. As people become involved in technology, so they still need to meet each other socially. They will not live in cyberspace all the time. Churches can provide a valuable meeting place, not just for formal services but as social outlets.

But there is more to Christian-



ity than just comfortable socialising. This will be more difficult to convey in an age when secular commercial activities offer many alternative attractions.

There is an upsurge of interest in "spirituality", which is a reply to the technology-dominated world. France, for example, now has more astrologers than physicists.

But will there be a rise in Jesus-less religion? People do recognise there is more to this world than just what can be seen and touched. But they do not necessarily see Christianity as the obvious response to the technology-dominated world. They prefer, instead, some form of a New Age cocktail of bland, "feel-good", value free, unchallenging philosophy. People may have an increasing interest in religion but there is no guarantee that they will flock back to Christianity.

The churches need to ponder all these points. Some are doing so, but most are not.

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(03) 9877 0700 (w)  
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# Classifieds

# Thinking Biblically Quite Unsuitable

WAYNE BETTS

## 90TH BIRTHDAY

**BROUGH Edna** Congratulations to Edna Brough, who celebrates her 90th birthday on 12 October. Love and best wishes from your family. Present address: 7/48 David St, Dandenong Vic 3175.

## IN MEMORIAM

**CLARK Allan Beach** 18.10.96 Faithful ministry of over 60 years. Lovingly remembered by Louisa, Glenys, Harvey, Francis, Adrian and Cheryl. Also Max, Elizabeth, Jill, Maureen and Steven. Fifteen grandchildren and Mollie, great. "In the presence of the Lord."

**MURDOCH, Heather Joy** Pondering how 30 years ago, one of God's most

precious children went to be with him on Friday, 27 September 1969, at the tender age of 19. Her love, personal warmth, gentleness, specialness, love of life, kindness, friendship, helpfulness, beautiful smile, courage, sense of humour and lovely spirit touched our lives and so many others in so many special ways. Daughter of Valma and the late William, sister Julie, Jeff, Neil and Colin.



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**"A** bout this application for membership—though we admire this man's good deeds and obvious teaching ability, we harbour serious concerns about his suitability as a worthy member of our fellowship. For a start, his witness is compromised by his association with the wrong sort of people—



*He himself has acquired a somewhat unsavoury reputation as a glutton and drunkard*

shonky financiers, drunks and prostitutes! While he claims some kind of divine mission to influence them for good, to be perfectly frank, there is little evidence of many of them coming to faith, yet he continues to hang around with them. (And those who do respond to his influence are prone to rather extravagant and, shall we say, indiscreet acts of remorse and/or restitution.)

"So close has this identification become, he himself has acquired a somewhat unsavoury reputation as a glutton and drunkard—hardly the kind of person we would like to represent our fellowship!

"Furthermore, he shows complete disregard for some of our most valued traditions. Sure, he may attend services regularly, but that hardly compensates for his cavalier attitude towards the fundamentals of our religious

heritage. He can't run roughshod over people's beliefs and values and then expect them to accept the new-fangled interpretations he chooses to propose. Holiness and purity are important characteristics of our faith, and he seems to want to reinterpret them as he sees fit. Why on earth does he think we keep our distance from the unclean masses he delights in embracing! You just can't go mixing it out in the world without some of the world rubbing off on you.

"He's on dangerous ground and sets a bad example for our younger members who might be tempted to copy him.

"It seems he has a completely skewed perspective on moral issues anyway. He takes great delight in criticising, even denouncing good, upright, clean-living members of our fellowship as though they're the ones who have it all wrong. Then he has the audacity to pronounce words of forgiveness to blatant sinners—without any effective accountability structures or means by which to assess the depth and sincerity of their supposed 'repentance'!

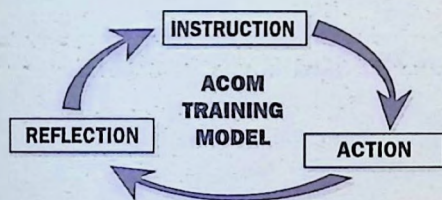
"That's not the kind of person we want in our church. Our founder wouldn't hear of it. Now ... what did you say his name was?"

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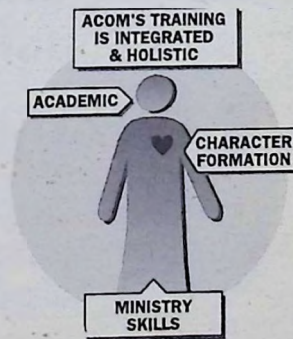


account the needs of your community and the people who you work with.

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# Obituaries

## OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words  
**LAKE, Lex**

(8.9.99) Born at Peak Hill, NSW, 6.3.28, Lex was converted at Sydney City Mission as a young man and began a life-long association with Churches of Christ. Married to Gwen Bowman in 1949, they worked together with Boys' and Girls' Brigades at Fairfield and Carramar churches. Appointment as Beaupaire manager at Nowra saw involvement at Nowra church. Recent years have taken Lex to preaching where needed and, having settled at Stanwell Tops in retirement, both he and Gwen have been active in ministering to seniors in retirement villages at Stanwell Park and Coledale Hospital. Sadly missed by Gwen, son Warren, daughter Sue and grandchildren.

—Graeme Ratten

**MCCAHEY, Elsie**

(31.8.99) Born in England 5.6.19, Elsie migrated to Adelaide with her parents in 1924. Meeting John in 1946, they married and had Robert and David. In 1959 they moved to Ashburton, Vic. Elsie was a great encourager. She supported John in all his endeavours, encouraged her sons to achieve their best, led the CWF for 20 years, Board member for 9, helped the church youth and assisted in worship. Elsie encouraged others with flowers, phone calls and quiet words of appreciation. Her courage in battling bone cancer was inspiring. She is sadly missed by family, friends and church fellowship.

—FO

**MITCHELL, Andrew Frederick**

(13.9.99) Andrew Mitchell had a home in Geelong at the time of his death, aged 35. His parents, Gerry and Shirley, live in Horsham. Andrew had been part of the youth group and boys' club at the Church of Christ while he

attended high school in Horsham. He was the middle of three children, with two sisters, Joanne and Kim. He married Leanne in 1988. Andrew was a gentle and loving person, with a love for animals, for practical jokes and for the computer business he ran in Geelong. He is sadly missed by all who loved him.

—Julie Trinnick

**RISSEN, Lorna Olive (nee Mudford)**

(20.8.99) Lorna, aged 73 at her death, is sadly missed by her husband Don, her children and their spouses. Her consistent, reliable, peaceful and

peace-giving Christian witness spread across all areas of her life. This was recognised by the 450 family, friends, pupils and associates who gathered to share in a celebration service 24.8.99 at East Ipswich Church of Christ, Qld, to give thanks for her contribution for God in the church, society and each individual's life she touched. Lorna's life illustrated Christ-likeness in such gracious and obvious ways that her witness will continue as those who knew her continue to be faithful to our Lord.

—J. Hicks

### Back to Preston Celebration (For the last time)

10.00 am, Sunday 24 October 1999  
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Final worship and communion as church is amalgamating to form Northern Community Church of Christ.

Morning tea to follow.  
Contact Nancy Garth, (03) 9478 0409.

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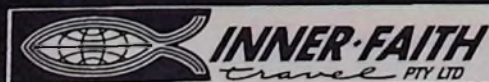
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