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Churches of Christ
A movement of the
people of God
shaping missional churches
crossing new frontiers
impacting cultures

mission

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Editorial

The Way Forward

DON SMITH

Tim Flannery in his recent book *The Explorers* sees the crossing of the Blue Mountains, NSW, in 1813 as a defining moment in the history of Australian exploration. The explorers Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Wentworth made their successful crossing through a maze of canyons, cliffs and isolated pinnacles that form the Blue Mountains. Flannery says the secret was to "keep to the ridges", whereas others had previously failed. Alan Atkinson in *The Europeans In Australia: A History* chooses to conclude his first volume with this story. He says the



success meant a sudden expanse of territory open to settlement and a new sense of the size of the continent. The explorers' task on return to Sydney was to tell the story and awaken the imagination to the future potential. * The message of the International Strategic Mission Task Group has a parallel to the Blue Mountains crossing. Just as the 10,000 population of Sydney was locked in by the Blue Mountains, we too have been preoccupied with the changes and challenges of this century. We have felt a recent restlessness and stirring, but never before have we received a national united challenge about our future. No doubt many were comfortable in the Sydney of 1813. The good news is that others were not and they made the journey outwards. * The Summit purpose statement on our cover is a challenge to hear the call of the Holy Spirit to become a missional church. At such a moment in our history, when new possibilities are before us we have the opportunity to go forward or face the risks of staying behind and trying to preserve what we have. * Moving a body forward is an immense task. We need to both encourage and trust our leaders. Not every move will guarantee success, or even be successful. Becoming a truly missional church is the challenge before us after nearly a century of complexity and crisis which have often constrained our common life and progress. * John Bond in his insightful feature article says he does not think there is much time. Two decades will probably determine whether we can sustain long-term development. The Holy Spirit calls us to new opportunities. Let's avoid canyons, cliffs and hazards. "Keep to the ridges"! *

Mission

Following the second international summit on mission, we raise some of the more practical issues on what it mean for us to have a mission focus.

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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.

Proposed Logo

To the Editor,
My earlier letters to this column about the waste of resources and the cost of changing the logo for the Churches of Christ have been shown to be correct. The logo chosen by the National Coordinator's Committee from a competition, is totally unacceptable, as it shows no reference to anything Christian or Church or Biblical. To an invitation to comment to our national body on the chosen logo, I have written to Robert Smith with my concerns about the inadequacies of the logo, with a suggestion for a compromise. Naturally, I still hold a firm belief that Churches of Christ should retain its present logo intact.

—Tom Trimnell
(Hamilton, Vic)

Proposed Logo

To the Editor,
Do we have an identity crisis? If the winning logo was chosen to represent Churches of Christ, then yes we do, because it depicts something other than us.

We know that God is there holding the world, even though we can't see him, but that does not represent the who, what, why and how of Churches of Christ.

The logo is an integral part of a visual identity and should always represent the appearance, words, actions, aspirations and attitudes of the organisation it stands for. It should embody its character and should be a visual representation of its mission statement.

In this case, the logo does not meet these criteria and therefore fails, regardless of what it actually looks like.

However, its physical appearance is of concern too. Not one person can honestly look at the new design and interpret its true meaning without its creator's explanation. Its very shape and form mean that it will not be readily adaptable to the variety of applications required, and present a number of technical difficulties for reproduction with outcomes such as lack of clarity when reduced.

As a professional, heading my own image design and management firm for some fifteen years, I am in full support of an updated visual identity, which will reflect our relevance in a changing world. Working with national and multi-national firms, Government departments and not-for-profit organisations, winning and losing tenders is par for the course. With this in mind, I should mention that my firm submitted a number of solutions for the new identity, which were rejected. I want to make it quite clear that this letter does not come out of bitterness or

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Letters to the Editor

disappointment, but out of true concern for our identity, or what could turn out to be a lack of an identity.

If the logo does not communicate the mission and life of the churches it represents, it is unreasonable to expect members to accept, embrace and take ownership of it.

I think that it's back to the drawing board. —Paul Andrews (Greensborough, Vic)

Mission Task Group Report

To the Editor

While few would disagree with the general thrust of the recommendations of the International Strategic Mission Task Group, there would appear to be some inconsistencies with comment in the body of the report and the recommendations made.

Consistent with the unrepresentative nature of the Task Force, a visionary leadership-big church (VLBC) model appears to be advocated. (One would draw this conclusion from the cases cited.) It proposes that Churches of Christ become a movement again and is critical of traditional leadership approaches and structures based on power, politics and programming. Superficially this makes sense. However, the report fails to recognise that change will have to come through existing structures and that the VLBC models are highly programmatic and political. Furthermore, the notion of a social movement being built around large churches is antithetical.

We have been through much of this thinking before. It was implicit in the disastrous Conference restructuring in NSW ten years ago, which led to demoralisation and decline.

While many of the sentiments in the Report are fine, the real test

will come when an attempt is made to implement the recommendations (program?). I think we'll find that visionary leadership turns out to be a slippery, contentious and idiosyncratic concept. —H.E. Hayward (Pymble, NSW)

Aging Baby Boomers

To the Editor,

In his article "Aging: The Mature Market" ("AC" 8.9.99) Roger Dufty says the baby boomers will be more active and adventurous in their aging years. It's already started!

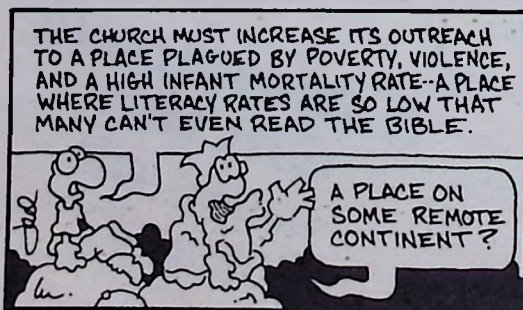
The caravan industry has been on an upward swing since 1990. The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia is taking more than 250 new memberships each month and has fifty local chapters. More people are doing the Wal-laby, driving around Australia, than ever before, instead of going to church.

To reach them, let them use your church parking lot to camp overnight. Request a donation of \$5. Motorhomes are completely self-contained with toilets and showers. They "take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but tyre tracks".

Churches will be unique in providing "room in the inn" for motorhomers. Advertise on the National Churches of Christ web site and watch out for the Baby Voocommerce. —Malcolm Gray (Upwey Vic)



Pontius' Puddle



Update

Dear Readers,

The compilation of every issue is always a big and busy task. We have particularly enjoyed finalising copy for this issue given the importance of the theme. The purpose statement on our cover is direct from the Summit and worthy of wide acceptance at national, state and local levels. The statement presents a vision which can unite us in a common purpose and, given that it arose from discussions between Australian, United Kingdom and New Zealand representatives, it has the potential for a much wider expression of unity and common purpose. The unanimous acceptance of the Summit Report at National Council, which includes this statement, is a great beginning. Riverlands, Qld, church has taken out five new subscriptions for distribution among members as the church's contribution to promotion of the paper. We really appreciate this support and invite all churches to consider ways they can promote the paper among members. Other new subscriptions are coming to hand. We need every congregation in Australia to assist our current promotion. Every single new subscriber counts.

We are also appreciative of gifts from churches and readers. A number of you have included positive comments. Thank you. The strengthening of our financial base is basic to the future of the paper. Since October we have incurred a substantial postage increase which adds to the financial pressure.

Australia Post in Melbourne has also experienced delivery problems due to industrial action by drivers. This has caused problems in our production week. One day we were without a delivery and since then the quantity has been reduced. It may be that some items intended for publication will be delayed.

We currently have other news items and letters awaiting publication. These are handled as quickly as possible. Sufficient space is always an issue.

Our office handles the dispatch of items for the National Literature Department. Such has been the demand for the 2000 calendar that supplies have been reduced to the last box. If your church needs additional supplies please be in contact.

Sam Smith



Praying for the Harvest

New Sight seeking assistance in their mission

Justin and Rebecca Whitecross are working in the environs of Byron Bay, NSW, to establish a positive and lasting witness for Jesus. In this report they comment on their experience and needs.

Sometimes people ask us if we are missionaries.

While our distinct and different approach may not exactly fit the commonly held view of "missionary work", particularly with our being at home rather than overseas, we are seeking to share the same gospel message with people who do not know the life-changing power of Jesus.

To us, the word "mission" seems to be one which is often misunderstood.

"Mission", in simple terms, is "the act of sending". In the Biblical sense, "mission" refers to God's plan to reach all people with his offer of salvation. We believe God calls his church and its people to mission (all believers are to bear witness to Christ) and to specific missionary tasks (sent especially to tell others about Jesus).

Finding our place in God's plan of mission is important!

Rebecca and I have been "sent" to establish a witness to Jesus in the environs of Byron Bay. Given the culture and diversity of "the Bay", it has been necessary to develop new approaches to sharing Jesus

and to establishing a community of believers (church).

A "mission mind-set" has produced a focused plan and strategy that engages us in community-based evangelism—an emphasis on lifestyle, serving and being with people where they are—the key to positive ministry.

So far, we have implemented a regional strategy, with a number of tools designed to begin and grow a church, including our downtown shop, regional market ministry, topical discussion nights, short-term missions, seminars, counselling and a women's support project.

Rebecca and I are thrilled with our growing bank of contacts with whom we are developing deeper personal relationships, and it is our prayer that many of these contacts will, over time, come through to accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Maybe God is calling you to something specific too? People ask us at times, "What is your biggest need?" Before we move further, we must find solutions to obstacles threatening the work and its growth. Getting the job done in bringing men and women to Christ is our goal. For this we need ongoing support which provides for our needs and maximises opportunities.



New Sight, engaging in mission in Byron Bay

When you are surrounded by disturbed, troubled people, knowing that it is only through Jesus that relief and healing is found, you pray for workers who can meet the needs of the spiritually neglected. You pray for helpers who have a heart for the lost. You pray for support resources that are vitally necessary to enable the ministry of mission, resources that

allow harvesters empowered by God's Spirit to declare the Gospel, both with word and lifestyle, and bring in the harvest.

These are our greatest needs! May God bless you as you search out your place in his mission. Maybe the Lord of the harvest is looking for you to step out too?

—Justin and Rebecca Whitecross

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163 Countries Now

Continuing expansion in worldwide Stone-Campbell movement

The World Convention Office of Churches of Christ located in Nashville, Tennessee, USA, reports that Churches of Christ congregations have recently been established in Gabon, Africa, making this the 163rd country where our work is represented.

A Cappella Churches of Christ, Abilene Christian University, USA, estimates close to 700,000

members in sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria has 204,000 members and 2,200 churches, Malawi (200,000/3000) and Ghana (56,000/700).

In Myanmar (Burma) there are some 60,000 members within the Christian Church overseas network.

In Japan there are 88 Christian Churches, along with many a Cappella churches.

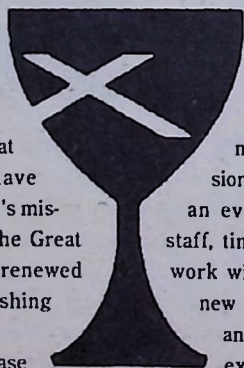
Church-Planting Emphasis

US Disciples board backs church planting

The Board of Church Extension of the Disciples of Christ in the United States announced that the directors have refocused the Board's mission upon fulfilling the Great Commission with a renewed emphasis on establishing new congregations.

A Disciple news release reports that the BCE directors at their meeting of 25-28 June approved a revised direction to "provide resources that channel the energy of the Great Commission into physical form, including facilities and new congregations".

Board chairman Marvin Eckfeldt, senior pastor of First Christian Church, Kent, Washington, said that what this means "is that the BCE is reaching back to the very



motivation of its beginning 116 years ago, as it moves into the new millennium. Church Extension recommitted itself to an even stronger use of staff, time and resources to work with partners to help new churches get started and to help strengthen existing churches toward new health and growth."

At the urging of Marian Hamlett, CPA, Flower Mound, Texas, directors and staff agreed to Biblical discernment and prayer as the Board takes the next steps toward developing action plans.

[The Board of Church Extension is a US national agency with Australian equivalents in state property and building-extension type committees. —Ed]

Ministry Team Growth

Small-group pioneering pastor on staff at Roxburgh Park Community Church, Vic

On 12 September, Cheryl Daly was inducted as an associate pastor at the Roxburgh Park Community Church, joining the senior pastor Mathew Salvador. Cheryl has previous experience as Victorian manager of Children's and Family Services for Melbourne City Mission.

She is a qualified social worker with twenty years experience and has also been involved in overseas missionary ministry in Thailand. Her expertise is in program development and innovation.

Cheryl is currently studying full-time at Tabor College (western annexe).

Her husband Jim is involved at the church in small-group leadership and is also a local real estate agent.

So far, Cheryl has pioneered six new small groups (including

mothers' support, pastoral partners, prayer, marriage enrichment and grief). Cheryl's job description is overseeing the pastoral ministry, crisis care and recovery. Cheryl's contribution has enhanced the growth of the church because of her ability to identify community-felt needs and then meet these needs with appropriate small groups. Her ministry skills are a bonus. She resources new mums with training skills and baby care, and also helps mothers with their emotional and psychological needs. After its first three and a half years, Roxburgh Park church has over 100 attending on Sunday mornings and in small groups. Cheryl is new to Churches of Christ. An application is in progress for her ordination following the completion of her theological studies.

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Training New Christians

Federal Aborigines Board steps out to fund training materials for new converts

For over two years news of a spiritual awakening among the Aboriginal people in WA's Pilbara Region has reached most within the Australian churches. Wonderful stories of conversions, baptisms, new churches springing up and the emergence of people to whom God has given leadership roles has caused us all to thank God. In recent months, God has brought together a group of people with linguistic and translation skills, theological teachers and counsellors. Most recently the need for appropriate training courses and discipleship classes has become an imperative. Ross and Helen Norling, whose ministry in Hedland has been greatly blessed by God, attended the annual meeting of the Federal Aborigines Board. They spoke of

the specific need for funds to implement courses they were preparing.

All FAB funds were already committed, but such is the urgent need, the Board voted unanimously to provide an amount of \$20,000 over and above existing commitments to assist in the teaching program.

For the FAB this is a real leap of faith. Members agreed that a special one-off appeal should be launched so that people within the Australian churches could link in by their gift to a most exciting program of training that will enhance the personal and corporate spiritual development of the many hundreds of new Christians and their churches.

Funds will be used to prepare and provide the culturally-based



FAB Chairperson, Max Wright (second from right) worshipping with Pilbara leaders

teaching materials that are presently being prepared. Almost one third of the target amount had been received from people within Western Australia. Readers and churches may care to make a contribution. Gifts specifically marked can be sent to the FAB office, PO Box 1199, Wangara WA 6947. They will be applied directly

to the training programs and will attract tax deductibility.

Details of the courses and subjects are available from the Board. This is a unique opportunity to ensure that God's Word reaches the new Christians through culturally-appropriate teaching.

—Avon Moyle
(Director, FAB)

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
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Youth Minister Wanted

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Werribee Church of Christ is an active church in Melbourne's fast-growing Western suburbs. With a committed youth membership of 20, our current youth activities are:

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- Weekly cell groups
- Bible discussion groups
- Youth Vision events/Youth Alive rallies

In addition, we have contact with many unchurched primary and secondary-aged-children.

Your role will include:

- Leadership, oversight and coordination of youth ministry.
- Participation in the life of the Werribee Church of Christ
- Ministry in accordance with spiritual gifts

If you feel that God is calling you to this ministry, please phone our minister, Graeme Batley, on (03) 9742 6788 or (03) 9741 6051 for any further information and a more detailed summary of the position requirements.

Applications close 1 December 1999.

Alpha

Over 1,100 Australian churches involved

Chris Ambrose, minister of the Goolwa, SA church and previous Editor of this paper, attended the national Alpha Conference held in Melbourne 19–20 October. Chris reports that almost 1,500 from all Australian states and territories and a team from the Solomon Islands attended. Nicky Gumbel and a team from Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, UK (HTB), where the Alpha Course originated, led the conference.

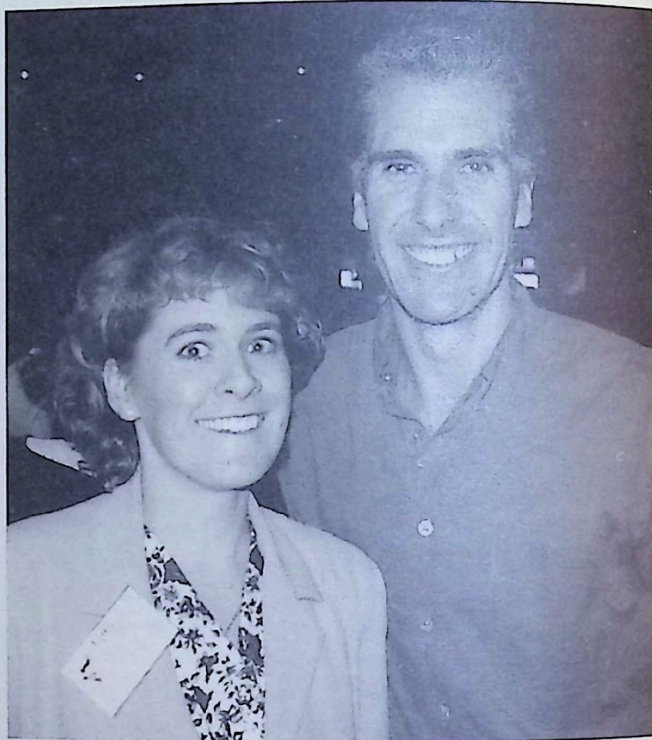
The thrust of the conference was for churches that have not run Alpha courses. Alpha is designed as a ten-week course to share the basics of the Christian faith. The course is based on a meal, a talk and then small-group discussion, and is offered with no commitment expectation. (The ideal is that people are not sent letters or followed up if they fail to continue.)

One of the keys to the success of Alpha, which after six years is now being held in over 100 countries (with over 1,100 Australian churches registered or running courses in Alpha), is the weekend

together. This concentrates on teaching about the Holy Spirit and the experience of the Spirit by the participants. (The weekend may be a difficulty for some churches, but is seen as an essential part of teaching the whole understanding of the Trinity.)

Alpha has been a highly successful evangelism tool, but also has a good record as a course that can help Christians grow in their faith. *The Guardian* newspaper published in the UK says that "Where once there was Billy Graham, now there is Alpha ... one of Britain's largest evangelising programs.

What Alpha offers, and what is attracting thousands of people, is permission—rare in secular culture—to discuss the big questions of life and death and their meaning." The British Press is hailing Nicky Gumbel as the "new Wesley". Chris Ambrose comments that the Alpha Australia office is planning a national adver-



Simone McDonald, administrator of Alpha at Swanston St, Melbourne church with Alpha's creator, Nicky Gumbel

tising campaign to encourage people to consider doing a course, starting in early May, 2000. In the UK last year, a £1,000,000 advertising campaign saw over 4000 courses offered, with over 100% greater attendance of non-Christians compared to courses at all previous times.

The Australian Conference itself looked at various aspects of the Alpha Course, including theological principles involved and the practicabilities of running the course.

Special emphasis was given to leading small groups and pastoral care within small groups. The concept of a ministry that could be exercised within the course was also highlighted. Seminars were held on worship within Al-

pha, the administration of the course, prayer within Alpha and Youth Alpha.

Chris Ambrose says, "All our churches should consider Alpha courses as an effective evangelistic tool. Large numbers of Churches of Christ have successfully run courses and would be willing to share their experiences." Simone McDonald, administrator of Alpha at Swanston St, Melbourne church, describes the courses as "one of the most exciting areas of ministry I have been involved in".

Information and videos on the principles and how to run courses are available from the national office. Phone (02) 9816 5477, fax (02) 9816 5795, or e-mail <admin@alphaaustralia.org.au>.

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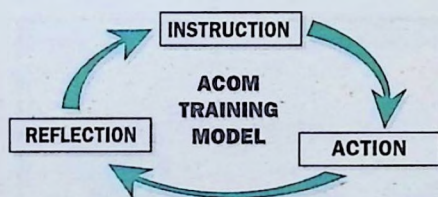
Train your whole life the Jesus Way

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Jesus taught in a simple but highly effective way. The way of instruction, action and reflection.



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Having done that, the disciples would return to reflect on their experience.

Jesus' Way is unique. And simple.

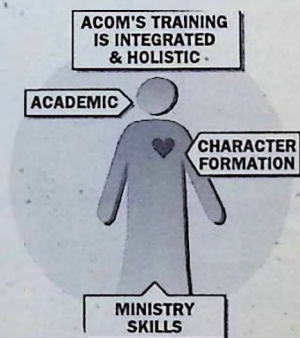
As Jesus did, we deal with the whole person, not just the mind. There is no better way to train.



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No Gaps

Unity at WA women's ministry camp



Fun at the old-time music night

The generation gap was non-existent at the WA 1999 Women's Ministry camp held at Serpentine 17-19 September. Sixty-two women plus day visitors aged

from 23 to 91 gathered to enjoy a weekend of fellowship. Women from Albany church organised the program.

Val Sprigg of Albany was the

speaker. Campers were challenged to eat from "The Tree of Life" and to spend more time loving people than judging them. Val also encouraged campers to be aware of "Christian clichés" when sharing God's Word with friends. Pam Timms presented a missionary focus. Campers were "boarded" on a flight to a mystery destination and "transported" to India, where host Pam presented an informative talk on life in India today.

Options during the weekend included a craft session, taking a nap, walking, driving to the falls, playing board games or just relaxing and chatting over coffee. An old-time music hall program was a feature of Saturday evening. Sunday morning communion service was presented by Heather Spencer and mime by Sharon Wise.

Amid the diverse range of women attending, there was a great spirit of unity and love.

Church Office Administrator

The task is to provide timely and professional office support services for the ministry team and other leaders of a busy, growing church.

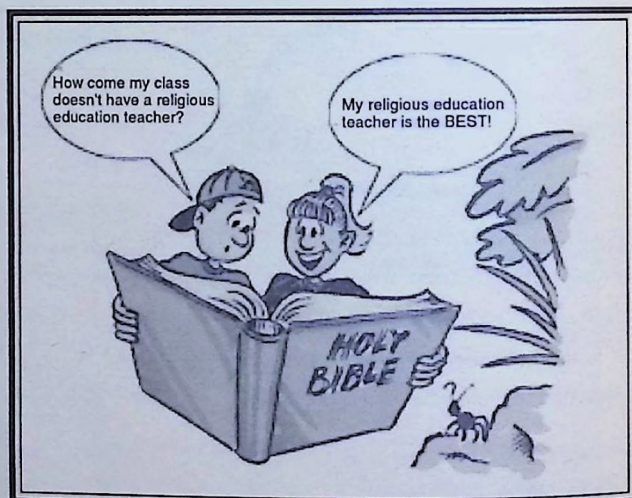
Management, secretarial, receptionist and broad computer usage skills are a necessity.

This is a full-time position which reports to the Senior Minister.

A duty statement can be obtained from George Crowl (church secretary) on (03) 9848 7043 (phone) or (03) 9848 2201 (fax) or <paull@dcc.org.au>.

Written applications are required to be forwarded on or before Tuesday, 30 November 1999 to

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OR your local Regional Officer.



Sunstate 99

Queensland convention both challenging and uplifting



Attendances were good at Sunstate, held in Toowoomba this year

Around 270 delegates were blessed and uplifted at Sunstate 99, presented by Churches of Christ in Queensland. Right from



(l-r) Peter Overton (Conference President), guest speaker Rick Rusaw and Rod Foster (General Secretary)

the start at the Convention Banquet on Thursday 7 October, through to the concluding session on Saturday night, God spoke through his servants. Special guest speaker Rick Rusaw, Senior Minister at First Christian Church, Longmont, Colorado, was joined by Chek Chia, founding and Senior Pastor of the Inter-

national Christian Community, Glen Waverley, Vic, and Ted Keating, Senior Minister at the Wollongong Church of Christ, NSW. Keith Farmer, Principal and lecturer in pastoral studies at the Australian College of Ministries, and Tim Foot, Director of Creative Ministries at the Northside Community Church, NSW, also made valuable contributions to the program.

Through a series of sessions including topics like: "Life as a Loser", "Noble Man makes Noble Plans", "The Pentecostal Church" and "Reaching Australia for Christ", listeners were challenged to examine their own lives and to reaffirm that it's only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit that souls are won. There was a strong focus on winning the lost and being available for every opportunity to spread the good news. Ted Keating urged the delegates to "Finish Strong!" and as Rick Rusaw encouraged each one to make the most of every moment, he asked, "When all is said and done, what will be said about what you've done?"

Here and There

WCC Chair of Mission

A gift of \$1.5 million dollars from the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, USA has endowed a chair in mission at the WCC's Ecumenical institute at Bossey, Switzerland.

Sudanese Church and School Bulldozed

Four bishops of the Episcopal Church of Sudan visited a shanty town outside the Sudanese capital of Khartoum recently to comfort residents there after government bulldozers levelled a school and a church. Mosques and Koranic schools have remained untouched. (*Christian Century*)

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Sauriki Plant

Good progress after one year

In June 1998 a group of students and staff from the Churches of Christ Banmatmat Bible College planned a visit to Vanuatu's tallest peak, Mt Tabwemesana, near the east coast of Santo (see map). The trek was a most arduous experience for all concerned, with four days of steep ridges, thick scrub and humidity. Mike and Aaron Folland were among the trekkers. A village in the area had requested contact with Churches of Christ and the opportunity was taken to take steps towards a church-planting initiative. Good contacts were made in the village

and a new church established. Mike Folland reports that twelve months later the church is growing and providing a central linking point for surrounding villages. The village is situated at the junction of a number of bush trails and provides a final gathering point for people walking to the coast. The church now has a full-time Pastor, Gordon Lala, who has considerable experience, especially in new areas. Gordon has commenced a strong children's program, which capitalises on the flow of families passing through. In this way, the children carry

Christian songs and stories back to their village, which are later followed up through visitation. The new Sauriki church has been well

supported by other Churches of Christ congregations in Vanuatu, with donations of materials to construct a church building.

Members Honoured

Number of respected members lost at Hartwell recently

The Hartwell Church of Christ, Vic, has been saddened at the passing of five respected and loved members over the last twelve months.

All of these served faithfully, giving of their talents in their own particular way.

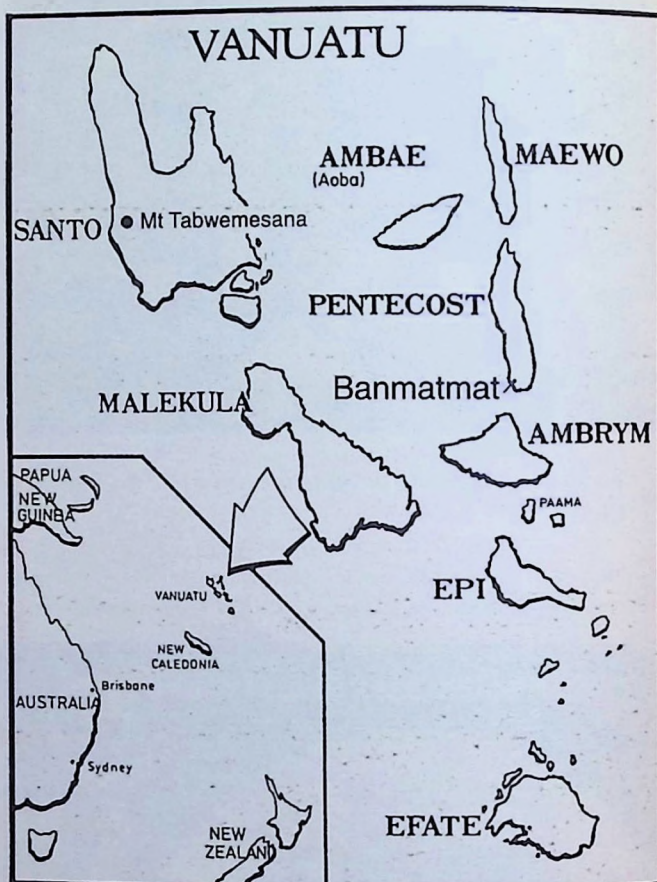
Dorothy Baker—Secretary of the Christian Women's Fellowship over many years, reader on the plan, devotional leader and choir member.

Vera Morrison—Past President of the Victorian and Tasmanian Conference of the Christian Women's Fellowship, speaker at CWF groups throughout the state, President of the Hartwell Christian Women's Fellowship (afternoon group), fund raiser extraordinaire.

Murray Savage—Minister of Hartwell from 1967–1976 and regular visitor over many years, President of the Victorian and Tasmanian Conference, teacher, pastor, leader and encourager. Edna Scambler—daughter of Principal T.H. Scambler, active member of CWF, past secretary and treasurer.

Mollie Spear—Secretary of Hartwell Christian Women's Fellowship. Committee member of Friendship Group, reporter of church news, member of the flower roster and past Sunday-school teacher.

We remember all these with love and gratitude and commend them for their devotion. Their lives are an inspiration to all who follow in service to Christ. —D. Willing



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Deaf Ministries

First Deaf Ministries International conference

The first International Conference of Deaf Ministries International, under the leadership of the Australian Churches of Christ missionary, Neville Muir, was

held 2-6 August at Davao, in the Philippines.

Neville Muir is an associate worker with the Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board. One hundred and twenty people from seventeen different countries were present.

The main speaker, Rev Bob McFarland, was a deaf pastor from England. His messages were delivered in British Sign Language and were simultaneously translated into spoken English and into six different sign languages!

Reports of work in many countries include:

- The deaf churches in Korea have sent a missionary worker to the deaf people in

Taiwan. A new church has been established.

- A deaf church has been founded in Burma
- There are over 20 million deaf people in China who have never heard the Gospel. A missionary has recently commenced in China.
- Many deaf children in the Philippines are being given an education, a language and a hope for the future.
- Deaf churches have been established in Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda.

There are 50 deaf churches and pastors being supported by Deaf Ministries International.

The next Deaf Ministries conference will be in Chang Mai, Thai-



Neville and Lil Muir, founders and workers with Deaf Ministries International

land, in 2002. Information about the work and deputation visit arrangements are available by contacting Kerrin and Jeanette Lee (03) 9836 8724 (phone/fax).

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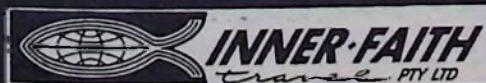
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Mission

A Missional Church

MARTIN ROBINSON

Some ten years ago I commenced teaching a weekend training event intended for emerging lay leaders. I always begin my sessions by asking the question, "What feelings or thoughts come to mind when the word 'mission' is heard?" When I first began, nearly every response reflected the idea that mission was always overseas. A few individuals would add that mission was also on their doorstep. When I ask the same question today, the proportions seem to me to have reversed.

Can the church describe the local and global mission to which God has called it?

That different response reflects a considerable mind-set shift among emerging leaders, but it still remains true that the word "mission" or "missionary" conjures up a variety of associations in the minds of those in local churches. It is for this reason that a group of mission scholars in North America began to coin the term "missional church" to describe a church which was oriented towards mission in its own community.

Marks of a Missional Church

Five marks of mission have been fairly widely adopted by Christians in Britain and elsewhere. They are as follows:

- 1 To proclaim the good news of the kingdom;
- 2 To teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- 3 To respond to human need by loving service;
- 4 To seek to transform unjust struc-

tures of society;

- 5 To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

What are the processes that would allow a church to change so that it displayed these marks? What training is necessary and what tools are available? Finally, is it possible to devise measurements that would allow a local church to assess its own life in order to know whether it was becoming missional in its orientation?

Measurements for Mission

Purpose A missional church should be able to express its particular call and commitment. Does the congregation understand and own its purpose as a vocation? Can the church describe the local and global mission to which God has called it?

Leadership Does the congregation understand and own the function and role of leadership? Is the leadership itself mobilised towards achieving the missional purpose of the congregation. Is it mobilising the congregation towards this purpose? Do the people recognise that this is the role of leadership? Do they recognise their need for this kind of leadership?

Numerical Growth by Conversion Setting an annual goal for those coming to faith by conversion as a percentage of the size of the congregation was taken to be both challenging and provocative. The goal of an annual growth figure of 5% by conversion was felt to be both significant and thought-provoking. Few congregations in the Western world achieve such a figure.

Discipleship We expect a process of discipleship to include both training and teaching, cognitive knowledge and lifestyle experience. Local churches might design a process and agree to



aim to see a significant number of people complete it. A two-year time-scale is stated so church leaders recognise that discipleship is more significant than an introductory six-week course.

Pastoral Care We need to re-imagine pastoral care as preparing people to look after each other and to encourage mission, rather than a minister taking sole responsibility for pastoral care.

Mobilisation We need to redefine mobilisation as a 24-hour lifestyle, not extra evangelistic events in the diary. Every individual should understand their gifts and call.

Community development Community involvement, investment, identification and integration is a valid expression of mission. The building of community beyond the confines of the local church is seen as intrinsically valuable and not merely as another evangelistic device.

Social responsibility Working to change unjust structures in society is understood as part of the call of the missional church. It may not be possible for a local church to undertake such action apart from cooperative ventures with other Christians, but a visible commitment to such activity needs to be seen as part of the life of a missional church.

All of these thoughts are provisional and not prescriptive. The journey towards missional church has begun.

Dr Martin Robinson is a UK Churches of Christ minister and Director-Mission and Theology with the British and Foreign Bible Society, UK.

Mission

Prepared to Listen

JOHN BOND

Are we prepared to listen to the difficult things the Spirit is saying to our Churches?

At the recent National Council meetings held at Stanwell Tops, the report of the International Strategic Mission Task group was presented. Throughout the three days of meetings there was a strong sense of unity. We were encouraged to listen to what the Spirit of God was saying to our churches. It was interesting that at 9.00 pm on 9.9.99 the report was adopted and affirmed. The National Council subsequently asked

Are we really committed to mission?

the Mission Task Group to continue the work it has begun and develop a plan of action.

What are the issues the ISMTG has to wrestle with? What are the implications for Churches of Christ, if we are to become a movement again? The following reflections are a result of these past two prayerful consultations.

We must find a way of praying corporately. We have been strong on doing and need to have a greater emphasis on being. The New Testament church knew and understood the power of corporate prayer. Every reference to the church being filled with the Spirit in the book of Acts was linked to corporate prayer.

We must find a way of releasing missional and visionary leaders, particularly the apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching leaders. These people, because they often threaten, challenge and push our buttons, must be encouraged.

We must find a way to empower imaginative thinkers, missional strategists, futurists, church planters and change initiators.

We must accept that our colleges are working together, crossing traditional and political boundaries. As churches, we need to follow their lead and work together in mission.

We must empower the laity for ministry and mission. All missional churches have moved in this direction, without exception. Pastors and leaders must let go!

We must find ways of releasing dollars to missional causes. Are the majority of our resources being invested in church planting and new mission initiatives?

We must be prepared to ask the hard questions of our churches and state associations regardless of their size. Are we having spiritual babies? If not, why not? Are we intentionally discipling new believers? Are we really committed to mission? Steve Addison, at the 1998 Summit, defined a Christian movement as "a group of people called by God who are dedicated to pursuing corporate and individual transformation which results in the renewal and expansion of the church in it's mission". We have to admit that across the country we fall a long way short of this.

We must find a way to support our necessary national visionary and administrative personnel. It is appalling and an indictment that with over 40,000 people we cannot find the resources to have a single person working full-time for us providing national visionary leadership, let alone the necessary administrative duties.

As a member of the National Council I welcome your prayerful input on this one, because I have the responsibility



to look at and report to National Council on how we can fund a fully-remunerated national office. I have until the end of January—please e-mail me <jrb@spcc.org.au> or facsimile (08) 9313 1604 with your ideas.

We must find a way to identify the key people in our churches who will lead with vision and drive change through our churches. This is always painful stuff, but if we don't do it we will die on the vine. Younger men and women will only join our structures if they are moving forward. I am tired of the business world and interdenominational agencies recruiting our best from us.

I encourage everyone connected to Churches of Christ to obtain a copy of the ISMTG Report arising from the UK Summit. State Conference offices will be able to supply copies. We must intentionally move into mission at every level if we are to make a positive difference for the Kingdom. Our roots and history mean we are well situated to make a difference for the Kingdom and our nation. But I believe we do not have a lot of time in which to make the changes. Let's pray, listen and act now! John Bond is Senior Minister of South Perth Church of Christ, WA.

Mission

Church Planting

ALAN HIRSCH

Church planting always and necessarily takes evangelism seriously. This is really quite obvious when you think about it. Church planting has to evangelise, because if it doesn't it will not even get off the ground, let alone survive. Because it takes evangelism seriously, it has to take the Gospel seriously, it has to believe its own message and act in a very practical way. The Gospel is therefore the life-blood of the missionary church plant—its own survival is directly linked to it.

The acid test of its effectiveness is its own survival.

Church planting as a rule tends to establish churches that are more relevant in terms of the surrounding culture. The reason again is simple. In order to establish a viable faith community, church planters must deal constantly with culture-gospel dynamics. This is precisely because its core task is not only to evangelise, but rather to establish a worshipping community that is wide open and accessible to non-Christian people (the so-called "unchurched"). This makes it highly responsive to the needs and culture of the target group(s) they are trying to reach. Again, the acid test of its effectiveness is its own survival. The church-planting team has to find the right culture-gospel interface or fail.

Church planting, as is true of all authentic mission, is the place where innovative models of the church emerge, are tested and are refined. This arises from the two reasons mentioned above. In order to evangelise effectively and then

establish a vital worshipping community, the new church project must experiment with new ways of being and doing church. Needless to say, this is especially vital in a time when traditional models of the church are being rejected as outworn and irrelevant.

I would argue that church planting is the most apostolically-consistent way to extend the Kingdom of God. Precisely because it is Gospel-centred, culturally-relevant and it always takes the church as the primary agent of God's Kingdom with absolute seriousness. Church planting is the church advancing the Gospel onto new ground. And is this not precisely what NT Christianity aims at? If the above reasons were not enough of themselves, another important one is that church planting is by far and away the most effective form of mission in terms of numerical growth. This is not only attested to by our own statistics, but is consistent all around the world.

Of all the growing churches (church plants, new churches, and other increasing churches) in Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania, new churches comprise the majority of growth over the past ten years—well outside the ratio in terms of their relatively small number. These new churches contributed 1,757 new members. This is 44% of the total additions, but nineteen churches are certainly not 44% of our some 145 churches.

It is fair to say that the new churches are significantly more effective in terms of numerical growth than the other growing churches in Conference. And what's wrong with growth?

Church planting that is true to itself, i.e. to creating other new churches, is potentially the most potent means of evangelising the world. If this principle



of organic church planting was done consistently and pursued with passion, we could effectively evangelise Australia in a decade or two. Organic church planting grows by multiplication not addition.

Perhaps some are already familiar with the story of the inventor of the chess game, who was given one free wish as his reward by a king of India. As a most "modest" reward he wished just for a bit of rice on the first square of the chess board, two kernels on the second square, four on the third, eight on the fourth, and so on. The king, who had initially smiled on it, thinking that he would get off lightly, simply could not grant the wish. He would have to produce 2^{63} kernels of rice which is 9,223,372,036,854,775,808 kernels, or more than the world harvest for the next 1000 years.

So I ask the question, "Can anyone see why we shouldn't pursue church planting with all vigour?"

Alan Hirsch is Director of the Division of Mission and Revitalisation of Vic-Tas Conference.

Mission

Community Caring

CHERYL JOHNSON AND WENDY PARISH

Mission is the lived out reality of God touching the lives of his people, to in turn touch the lives of others. Community Care in NSW and Victoria have exciting programs where they minister in partnership with local churches. Local churches are seeing their mission as travelling alongside people in their local community.

The community service programs being supported by Community Care offer specialist services, such as, counselling, community shops, direct welfare and other caring ministries

It is a challenge to eliminate the judgmental attitude that builds up within your own thinking.

that focus on being out in the community.

As Community Care workers, we could do welfare work for an agency of some kind, but for many years have chosen to serve the church in a role in which few last more than one year in a secular context. The revolutionary aspect of our work is that we act within the context of a church community. We bring good news to the world on behalf of our Christian community and we share with others in bringing good news to the church as we find God to be alive and at work in the forgotten parts of humanity. In a world that is hungry for community and connection, we know of nothing more real and refreshing than a church community that lives and learns the gospel together.

Community Care seeks to assist the church meet community needs. At Geelong, Vic, the Kardinia Christian Fellowship manages Crossroads Lodge, which is a supportive accommodation for men who are working through drug, alcohol and other tough issues within their lives. It is a positive Christian environment that has life-changing realities happening.

Why do churches and individuals commit to this demanding aspect of ministry? They believed strongly in the compelling demand of Jesus to be "out there" in the community—to encounter the realities of life. Yes, it would be much easier to be confined within the four walls of an institution, but would that be fulfilling the call of God? Therefore, this fellowship connects with the needs within their community.

Last Friday night I was tired after a hectic week with Community Care in NSW. I'd spent a large part of the day with a lady from our Crisis Centre whose five-year-old son had been run over when crossing the road. This occurred in front of his brothers and sister. There are no words to describe this mother's grief. My most eloquent words of comfort amounted to tears. My only thread of hope was that God knows exactly what it is like to have a son killed before he reaches his prime.

Maybe one day down the track this knowledge of shared grief would be a comfort.

There are many times when I have thought that I am doing someone else a great service and instead they have blessed me. I remember vividly one night when my small group gave up the comfort of their living room Bible study and went to help a single mum move into her new home. The walls were mouldy and covered with graffiti. There was a dead mouse in the toaster. We helped for a couple of hours and then as we sat outside with a coffee she said, "You've done more for me tonight than my family ever did". What we did was ordinary, everyday neighbourliness. I find that I don't have to do great things for God. I just need to be faithful in the small everyday things.

Emergency relief ministry is a challenge for the Williamstown, Vic, church as they seek appropriate ways of supporting people. The challenge is to "do more" than just hand out material aid. How do we walk beside people, to understand their needs, to see them as more than people who "need help". It is a challenge to eliminate the judgmental attitude that builds up within your own thinking.

Ministering at the margins of our society is a challenge to our collective

commitment to reconciliation. We operate out of a belief that all Christians are called upon to emulate God's justice and mercy. "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8, NIV)

Wendy Parish is Assistant Director Community Care-Welfare, NSW. Cheryl Johnson is a Director of Community Services for Community Care, Vic-Tas.



Mission

The Way We "Do It"

DAVID YARDLEY

We must be accepting of one another's short comings and encourage each other to excel in our strengths and be relevant in our attempts to reach our culture. That doesn't mean compromising in our faith or commission. It means we should do our best.

How many times do we squabble in the church over things that mean very little in regard to the salvation of the world? Things that are very frequently founded only by tradition, or repetition. Meanwhile, the world looks on and still

I think we need to think a little more on the cutting edge

calls us irrelevant, behind the times and conservative. The Churches of Christ in Australia have the opportunity to be front runners in reaching the nation, but why are we not?

I believe the answer lies in taking our eyes off tradition, seeing the needs that are current and endeavouring to meet those needs now. By "now" I mean in a relevant manner and within the boundaries of relevance. Youth For Christ have had a motto that is worth thinking about. "Geared to the times, but anchored to the rock!"

It is wrong to just consider our local congregation. We must make changes in the formula to more effectively reach the local people. Paul in the New Testament spent much time encouraging local groups, but also had an outward vision to reach people in their culture; and was "prepared to do what it took". I am saddened as a member of the fam-

ily that we are so judgmental concerning the "way others who are successful do it". By that I mean that for many of us, and sad to say I am not exempt, we score each other with spiritual points weekly, instead of endeavouring to focus on the purpose and goal. No, it may not be the way I would pray, not the way I would lead worship,

not the song/hymn that I like best or the order I would run the program; however it probably best reaches the people that I am (ought to be) praying for.

I think we need to think a little more on the cutting edge of where things are heading in the secular world and get on board in order to reach the masses. Don't see the Internet as a negative weapon against our faith, full of filth and to be avoided at all cost, but as a tool to reach more people, more quickly and in a contemporary fashion.

I very often wonder if Jesus entered the world now what would he wear, what church would he go to, what places he would frequent and who would he choose as disciples? When I look at the character of the disciples he chose, I think I would fit in, even though I have done wrong, and even though I question the status quo, and even though I have a secular job.

One unfortunate and possibly controversial comment is that we are becoming a generation that is yet again focussing inward, in the area of worship. Our emphasis is not yet out of



control, but be wary of the imbalance. An indicator of this may be seen in our budget. How much is going to relevant and appropriate outreach when compared with equipment for our worship program?

Yes let's present our voices as sacrifices of praise, but let's present our whole bodies as offerings of sacrifice. This means taking the feelings that we are feeling outside the walls of our churches and in understandable ways introduce Jesus to the people of 1999-2000 young and old.

Jesus would, I believe, like to upgrade our traditions just a little. Most of them would have been unthinkable even to him at any rate.

The world, we say, is screaming out for hope. Are we pointing to a dead and buried hope or one that through Christ lives today?

We must rethink our goals in line with the great commission and alter our plans to touch the community where it is at, not where it was!

David and his family attend our Thornlie, WA, church. He is responsible for the development of the Bridge Theatre.

Messianic Mikveh Service

LAWRENCE HIRSCH

Beit HaMashiach is Hebrew for "House of Messiah". It might not sound like it, but it is one of the newest Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania. It is a messianic Jewish congregation planted by the missionary organisation "Celebrate Messiah" and it affiliated with conference in May 1999.

During the Jewish High Holiday Season, Beit HaMashiach held a "messianic mikveh service" (baptism service) where four, mostly new believers, testified of their faith in Jesus through immersion.

Lawrence Hirsch, Director of Celebrate Messiah and leader of Beit HaMashiach, began the



After years looking for the coming of Messiah, Faygala is baptised in the name of Jesus

She asked if Lawrence could hold her under the water for a little longer

service with an explanation of Christian baptism.

Lawrence pointed out that baptism has its roots in Jewish ritual cleansing dating back to the Temple and pre-Temple times, ever since God told Aaron and his descendants to bathe themselves in water before performing their priestly duties. This ceremonial cleansing developed further with the coming of John the Baptist. Then later, with Christian or "messianic" baptism in identification with the Messiah's death, burial and resurrection.

Beit HaMashiach has an attendance of about 70 congregants, who are a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles. The four candidates for baptism reflected this mix—two were of Jewish origin

and two from a Gentile background.

Each candidate shared a short testimony before they were baptised, telling how God had brought them to that point. Their testimonies were each special and challenging, and many in the congregation were moved to tears.

Alison shared how just 18 months ago, she was an atheist, leading a professional singing career back in her home town in the United States. She is now attending Bible College and feels that the Lord is teaching her about discipline.

Faygala, an 84-year-old Russian Jewish lady spoke of her experiences during the war, during which her house was fire-bombed by the Nazis. She suffered burns to her entire body and face. She lost her first husband and child in the war, and then later married another man who really loved her despite disfigurement from the burns. It was especially poignant when she shared how her mother had

always looked for the coming of the Messiah and now, at 84, she had found him—Jesus.

Jane shared how she had been drawn to the Lord through a very special girl—Sarah Hirsch. Sarah is the daughter of Lawrence and Louise Hirsch, who was born with very severe brain damage. Jane had come into the Hirsch home as a carer for Sarah. Over a year and a half she observed the Hirsch family and was drawn to the Lord through the love she found in the family. Her testimony was very moving and she also shared a poem she had written before coming to faith in Jesus that spoke of her longing for God. Jane is going to live in Israel for three months as a volunteer on a Christian mission. Sue shared about her experiences as a young girl in Synagogue. The first impressions she had of God was during a Rosh Hashanah service (Feast of Trumpets), when she was a child. Once she had come to faith in Jesus, she took quite a

while to begin to understand the meaning and significance of baptism. She had always wanted to be baptised by another messianic Jew and she expressed her excitement and enthusiasm for baptism when she asked if Lawrence could hold her under the water for a little longer so that she could savour the moment. When Sue told her Jewish mother she was going to be baptised, her mother was very angry and said that she was betraying her Jewish ancestors. Sue asked those present to please pray for her mother.

A visitor to the service shared that he had, in his experience as a Christian, never seen people express such enthusiasm in being baptised and it really impressed him greatly. It was a very special service. It felt that the presence of God was almost tangible and many were drawn closer to the Messiah. It is a night that will be remembered for a long time to come.

Lawrence is Director of Celebrate Messiah Australia.

WAYNE BETTS

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

HEMER, John John's new home is "Resthaven", 47 Eve Avenue, Bellevue Heights SA 5050.

APPROACHING MARRIAGES

ROGERSON-LUSTED Marj. and Bob together with Wendy and Ian are pleased to announce that Heather and Andrew will be married in the Doncaster Community Church of Christ, Vic, on Sunday, 21 Nov. 1999 at 2.00 pm.

GOLDEN WEDDING

RATTEN, Jean and Greame Married at Mordialloc Methodist Church, Vic, 20 October 1949. Present address: Cottage 23 "Hillcrest", Railway Crescent, Stanwell Park NSW 2508.

DEATHS

LEASK, Malcolm Sunday, 24 October, aged 84. Died in hospital at Gosford, NSW. Husband of Orba. Father of many. Retired minister of Berkeley Vale Church of Christ.

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Those who have read this column over the past two years (thanks, Mum and Dad!) will probably have formed an opinion on my theology.

You will have observed that I share a healthy distrust of glib answers to life's questions. You may have perceived that, because of this, the diversity of the Old Testament particularly appeals to me.

For spiritual control freaks, some of the loose ends of Scrip-

I share a healthy distrust of glib answers

ture demand extensive "spin doctoring" to fit them into a neat theological system. (That's what political hangers-on do to create the best possible interpretation of both success and failure.) I think the Scriptures (and God too, for that matter) resist our puny efforts to pin down, dissect and categorise them, and put them in nicely-controlled boxes.

Take the beginning of Genesis 6. (I reckon many people have wished that *someone* had taken it out!). Who are these sons of God? Who are the Nephilim?



Now I've heard all the explanations about fallen angels or the godly line of humanity, etc, etc. Honestly, these explanations (to me at least) sounds very much like "spin-doctoring". So what is this passage? Hebrew folklore? And if so, what's a folktale doing in Spirit-inspired Genesis? And what does that do to our doctrines of inspiration, inerrancy, etc?

No easy answers, I'm afraid. When I'm faced with difficult passages like this (and believe me, there are a few of them in there!) I come to the point of saying "I don't know". Despite my years of studying and all the commentaries I may consult, I **don't know**. Despite furrowing my brow, looking intelligent, and exerting every brain cell I possess, I **don't know**.

God's purposes are beyond ours, and his revelation to us way beyond our little boxes of inerrancy, inspiration, fact, fiction and faith. In spin-doctoring such passages we may satisfy our control-freak tendencies, but we can also miss what God may be wanting to say to us about embracing mystery.

I'm learning to allow the diversity (dare I say "contradictions"?) of the Scriptures to remind me that I see "through a glass darkly", but that one day I will see "face to face". In the meantime, it's OK to say, "I don't know".



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—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

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The View from the Outside (2)

VINEY LONGTHORP

In a previous issue of the "AC" (11.8.99) we sampled four media views of the Christian faith and churches. On the whole they were not flattering. But there is value in seeing the ways others see us. Even negative comments may help in our dialogue with the world. Archbishop Vaclav Maly's words are apposite: "Rather than seeing other people as enemies, we should see them as enrichment of our own point of view."

Thus church and world face each other in quizzical wonderment.

In this respect, the statement in Acts 11:26 is instructive, where it is recorded that it was in Antioch that the first disciples were first called Christians. As William Barclay noted, the term originally was meant as a jesting nickname, but it became one

of deep meaning. Sometimes the views of outsiders can be spot on.

Likewise the fact that many outsiders call Churches of Christ a denomination irritates some of us. We protest that we are a movement with a plea and a plan for Christian unity. But in spite of our inner ideals, it has to be admitted that to all outward appearances we display many of the accoutrements associated with denominations. Ideals are not easily seen from the outside. So, as world and church look at each other with seeming incomprehension, what does each see and how do they respond?

Our understanding of the present world in its continual paroxysm of change is helped by the insights of Neil Postman in his book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Many regard this as a seminal text, especially in understanding the effects of the mass-media on society. Then our own Hugh Mackay in his *Generations* writes in a similar way about the Australian scene. He says ours is an age of uncertainty, of subjectivity and relativity. It is an age of rampant individualism; one preoccupied with the rational and the material. Yet paradoxically, superstition is rife. Institutions, from marriage to schools, and including the church, are viewed with suspicion. Politics is reduced to a spectator sport.

Postman sees our quests for distraction, entertainment and pleasure as the name of the game. He notes, as do others, that many churches tend to take their cues from this culture. Services must be "bright", hence many of these resemble a religious concert rather than being shaped by the discipline of liturgical forms. He sees

many presentations of Christian truths more a matter of style than substance.

Mackay notes that many Christians are "footloose", with no close denominational loyalty. As Malise Ruthven writes, the churches confront the world with a "divine supermarket" in the Safeway mode, much like a spiritual smorgasbord. Hence many churches drop their denominational tag, preferring the ubiquitous expression, "community".

Thus church and world face each other, not so much in the manner of a battle, as in quizzical wonderment. The church especially needs to heed Dean Inge's caution: "The man who marries the spirit of one age finds himself a widower in the next."

Even so, the situation is full of irony, paradox, and ambivalence. For "the very uncertainty that characterises this post-modern era will lead, inexorably to a season of renewed faith ... doubt is the engine of faith ... meaninglessness is uncomfortable ... hence the growing interest in spirituality." (Mackay) One hopes that in this situation the church grasps its opportunity to present life's true foundation.

The media reflects all these in its many presentations of religion. After all, religion sells, like sex and royalty. But what a mixed approach the media makes! For instance the recent Mike Willesee television program "Signs from God" which examined a Bolivian woman's manifestations of the stigmata of Christ topped the ratings the week it was broadcast. Then there was that film, "Noah's Ark", also shown on television. The actor Jon Voigt played the part of our primeval shipwright.



But both features made many Christians (and some "outsiders") very uncomfortable with the heavy emphasis on externals and the visible, on "sand tray theology" (unquote). This seems to be where much of the world is at, least wise, according to the media.

That splendid series, "The Devil: an unauthorised biography", as shown on the ABC's Compass program, received commendation from many, erstwhile hard-bitten journalists, who admitted to being a "pagan lot". But it had poor ratings. In recent times, both the Pope and Britain's Archbishop of Canterbury in separate comments caused flurries in the media when they questioned the extra-terrestrial geography of Hell and sought to give it (and Heaven), a more profound theological interpretation. The media seems to show a world variously conservative, concrete, and celebrity-driven in its attitudes to religion. Has Christian education failed us?

There is much evidence to show that as far as religion is concerned, the church and the media need each other. But so often the church feels that the media never gets it right and the media finds the church a petulant critic of its religious presentations.

Is rapprochement possible?



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MARRIAGES

•Joanne Rankin and Kevin Sadler, Waikerie, SA •Wendy Williams and Tom Chapman, Mitcham, Vic •Rebecca McFerran and Andrew Clearer, Scarborough, WA •Rebecca McHutchinson and David Kent, La Trobe Terrace, Geelong, Vic •Emily O'Keefe and Paul Morrison, Launceston, Tas

DEATHS

•Douglas Jecks, Scarborough, WA •Ethel Jakobi, La Trobe Terrace, Geelong, Vic •Lily Adams, Taree, NSW •Jan Blackmore, Monash City, Vic •John Butler, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld

OBITUARIES NSW

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
ADAMS, Lily
Lily, a member of the Taree, NSW, church, recently died at the age of 92 years. She was most active up to her sudden death. Always a cheerful participant in church activities, she was a gracious friend to many through the years. Lily is survived by her son Norm and family. She is fondly remembered by the members of the Taree Church of Christ.

—KB

POWELL, Jean Muriel
(16.9.99) Born Wagga Wagga, NSW, 23.9.13, the ninth child of Richard and Antonia Roberts, Jean completed nursing training at Young. She married Arthur Edward Powell 25.9.37 and was baptised during the Hinrichsen-Morris Mission 8.10.41. Their Athol Street home, became a home-away-from-home for young people and venue for CYF. Jean was a member of the Gideons women's auxiliary. She was widowed December 1991, a year after shifting to Gumleigh Chauncy Retirement Village. Pastor Bob Whan conducted her funeral service at Wagga Wagga church. Jean is survived by four of her five children, Richard, Marie Berecny, Barbara Luelf and Ian, 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

—Richard Powell

TAREE (R. Foletta, S. Kelly) CWF led Sunday service & hosted luncheon to celebrate 75th anniversary of women's ministries in church. Shirley Mansell guest speaker ... 30 children enjoyed Kids Holiday Club with Owen Shelley ... Annual fete raised \$3,000 which will be shared with a sister church ... Regular monthly men's breakfasts currently focusing on stress management.
TWEED HEADS-COOLANGATTA (Bruce Warwick) Over 80 enjoyed lunch for Year of the Older Persons arranged by Drop In Fellowship. Lil Oakes of Marana Gardens, formerly of Tweed, special guest as the senior citizen of this special year. Junior band & young people presented musical program ... Church to extend property with children's ministries in mind & seeks appointment of associate minister ... Warwick family on long service leave. Stuart White pastor in absence.

QLD

CAMP HILL (John Adermann) Church encouraged by visitors & developing strategies to get them to stay ... Ted & Marge Keating visited after Sunstate Convention. Ted spent time with church leaders who found this time most beneficial ... Family camp held in the mountains. Great time had by all ... A number of members participating in "Becoming a Contagious Christian" course.

TWYFORD ST, BUNDABERG (Roy Funu) Bruce & Connie Roberts farewelled 3 Oct. Church welcomed Roy & Jeanette Funu 17 Oct. for interim ministry with emphasis on prayer ... Don & Connie Bengston & Carol Devlin welcomed into membership ... Colin Albert & Bob Bignill inducted as new elders ... Marion Hopton recovering from heart surgery. Don & Gay Stringer proud grandparents.

HUME ST, TOOWOOMBA (Dale White, Ross Savill, Darren Robinson)

Church hosted annual Sunstate Convention. Guest speakers Rick Rusaw (USA), Keith Farmer, Ted Keating, Chek Chia, Tim Foot ... Bev Grenfell inducted as President of Queensland Christian Women's Ministries ... Peter Overton continuing as Conference President ... Small group census revealed over 300 people participating in Bible studies and home groups ... Church hosted Toowoomba Missions Expo. Speaker Tim Meyers (Pioneers). 1000 people from different churches attended.

SA

WAIKERIE (Peter DeWildt) Attendances at weekly services being maintained ... AGM held recently. All previous office bearers re-elected. Minister appointed further 12 months ... Weekly Bible studies being held. Also monthly program on church leadership ... Fellowship continues to support financially Kelvin & Roslyn Nicolle, Wycliffe Bible translators ... Members rejoice in baptism of a young man, with further rejoicing in marriage of couple in the fellowship.

NARACOORTE (Steve Kifto) Church growing. In positive heart ... Over 100 attended musical smorgasbord night. Almost \$1000 raised for new piano ... Friendship evangelism course nearing completion ... Church camp at Robe challenging & relaxing ... SE churches rally 13 Nov. at Naracoorte ... Monthly Sunday evening dinner with average of 55 attending. Service conducted around formal meal ... Young people led service & played music when Melinda Rabbetts baptised.

TAS

DEVONPORT (Peter Willis) Commenced duplicate service to allow for growth ... Seth Cleaver employed as part-time assistant minister 6 month period ... 49 new members last 12 months ... 5 baptisms last 5 weeks ... Baby dedication for Madison Bannon ... Christmas musical rehears-

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