

THE AUSTRALIAN

# christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 102 No. 7, 12 May 1999

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## *Pentecost*

*Anyone who enters into  
genuine discipleship accepts  
the **adventure** of the **Spirit**,  
the **demands** of the **Spirit**,  
and the **ministry** of the **Spirit**  
as they collaborate in common  
work for the coming kingdom.*





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Vol. 102 No. 7, 12 May 1999

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## Editorial

### An Extraordinary Work

DON SMITH

**P**entecost has often been associated with the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity", a theme relatively easy to ignore in a busy life. Since the 1970s the charismatic movement has often seemed to be the most highly visible and immediate expression of the Holy Spirit in the church. \* Peter Wagner in a recent book *The New Apostolic Church* acknowledges his debt to Donald McGavran who introduced him to church growth thinking. In research, while lecturing at Fuller Seminary in the US, Wagner moved on to consider the whole direction, intrusion and growth of the charismatic movement within the



world church. His present study focuses on what he describes as the New Apostolic Reformation. Wagner believes we are in the midst of the most radical change in the way of doing church since the Protestant reformation. Wagner defines the New Apostolic Reformation as "an extraordinary work of God at the close of the twentieth century that is, to a significant extent changing the shape of Protestant Christianity around the world". \* Thinking about the five-fold ministry pattern of gifting is the substance of our theme articles and flows in part from the issues noted above. This is our first exploration of these matters. We may ignore all this or ponder what the Spirit may be saying to us. One thing that is fairly clear is that wherever Christians turn aside from the Spirit's prompting and guidance and simply affirm old ways, they could seldom be optimistic about their future. \* One outcome of the Stanwell Tops Summit of late 1998, with Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom representatives, was the introduction of the theme of the five-fold ministry pattern in the Manifesto. While keeping our feet firmly on the ground so to speak, we are embarking on renewed exploration and discovery of the Scriptures. \* Within the Western church we can all too easily find gloom, contraction, disunity and decline. Our churches are heading in the opposite direction. The early pointers are there. It would be a good experience for each of us to reflect upon our cover statement and our theme and pray for our personal and corporate life. We may well be on the edge of a great adventure in the Spirit. \*



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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.**

### Hymn Details Thanks

To the Editor,

Your recent publication of my request for information about a hymn ("AC" 7.4.99) drew a remarkably strong response—15 letters and telephone calls from all states. My state of health does not permit me to reply to such large numbers, so I would be grateful if you could run a paragraph in the "Letters" column thanking these good people for their kindness. It was a tribute to the effectiveness of *The Australian Christian* in reaching its audience.

—Jack Ludbrook  
(Toorak Gardens, SA)

## Baby Boomers

To the Editor,

I was interested in the "Comment" on the Baby Boomers written by Gordon Stirling ("AC" 10.3.99). The statement that Gordon makes when he writes of the commercial world outmanoeuvring the churches for the allegiance of the Baby Boomers with attractive programs such as senior citizens and travel clubs provide is quite true. But surely, many of the types of programs that these organisations use to attract the Baby Boomers are not beyond the imagination and ingenuity of our churches to take, adopt and alter to suit their circumstances.

The church which my wife and I attend has organised evening programs with a meal and imagination, on each of the past three years. Our members were encour-

aged to invite their non-church friends to attend these functions. The results were encouraging—a full house each time.

However, the most important point I make is that these occasions offered excellent opportunities, not only to warmly welcome these non-church attenders to our program, but to talk to them and cordially invite them to our church services and become part of our Christian family.

—Howard Barnden  
(Echuca, Vic)

## Perfection

To the Editor,

Graeme Ellingsen ("AC" 28.4.99) seems to have misunderstood when I said that we were not made perfect, but had our relationship with God restored through Christ's work on the cross.

I was not speaking about abstract theology, but about our experience of our salvation. Obviously, from our experience, and from the record of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 7, we cannot escape the frailty of our human nature—we all fail and fall into sin.

Thinking in the terms I suggest has some significant benefits. First, it helps the new believer when faced with the reality of their own failures to know that they have not suddenly been made sinless, but have been forgiven and have begun a journey of relationship with God that results in their becoming more like Christ. It helps avoid despair and giving up.

Second, if we use the language of shame and forgiveness when speaking with those outside the faith, we leave less opportunity for accusations of hypocrisy and inconsistency, as we are a forgiven people, not a perfect one. That is, it is a useful approach in evangelism. —Nigel Pegrum

—Nigel Pegram  
(Kilmore, Vic)



# Letters to the Editor

## Ecumenism

To the Editor,  
Regarding Bill Tabbernee's comment on ecumenism ("AC" 7.4.99), no matter how well intentioned Christians are, no matter how many portions of Scripture are embraced, I cannot see much progress in unity while the attitude of Pope John Paul II remains paramount. The following statement says it all. "Christian unity will not become a reality unless all churches accept the authority Christ entrusted to St Peter and his successors. Unity in Christ is based on following his will."

—Garth Rehn  
(Kersbrook, SA)

## Contemporary Titles

To the Editor,  
In reply to Beverley Maxwell ("AC" 24.3.99) and Ron Brooker ("AC" 7.4.99) "Contemporary Titles". In today's society "Ms" has feminist connotations. There is even a feminist magazine called *Ms*. "Ms" does not convey a woman's marital status, a status which is very important to Christians as when a man and woman are married they become one flesh. Is the title "Ms" an attempt by a woman to usurp authority over a man? (1 Tim 2:12) Does "Ms" have a place in Churches of Christ?

Ron Brooker stated that "spouse" could be replaced with "partner". Today, partner can mean "homosexual partner", "unmarried partner" or "married partner" but "spouse" means married partner. As Christians we should not even take on the appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22). The Bible tells us that an unrepentant homosexual or fornicator will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9). A World Convention of Churches of Christ needs to be based on the Bible in all aspects, even titles.

—Stephen Dyer  
(Swan Hill, Vic)

## More Mopping Up

To the Editor,  
I recently commented on the growth of MOPS (Mothers of Preschool Children) in Australia. Uncharacteristically, I understated the remarkable growth that it has

enjoyed. There are now 22 MOPS groups in Australia. This compares to two groups that were active in 1996. Groups operating within Churches of Christ are found at Campbelltown, NSW, North Turramurra, NSW, West-

side Qld, Nambour, Qld, Ballarat Vic, (Dawson Street and York Street) Doncaster, Vic, Monash, Vic, Blackburn, Vic, Portland Vic, Toowoomba Qld and Wollongong NSW.

—Ted Keating  
(Wollongong, NSW)

## Update

Dear Readers,

You will want to note the initiative from the Overseas Mission Board to accept donations for Churches of Christ in Albania for their refugee relief work (see page 5). The Board of *The Australian Christian* has agreed to co-sponsor this appeal. A report on the Albanian churches' work appeared in our last issue. As we went to press, a substantial report arrived from Albania, which we have included (see page 7). In this issue we introduce a new feature, "Postcard from Trent". "Trent" is a young man from one of our churches who

is touring Australia during this year. We look forward to his postcards from time to time. He might even turn up in your church.

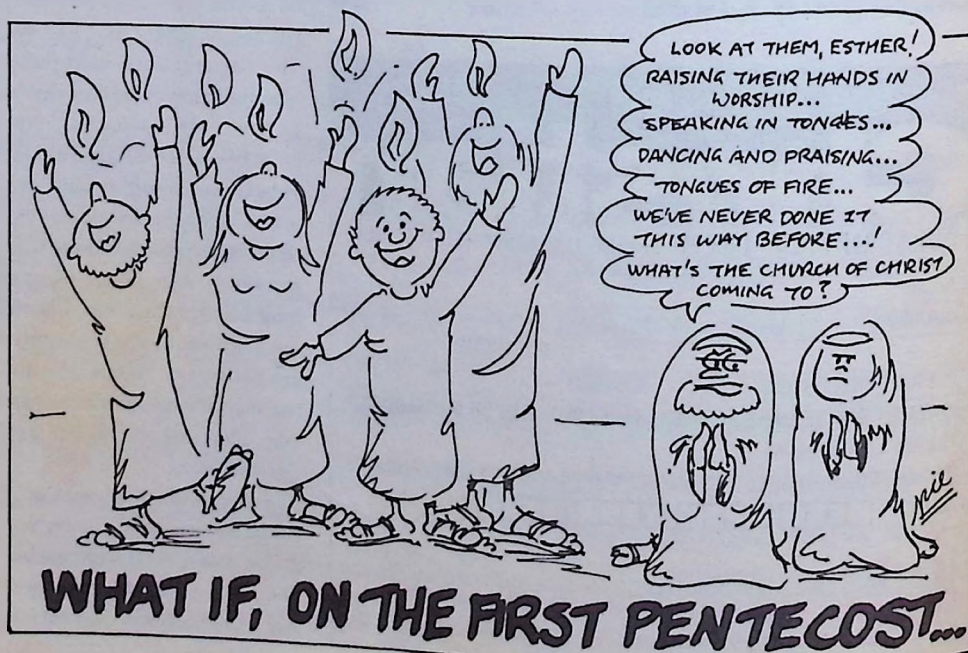
Responses to our invitation to nominate men and women who have made a significant contribution to our state and national life are now coming to hand. Readers are invited to send us your nomination of up to 100 words by 21 May.

In our issue of 11 November 1998 we carried a book review by Janet Thompson of *With Hearts and Hymns and Voices* a novel by Pam Rhodes published by Hodder. Demand for the book meant that cop-

ies sold out. We are advised that this book will again be available in May in a new edition.

Lyndsay and Lorraine Jacobs of the World Convention International office (they originally came from our New Zealand churches) will be present at a number of state Conferences to promote the Brisbane World Convention in August 2000. We welcome the Jacobs to Australia on their visit from the USA.

*Ken Smith*





# Does God Care for Little Boys?

DON SMITH

On Good Friday night I found myself watching television reports of the humanitarian crisis on the borders of Kosovo. There were shots of endless lines of refugees shuffling along, but what gripped my attention was a little boy of some eight years amid the crowd, crying and fearful as he looked at the camera. Within a few seconds the picture was repeated with the comment that this little boy in the blue jacket had become separated from his family and was lost. I thought how this one clip could become one of those which in time depicted the whole horror of the situation.

My heart went out to this little boy. Last year our family were on a picnic in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. In a remarkable way seven adults lost touch with our four-year-old grandson who was playing on the edge of a wooded area. One minute he was there and then he was gone. We searched the area and called his name, but to no avail. Family members spread out further to search the

numerous pathways leading from the area and in the trees and dense shrubbery. I think we all tried to remain calm, but when there was no trace the urgency increased. Thankfully our grandson was recovered within 20 minutes and emerged deeply upset from behind the counter of the gardens gift shop where he had been taken by a caring visitor.

The little boy from Kosovo still haunts me. Has he been united with family members? I find myself praying for him, feeling his appalling sense of loss if he is still separated. I pray for him and feel a little ridiculous about praying for "a little boy in a blue jacket".

Does God care for little boys in blue jackets?

I believe he does, but these are profound questions that trouble one's inner spirit at such times. And all this seen on Good Friday night! One feels such a sense of despair as these pictures continue night after night. We have sent a donation. It's something we can do! I hope you can too.

# Albanian Appeal

Channel for funds to our Albanian churches opened

Once again Churches of Christ in Australia have responded compassionately to a situation of human suffering and tragedy.

The Overseas Mission Board has received numerous phone calls and inquiries seeking to help those who have been affected by the situation in Kosovo.

Churches and individuals are eager to give support through a credible channel in order that relief can reach those directly affected.

The Overseas Mission Board is making an allocation of \$10,000 from Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA) funds that will be directed to contacts in the area through British a cappella Churches of Christ.

There is a cooperative response in the churches in Britain to this need.

The awareness of the need and the possibility of sending funds via our UK churches arose from a report sent to *The Australian Christian* ("AC" 28.4.99), which is co-sponsoring the appeal.

Please let your church leaders and friends know about this.



*Craig Bossie, OMB Assistant Director, reports on a channel to assist Albanian refugees*

If you, your friends or your church wish to support the relief efforts in Kosovo please send donations to: COCOA, 180a Gray Street, Adelaide SA 5000. A tax-deductible receipt will be issued and your donation passed on as soon as possible.

—Craig Bossie, OMB Assistant Director

## Here and There

### Kosovo

The Australian Jewish community has committed itself to support for refugees from Kosovo, many of whom are Muslim. Rabbi Franklin, who launched the appeal, said that the Jewish community will not stand by and do nothing while ethnic cleansing happens again in Europe, observing that the world appears to have learnt nothing from the terrible history of this century. He said that Jewish people would do all they can to help the people affected by ethnic warfare, whether Muslims, Christians or Jews.



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## CBMI Work Continues

**CBMI staff work tirelessly in battle-torn Sierra Leone**

Local Christian Blind Mission International staff in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, are safe and continue to work tirelessly despite fierce fighting between rebels and Government forces in that country.

There were grave concerns for the safety of CBMI staff when Freetown was attacked and the main telephone exchange was damaged, cutting all lines of communication. Phone lines were not re-established until 12 days later when news came that, despite heavy bombardments and at least one CBMI eye hospital being looted, work has been able to continue.

David Lewis, CBMI's Field Director who worked in Sierra Leone from 1990-1993, says staff in Freetown are ignoring the surrounding chaos and are working around the clock to help those in need.

"In the midst of this desperate situation, CBMI staff, though hampered, continue to treat locals and refugees who present with eye injuries and infections, thereby preventing blindness.

"We thank God they have not been forced to stop their essential work and pray they will be able to

continue helping as many people as possible. We anxiously await news of our staff based in rural areas."

CBMI supports four projects in Sierra Leone; the Lunsar Eye Hospital, the Makomp and Makeni Rehabilitation Programs and the Kissy Eye Clinic in Freetown.

The war in Sierra Leone began in 1990, with rebels attempting to wrest control of the nation from the elected government. This latest round of fighting flared in December 1998, with diplomatic efforts for peace unsuccessful to date.

David says there are now serious fears of a humanitarian crisis as over 1.5 million Sierra Leonians seek refuge from surrounding conflict in the capital, Freetown, large areas of which have been destroyed.

"Grandstands at the city's main football stadium have become



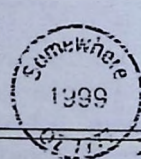
*Local CBMI staff treating refugees.*

shelter for around 50,000 of these refugees," says David, "with aid agencies only able to provide limited food and medical assistance. "The potential for disaster is enor-

mous. We just hope and pray the war will stop and Sierra Leonians will be able to rebuild their homes and lives in peace and safety as soon as possible."

Australian  
Christian  
Postcards

Postcard  
from  
Trent



Dear Don,

It seems longer than two months ago that I left home to begin my journey around Australia. I travelled slowly to begin with, spending some time at Mt Gambler before heading to the SA Riverlands District to work.

Most of my time here has been cutting pears on a factory line for drying. Never before have I met such a mixed bunch of people as there were at Angus Park. Aged between 15 and 75, everyone was so different, some loud, others quiet and reserved, some content to dream the time away, others talking non stop. One lady had a repertoire of about five stories which she repeated every day!

Another two had Down Syndrome and taught us life from another, joyful and loving perspective.

Meeting new and wonderful people is continually the highlight of my trip, as by discovering the personalities and qualities of others, I am learning more about myself.

Until next time,  
Trent Harris

["Trent", not his real name, is known to the Editor, who suggested he might send an occasional postcard on his great "learning experience" while travelling around Australia. He might visit your church sometime. This could be a bit like "entertaining angels unawares", but not quite!]

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# Kosovo Report

## Update on our church's relief efforts in Tirana

*We have just received another letter from Artan and Becky Samara in Tirana, Albania. You will also want to note the relief channel co-sponsored by "The Australian Christian" and OMB (see page 5).*

Dear Brethren,

We thank you all for the support, love and encouragement you are giving to us, as we serve our Lord through our relief project for Kosovo refugees. As you probably know, our priority at the beginning was to build up and manage a refugee camp of our own. This

decision was the result of our good will and enthusiasm to do our best in service to these people. Naturally, we have had no previous experience in such things. As time passed and after a careful study of the situation and what was needed to run a camp successfully, and after we carefully listened to those with experience in emergency work, we decided not to take on this responsibility. Our efforts now will be directed to the Kosovo refugees who live outside the camps who are hosted by Albanian families, and who are the ones in more desperate need for food. The refugee camps are being helped from different Non-Government Organisations, but no one is helping the refugees who live in the houses of the Albanians. That is because information about the refugees is missing and it is difficult to organise the work to help these people. On the other hand, Albanian families who have opened their houses to refugees can no longer support refugees with food. Let's not forget that the Kosovo families are big, with an average of seven people for each family, and the economic situation of Albanian families (according to the World Bank data) is far below the average poverty level.

A week ago we went to a house of an old lady where twelve refugees were staying. The old Albanian lady did not stop thanking us for the food we provided. She said that in the two weeks that refugees had stayed with her she had spent all her savings. All those in her house were now in desperate need of food. Some of the people that live with her were going to the camps for food, but because they were not part of the camp,

food was very difficult to obtain. To be more organised, more effective, more future-orientated, and to get things more under control, the church decided to create a Crisis Committee, which will deal with the project's everyday operations.

The committee has opened a special bank account. For the moment, I will be the one with the responsibility of creating the financial system and keeping the financial data records, which will be double-checked on a regular basis by each of the committee members. Records will be available to each member of the church.

Based on the suggestion of our brothers and on the need to show our unity in our efforts to help the refugees, the committee decided that it would be best to have an official report of the work that will be sent out weekly. It will be reviewed for accuracy by members of the committee and the final copy will be sent via e-mail to our contacts and supporters.

To date, we have been able to help around 400 refugees or around 50 families who live outside the camps in different areas of the town. We have assisted them with food—mainly flour, oil, sugar, rice, meat, fruit, soap, nappies for babies, toiletries, sleeping mats, blankets, second-hand clothes and the like. We are continuing to help the refugee camp in Kavaja, where we recently sent a van full of nappies for babies. The total amount spent till now has been around \$US10,000. In our relief work we are considering not only the help we are giving, such as food or other items, but also the need to spend time socialising with them. So whenever we go to



*Artan and Becky Samara, attempting to deal with the refugee crisis in Albania*

give some help, we stay to talk with the refugees about their physical and spiritual needs. The result of our work has already borne fruit. There are some Kosovo families who have started to bring their children to the children's classes that we organise in the church.

Last Sunday I was preaching in Elbasan, a town around 60 km from Tirana. There were many visitors present, but what made me more than happy was the presence of two young Kosovo refugees. The theme I spoke about was "Generosity". At the end of the service, the two Kosovo boys came and hugged me with their eyes filled with tears. It was very emotional. These hugs were not given to me, but to the Lord's Word. I pray to God that many other souls will be touched by his Word of truth, by his love and generosity, and may the door be opened for us to evangelise in Kosovo.

We are so thankful to God for the love and enthusiasm of our brothers and sisters in the church and to all of you who are supporting us in our joint efforts.

May God bless you all,  
Artan and Brikena Samara

### Here and There

#### Kosovo Crisis Appeal

The National Council of Churches in Australia has launched an appeal for the many thousands of Kosovars seeking refuge from violence, ethnic cleansing and killing. The council is working through ACT (Action by Churches Together), which is involved in Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and may be made by calling the Council on 1800 025 101 or to the Kosovo Crisis Appeal, NCCA, Private Bag 199, QVB PO, Sydney NSW 1230.

#### Bible Society—Kosovo

Twenty thousand copies of *When Your World Changes*, an evangelistic scripture-based booklet, have already been distributed in Albania and in camps holding refugees from Kosovo by the International Bible Society. Many more copies are expected to be needed. The booklet has previously been distributed in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia.



## A Great Year

Graduate Year of 1962 Reunion



(L-R) Kevin Edwards, Trevor Lawrie, Brian Ricketts, Alan Matheson, Brian White, Graham Carslake, Mal Giezendanner, Kevin Turner and Tom Morrison. (Inez Compston (Groves) was at the reunion but missed the photo.)

Coinciding with the graduation of CCTC Mulgrave last November, the class of students who graduated thirty-six years ago from what was then known as the College of the Bible, Glen Iris, held a reunion.

Of the thirteen who graduated, ten shared in an afternoon get-together and an evening meal before attending this year's graduation. Only Keith Bowes, now ministering in Perth, Bert Storay, who has a counselling centre in central Victoria, and Robert Sidler, in

South Australia, were unable to attend.

Of the thirteen, eight are still in pastoral ministry or chaplaincy. Others are involved in church and conference leadership. Some have served as state conference presidents. It was a good reunion. 1962 was a great year!

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## Rattling the Chains

Churches and schools of Kooyong call on Federal Member to support forgiveness of unpayable component of third-world debt



Schools and churches join to present paper chains calling for release of third-world debt to the local Federal Member

On 13 April, Surrey Hills Church of Christ, Vic, joined with 18 other churches and five secondary schools in the Kooyong electorate to present Federal Member Petro Georgiou with cardboard chains representing the chains of debt keeping millions of people in the developing world in poverty. Each link in the cardboard chains had been signed by someone supporting the Jubilee 2000 Debt Relief Campaign. Collectively, the chains represented thousands of supporters of debt relief. Churches representing all major denominations in Kooyong participated in making the chains. The Jubilee 2000 Debt Relief Campaign calls for forgiveness of the unpayable component of Third World debts in the year 2000, so that all people may enjoy a basic standard of living.

Church representatives met with Petro Georgiou, Jonathan Moore,

minister of Surrey Hills church represented Churches of Christ in the delegation. Petro Georgiou expressed sympathy for the aims of the campaign and indicated that it was having an influence on the Australian Government. However, the main difference in the position of the campaign and that of the government is on the priority of the human rights of the poor in the conditions of debt relief being granted. The campaign argues that people's basic rights to live with dignity must come first, while our government places greater emphasis on economic management.

Anyone interested in learning more about the campaign or becoming involved can phone the national contact point on (03) 9819 1900 or e-mail <tearvic@ozemail.com.au>.

—Mark and Kristina Zirnsak  
(Melbourne TEAR Action Group)



## Prison Without Walls

**Free Burma night makes a difference**

Amnesty has described Burma as a "prison without walls" and the UN has said that "the Burmese ruling military junta practises torture, executions, forced labour, rape, political arrests, restrictions on freedoms and oppression of ethnic and religious minorities". To help fight injustices in Burma around 150 attended an information and cultural awareness night on 27 March in Springvale, Vic. The night consisted of Burmese dancing, drumming, food and personal stories of oppression from inside Burma. It was organised by a coalition of local Burmese and the Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope members. Many of the Burmese participants in the night have been recently brought out by

airfares raised by Churches of Christ people.

A highlight of the night was the launch of a campaign to ask the City of Greater Dandenong to adopt a selective purchasing policy so that it will not buy Burmese products. The military dictatorship in Burma only stays in power by foreign investment. The campaign was formally launched by the former Australian ambassador to Burma, Garry Woodard, who noted that many American cities such as San Francisco and some Australian councils such as Marrickville and Leichhardt (NSW), Vincent (WA) and Moreland (Vic) have already adopted the policy. Local councillors Dale Wilson and Youhorn Chai responded at the end of the night with confidence that the policy would be taken up by the City of Greater Dandenong too.



*Part of the Burma cultural awareness night held in light of the human rights issues there*

**The fact is that the message and witness of Churches of Christ needs to be reinterpreted in every generation of our rapidly-changing world, and hopefully this will happen as the twenty-first century moves on, ensuring that Churches of Christ will continue to be relevant in every age.**

**—Gordon Stirling**

*From Churches of Christ: Reinterpreting Ourselves for the New Century, released at state conferences in Vic-Tas, SA and NSW Available now for \$7.50, plus \$1.00 postage.*

## IN SEARCH OF VISION AND LEADERSHIP FOR THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

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*The Bible Society in Australia is seeking a person with the skills and motivation needed to fill the position of Australian General Secretary (Chief Executive Officer)*

The position calls for strong personal Christian commitment, unquestioned personal integrity, a sound knowledge of the Bible, a mature spiritual insight, training and experience for leadership and counsel. Strong communication skills (both interpersonal and public) with the ability to articulate clearly in speech and writing are essential, as is a deep regard for different ethnic and religious sensitivities and accessibility and responsiveness to people. Key responsibilities will include planning, policy-making and implementation, and working in cooperation with State Constituents within Australia to achieve the objectives of the Society. Experience in financial management, fundraising and administration is of prime importance.

An attractive remuneration package is offered.

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## New Intensive Being Forged

**Second intensive course to focus on spirituality and discipleship**

The second of two Forge intensive training courses will be held 28 June – 2 July. The first course, held in February on the theme of shifting paradigms of church and mission for church planters and leaders involved in mission, was judged an outstanding success. The second intensive will focus on spirituality and discipleship, as these themes relate to mission and church planting.

Course leaders are Mike Frost, Alan Hirsch, Debra Hirsch, Steve Addison, Milton Oliver, Ashley Barker, David White and Darryl

Gardiner. The course will be held at the Campion Retreat Centre, Kew, Vic. Limited places are available for non-interns. The course has been accredited by a number of theological colleges.

Alan Hirsch, co-director of the project with Mike Frost, described the forthcoming course as especially relevant for those involved in mission who need to stoke up the "fire in the belly" and take in some sustenance for the hard journey.

Enquires to <foragemtn@earthling.net> or (03) 9326 8900.

## Stable Church Building

**Stable location found for Victorian church**



*People gathered for the opening of the Bellarine Peninsula, Vic, church's building—a converted stable*

## WA Bible College

**Overseas graduates and student growth at college**

Geoff Fewster, Principal of the WA Bible College (WABC) recently visited Jakarta to conduct an ordination service at the Setia Bible College. He spent two days with the 25 candidates who have completed four years of study and two years of practical training. Geoff Fewster is a member of the

Kalamunda Church of Christ. WABC deputy principal is a member of our Nedlands church. WABC has over 130 students, of which 64 are full-time. Fifty-five percent of students are from non-Australian cultures. With the growth of the College, additional facilities are proposed.

### Dalby's 50th Anniversary

The Church of Christ in Dalby, Qld, will celebrate 50 years of service and witness in the area in May, 2000. If you are a past minister or member of Dalby church, we would appreciate receiving names and addresses, information, photos or memorabilia to enable us to make contact with you.

Please forward information to:  
The Secretary  
49 Moreton St  
DALBY QLD 4405.

The Bellarine Peninsula, Vic, church began meeting in the home of Les and Jean Poole in Ocean Grove over twenty years ago. With increasing attendance, the church was given hospitality in the local Uniting Church on Sundays at 11.00 am, when the building was not needed for other purposes. Later a senior citizens' hall became available for a short period, when again the Uniting Church arranged for the Church of Christ to share facilities with one of its nearby country congregations.

Ocean Grove was extending north-eastwards and a former farm was becoming a housing estate. Central to the estate and on a rise was the former stable, a large, solidly-built structure. It captured the imagination of Glen Stibbe, the minister at the time. Gradually other imaginations were stirred, and the congrega-

tion saw at the end of a lot of faith and hard work a church building of their own. The Division of Ministry and the Properties Corporation of Vic-Tas Conference shared the vision and helped with encouragement and a loan. The church members, most of them seniors, provided voluntary labour. On Sunday, 28 March, it was opened by foundation members Les Poole and Elaine Stewart. Over 200 representative people packed the building. John Gilmore of the Division of Ministry represented the Conference. Gordon Stirling gave the occasional address. Maureen Chapple and Merryn McDonald launched a history of the church. David and Christine Wanstall are in ministry. Visitors to the popular seaside resort will be able to worship in "The Stables Complex" any Sunday at 10.30 am at 17 Tareeda Way, Ocean Grove.



## 20,000,000 Bibles

### Twenty-millionth Bible printed in China

Officials from the China Christian Council (CCC) and representatives of the United Bible Societies (UBS) gathered in Nanjing, China on 16 March with church leaders and dignitaries to mark the official printing and dedication of the twenty-millionth copy of the Bible produced by the Amity Printing Company.

Printing began in late 1987 and since then Australian Bible Society donors have contributed \$1.7 million to producing Scriptures for the world's most populous nation. This has allowed a hardcover Bible to be purchased at A\$2.40. The gathering, which included UBS General Secretary, the Rev. Fergus Macdonald, the Indo-Pacific Regional Program Services Coordinator, David Thorne, the General Secretary of the Bible Society in Australia, Rev. Philip Oliver, and General Secretary of the Bible Society in New Zealand, Colin Reed, gave thanks to God for the achievements of the Amity Printing Company during the past eleven years.

"The relationship between the UBS—on behalf of the Bible Societies throughout the world—the Amity Printing Company and the CCC has gone from strength to strength," Mr Oliver said.

"Initially, it was estimated that there were fewer than five million Christians in China, but Chinese church leaders believe a more accurate figure today would be around eighteen million. Every time I visit China I am amazed and encouraged by the growth in the Christian Church.

"Australian Christians can feel a strong sense of partnership with their Chinese brothers and sisters through their continued support of the Amity press."

In addition to the demand from the churches there are many non-church people who have wanted a copy of the Bible, such as students, teachers and lecturers, writers and others who are curious to have the chance to read the famous book banned in China throughout the period of the Cultural Revolution.



*20,000,000 Bibles printed by the Amity press in China—a cause for joy*

### Youth Pastor

We are seeking a trained, experienced person for the position of Youth Pastor/Director (and some other ministry areas).

Swanston Street Church of Christ is a dynamic, unique, multicultural church in the very centre of Melbourne city. We are seeking someone with leadership, team-building and disciple-making skills.

Applicants should prayerfully submit CVs for consideration in writing to:

Youth Pastor Position  
Swanston Street Church of Christ  
194 Lt Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne Vic 3000.

For further information,  
phone the church office on (03) 9663 3884  
or e-mail <sscoc@onastralia.com.au>.



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## Imaginative Squares

### Imaginative patchwork squares arriving in World Convention office

Usually "squares" are supposed to be unimaginative. But not this kind. They are already arriving at the World Convention office for "Brisbane 2000", the World Convention of Churches of Christ, 2-6 August, 2000.

They are patchwork squares from each Australian Church of Christ, to be made into a banner of 12 square metres to be displayed at the Convention.

Each church is representing something of its lifestyle or ethos, or some characteristic of its community in its banner.

A notable thing about the squares already in hand is their variety and their imagination. Two hundred and nineteen of our churches have agreed to provide a square and over 300 are expected. Ask someone if your church is "doing a square".

## World Convention Secretaries to Australia

### A whirlwind tour

In preparation for **Brisbane 2000** (the World Convention of Churches of Christ, 2-6 August, 2000), Lyndsay and Lorraine Jacobs arrived in Melbourne on 30 April in time for the Vic-Tas Conference. They will meet with the Australian Committee of the WCCC before going on to Adelaide for the SA State Conven-

tion. While there they will celebrate their 33rd Wedding Anniversary. They then go to Brisbane before flying to Sydney for the NSW Conference, and home to Nashville after less than three hectic weeks. Lyndsay and Lorraine are New Zealanders and have seasoned the WCCC with a little Australasian salt.

## Radio Host Departs

### Jay Bacik pulls the plug

After ten years on air at Radio station 2CH, Jay Bacik has relinquished his position as the host of the Sunday Night program and director of Religious Programs. Jay has taken up a post with a university in the USA.



Jay Bacik

### Here and There

#### Aged Care Chaplains' Conference

The third National Ecumenical Aged Care Chaplains' Conference will be held at Merroo Conference Centre, Kurrajong, NSW, 25-28 October with a special focus on the International Year of Older Persons

**Vital Sales in SA**  
Ron Holmes, SA Vital Publications representative, reports that direct sales amounted to \$1,600 in 1998. Since representing Vital from 1987, his sales in SA exceed \$32,000.

#### 1000 Zimbabwe Churches

In a recent World Convention report, Lyndsay Jacobs comments on our work in Zimbabwe and notes that from discussions and reports from local leaders there are up to 1000 Churches of Christ congregations spread throughout the country. There is an enthusiasm to invite the World Convention to Harare in 2008.

He was expected to be there in time for the Presidential Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC and planned to report back to the 2CH Sunday night Religious program with the first of his reports from the US covering this event.

The Program Director at 2CH, Peter Burgham, commented that he remembers Jay commencing at the station and has appreciated the contribution he has made in hosting the Sunday-night programs.

"He will be missed," said Mr Burgham, "but we wish him every success in his new position."

### Gympie Church of Christ



is celebrating 113 years' witness in Gympie and 40 years at Horseshoe Bend, Gympie, Qld.

This will be combined with our annual missions weekend on

**20-22 August 1999**

**Celebration dinner Saturday, 21 August**

*Former members especially invited to attend.*

RSVP by 6 August 1999 to PO Box 152, Gympie Qld 4570, or phone Pastor Graeme Ellingsen on (07) 5482 1084.

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# Pentecost

## The Five-Fold Ministry

MILTON OLIVER

**A**t last year's mission summit at Stanwell Tops a manifesto was produced which was affirmed by participants representing Churches of Christ in Australia, Britain and New Zealand. Part of that manifesto said, "We recognise and affirm the five-fold ministry pattern of gifting of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the church, for equipping all Christians for serving Christ". This was a crucial affirmation. The five-fold ministry to which the

*We need to take seriously the ministry of all believers according to their spiritual gifts.*

Apostle Paul refers in Eph 4:11-12 is the centrepiece of his understanding of how the church is organised for ministry. "It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles ... prophets ... evangelists ... pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up." The purpose of this ministry was not to set up hierarchies in the church, but to organise effective ministry around the spiritual gifts with which those born again are endowed by the Holy Spirit. It was also established for the proper equipping of the priesthood of all believers for participation with their spiritual gifts in Christian ministry, and to edify or build up the church. In short, the fruits of the five-fold ministry were maturity and stability—an excellent base for mission. All of these are strong ideals in our movement, yet most churches continue to opt for a hierar-

chical-democratic model of ministry. Yet, no other pattern is given in Scripture for this noble undertaking.

The five-fold pattern encourages a strong mutual ministry environment, but at the same time specifies apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These were no longer "offices" with Christ-appointed authority, but ministry functions by individuals whose major spiritual gifts were potent and obvious to the wider body. It would be quite difficult to claim to be an evangelist when one had no converts to show for it, or a teacher if no one was able to learn from you.

I believe the moment has arrived when we in Churches of Christ must take seriously the implications of the five-fold ministry. In Romans the apostle presents the revelation of the gospel, in Ephesians the revelation of what the church is and should be. Paul nails down a crucial piece of framework for how he sees the body functioning so that it could mature and carry out its mission function. We need to take seriously the ministry of all believers according to their spiritual gifts. Believers need to undertake training and equipping by those among us who have already demonstrated proficiency and fruitfulness with these spiritual gifts (which are not merely vocational or educational capacities gained by our own efforts—they are supernaturally endowed) and who are able to impart their experiences and knowledge to those coming behind with similar gifts. We do not have good track record in doing this in Churches of Christ. We have not provided adequate opportunities for believers to discover and use their spiritual gifts. In fact, we seem to have opted for a "three-fold ministry", jettisoning apostles and prophets some-



where along the way—and I've heard some very strange arguments for us having done so! This is not good exegesis! We believe all of what Ephesians says, or none of it.

Another key implication of Paul's ministry pattern is that these five ministries, are given for each other. They never operate in a vacuum or without relationship to one another. The teaching ministry, for example, can never be allowed to ignore what the prophetic ministry is saying; and the evangelistic ministry can never operate without thought for the pastoral ministry; and so on. Yet we've allowed this to occur. Paul was arguing for a close relationship between the five ministry areas by which they informed each other and collaborated, where they held each other accountable and where balance was maintained in the body.

For Paul such an understanding for ministry was vital. It needs to become a given in our churches, especially if we are to make genuine claim to being a movement dedicated to the restoration of New Testament principles. The five-fold ministry pattern is one of them.

Milton Oliver is the senior pastor of the Sunbury, Vic. church and was a participant in the Stanwell Tops Conference in 1998.



**Churches of Christ  
Federal Aborigines Board Inc**

is calling for applicants for the position of

**Assistant Executive Director**

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**Duties**

Administration of the ministry in conjunction with the present Director. This will include:

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- Preparation of promotional materials
- Some responsibilities for financial management.

The applicant should be computer literate.

**Remuneration**

Package includes rates of pay as per the recommendation of the WA Conference. Other benefits apply.

**Location**

The successful applicant will be required to live in Perth, WA.

Written applications, marked "Confidential" and including CV and the names and addresses of three referees, should be addressed to:

The Executive Director  
Federal Aborigines Board Inc  
PO Box 1199  
WANGARA WA 6947

Applications close 5.00 pm, Wednesday 30 June 1999.



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***Churches of Christ in Queensland***

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The successful applicant will be a person with theological and ministerial competence, a proven commitment to the mission and ethos of Churches of Christ, a demonstrated capacity for visionary leadership, good communication skills and the ability to direct the resources of the Conference towards effective mission.

**Applications will close on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1999**

Written applications and requests for further information should be directed to:

Mr Peter Overton  
Chair of Conference Council  
Churches of Christ in Queensland  
PO Box 469  
KENMORE Qld 4069  
Ph. (07) 4636 1955; 0418 980 160  
Facsimile (07) 3378 1334



All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Conference Council reserves the right to invite people to apply.



# Pentecost

## Apostles

STEVE ADDISON

**Y**ou don't graduate from the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Indonesia unless

you have started a new church in an unreached village with twenty-five baptised converts—no exceptions.

Under the leadership of its Principal, Chris Marantika, the seminary's goal is to plant twenty thousand churches by the year 2015. One church in each of Indonesia's twenty thousand villages. Over seven hundred churches have been planted this way and the college

*They don't need business cards with "apostle" printed on them.*

has started thirteen branch seminaries throughout Indonesia. Chris Marantika is just one example of a modern "apostolic" leader.

Don't worry, Marantika doesn't write Scripture. The unique ministry of the Twelve Apostles and Paul, is unrepeatable. They were God's chosen witnesses to the Resurrection of Christ and to the authority of the New Testament. Yet, according to Howard Snyder, Paul is clear that "the Spirit continually and charismatically gives to the Church the function of apostle" (1 Cor 12:28-29; Eph 4:11). What do apostles do? How do we recognise them today?

### **Pioneer Evangelism**

Paul's ambition was to preach where Christ was not known, rather than build on someone else's foundation (2 Cor 10:13-16). His ministry was mobile. Paul recognised that the lasting impact of the gospel in a region would not be made by him and his team. Their role was to "pick ripe fruit" and then leave

a body of believers behind who would evangelise the region in depth.

### **Starting New Churches**

For Paul, evangelism was not complete until a new church was started. Paul Bowers says that Paul pictured himself as a builder of buildings, not a maker of bricks (1 Cor 3:9-10). Once formed, the new community of faith became a living witness to the grace of God and a means of continuing mission.

Paul believed the work of an apostle was to preach where the gospel was unknown and to plant churches where there were none. As those churches came to a basic level of maturity, the apostle moved on to a new, untouched area to begin the process again (2 Cor 10:15-16). The pastoral work of a local church may never be finished, while the ministry of an apostle in a region can be completed.

### **Strengthening Churches**

The nurture of emerging churches was a key aspect of Paul's apostolic ministry. He regularly revisited the churches he had founded.

Paul describes himself as a "father" of the churches he started (1 Cor 4:15; 1 Thess 2:10-12). He speaks of his daily concern for all the churches (2 Cor 11:28). The goal of Paul's ministry of church strengthening was that the churches would stand on their own feet and participate as partners in his mission.

When Paul asserts, "I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ." (Rom 15:19), he refers to the scope of his apostolic mission which included: pioneer evangelism, the nurture of emerging churches and their firm establishment as congregations. Once this had occurred, Paul could move on to new regions. These were Paul's key apostolic tasks.



### **Apostolic Leaders in Australia**

I have met Australian church leaders who share Paul's apostolic vision. They want to reach this generation with the Gospel and they know that multiplying dynamic churches in every place, reaching every people group, is the most effective form of evangelism.

I am thinking of a young man who has a vision to see churches of the poor, reaching the poor in every Australian city and throughout Asia. I am thinking of a leader who is renewing his denomination by revitalising its churches and starting new churches across the nation. I am thinking of a suburban pastor who has transformed his church into a "leadership farm system" where pioneering leaders emerge who are sent out to pastor and plant churches. Each of these leaders, in their own way, model for us what apostolic ministry looks like today. We need them. Leaders with apostolic vision who see people groups, regions, cities and nations reached for Christ. They don't need business cards with "apostle" printed on them. They do need us to make room for their ministry.

Steve Addison is National Director of Church Resource Ministries (CRM). Steve is a member of our new Eastgate, Vic church.



# Pentecost

## The Prophet Profile

JOHN REES

**A** basic definition of prophecy might be "the communication of the mind of God".

What is the profile of a prophetic ministry? How might such a profile be a timely reminder of our own needs as a movement?

### A Gospel Profile

The importance of prophecy can be seen in its close proximity to some of the major ministry statements in the Gospels and Acts. Perhaps the most obvious such text is the Pentecost event, where God's word through the

*It is worth noting that Paul never moves to ban the prophetic in worship.*

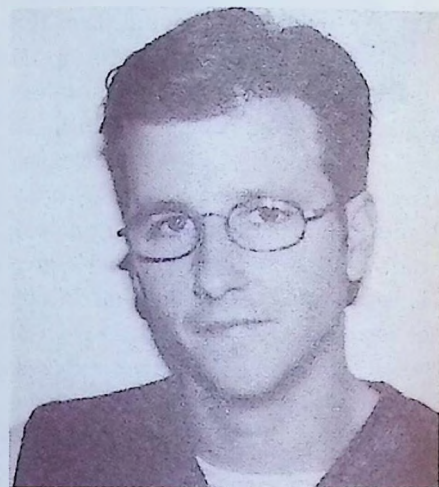
prophet Joel is fulfilled, that "on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit ... and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:18). Another reference to the prophetic is Jesus' own mission statement in Luke 4:18-19. The "prophet" of Nazareth (v. 24) takes the words of the prophet Isaiah and declares the prophetic mission of God's Messiah. In Matthew, Jesus stands as one of God's prophets killed by the hypocritical and oppressive rule of "false prophets" in Israel (see Matt 23:37f, 7:15f). For Matthew Jesus' ministry is the prophetic ministry.

We can see that a profile of the prophetic in the Gospels and Acts looks backwards to the words of Old Testament prophecy. Yet it also looks forwards to the mission of Jesus and the birth of the church. There is a continuity here that flows through to us. Jesus is God's prophet and we are God's prophetic people. Therefore, the prophetic

ministry of our churches is not primarily shaped by the immediate context of our ministry, but has already been given shape by the prophetic ministry of Jesus. For example, if we take Luke 4:18-19 seriously, then it is not hard to see that "where poverty and oppression are not challenged God's kingdom is neither proclaimed nor experienced". (Lieu, 1998)

### A Pauline Profile

The profile of prophets and prophecy takes a different focus in the epistles of Paul. Paul affirms the ministry of individual prophets in the church (eg 1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11). So while we are a prophetic people as a whole (Acts 2), some among us are more prophetic than others. It is also worth noting that for Paul, the gift of prophecy was a vehicle for the Spirit's ministry in the assembly of worship, that is, a church service. It stands to reason that there is a need in all churches to affirm those who have prophetic gifts and encourage their use in services of worship. Paul also contains the ministry of individual prophets in the church for the sake of clarity and order. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul instructs prophets to prophesy in an orderly fashion (v. 29f), and this so that others may be encouraged by what they say (v. 31). Whether Paul had such a prophetic gift is hard to guess, but his words in 1 Corinthians 14 leave no doubt as to his pastoral concern about prophecy. If you have ever suffered under the tyranny of uncontrolled prophecy in the church, or even under an "untouchable" prophetic leader, you will appreciate Paul's pastoral desire for order and accountability. Prophets need pastors. The ultimate mechanism for encouraging and containing prophecy in the church is the ministry of those with



biblical knowledge and wisdom. Prophets and pastors also need teachers. It is worth noting that Paul never moves to ban the prophetic in worship. Why? Because the suppression of gifts such as prophecy undermines the prophetic authority of God's people as a whole. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said that while it is certainly easier to keep order in a graveyard than in a preschool, it is only in the preschool that life can be found.

Biblical wisdom will always seek to affirm both the unity and the diversity of the body of Christ for the sake of life-giving ministry (1 Cor 12:4-6).

### A Timely Word

There is some evidence among our churches to suggest that God is raising up prophets to help form a kingdom ministry for the new millennium. Such a ministry will be most fruitful if it mirrors the prophetic profile of the Jesus mission, if leadership can release the prophetic gift in the assembly of God's people, and if those prophets among us commit themselves to the pastoral well-being of the church and to the wisdom of the Scriptures.

John Rees teaches theology and history at the Australian College of Ministries in Sydney.



# Pentecost

## Evangelist

MARTIN ROBINSON

**T**he pages of the New Testament give us an enigmatic glimpse of one who was called an evangelist. Philip appears in the desert and conducts an astonishing evangelistic conversation with a government official from Ethiopia. The ancient Coptic Orthodox Church in Ethiopia traces its origins to this conversion. Philip also appears in at least two other roles. He was one of the seven appointed by the church in Jerusalem as deacons. Later we see that he is a leader in the church at Caesarea, and possibly an elder.

What we can know is that New Testament never talks about the "office"

became established, mention of the ministry of evangelists tends to cease. The last two hundred years have seen the recovery of the concept, but in some curious ways. British Churches of Christ used the term in the 19th century to denote the travelling evangelists appointed by the churches, both nationally and locally, to travel around the churches, strengthening existing works and planting new ones. There was a conviction that ministers could not be justified from the New Testament, but that evangelists could. Inevitably, over time, the evangelists tended to travel less and the transition to settled roles as ministers began.

A different use of the term evangelist emerged from the revival tradition in the late 18th and 19th century in Britain and America. The open-air preachers such as Whitfield and Wesley began to be described as evangelists, just as their followers began to be called evangelicals. Their task was to call people back to God. This spontaneous response to opportunity and need also gradually became formalised from the late 19th century in the revivalist tradition of Moody and Sankey, Billy Sunday and Billy Graham.

If it is true that we are again in a missionary situation, where the need is not to call people back to God so much as to introduce them for the very first time, then what does this suggest for the notion of evangelist? Three brief thoughts:

1. I begin with the conviction that there are individuals that God seems to gift who are able to convey the message to people with a clarity and conviction that causes people to respond. While all are called to witness and give an account of the "hope that lies within", not all are able to translate their witness into ex-



planations of the gospel hope that causes people to respond in the way that someone with the gift of evangelism can.

2. Evangelists will not necessarily lead crusades or large meetings. Their initial task will be to share the gospel message with individuals. Somehow, it seems to be in the nature of the evangelist to draw key individuals to faith. While this is not a universal rule, it is amazing how often one with the gift of evangelism is able to penetrate the fissures of society so that the message multiplies.

3. We need such gifted people working with church plants and with what I would call key mission-resource congregations. Operating from congregations that have a call to enable others beyond their own congregational boundaries, evangelists will not only be effective in building up those mission congregations in which they are based, but can potentially liberate the gift in others much more widely.

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

### *Evangelists will not necessarily lead crusades or large meetings.*

evangelist, it only describes the ministry gift of evangelist, but it does mention the office of deacon and elder. These offices are not the same as the gift of evangelist, even though in the case of Philip they may have come together in the same person.

The idea that someone had such a gift of evangelism that their ministry could lead them to be called an evangelist is missing from much of the history of the church. There are some exceptions, which not surprisingly flow out of situations in which the church was operating in a missionary context. The many "ministers" in England represent one such exception. These were originally mission stations from which evangelists were sent out to establish churches in outlying situations. In more settled times, as Christendom



# Pentecost

## Pastor-Shepherd

CHRIS COHEN

**E**pitomised in the film *Babe*, the Tasmanian sheep farmers I grew up around were so much like the main character—shepherds: protective, devoted and tender with the sheep.

In Western Australia, however, this type of sheep farmer seems harder to find. We have immense stations where station managers raise sheep on a macro scale. Sheep roam free, independent of the flock, independent of the farmer.

*God is calling for the pastor with a shepherd's heart rather than a manager's mind.*

Then we have the newer phenomenon of scientific management! This is intensive agriculture, farming on a micro, scientifically-controlled scale. Sheep are systematically grain fed while confined to a small pen, independent of the flock, completely dependent on the farmer.

Neither of these two models of sheep-rearing constitutes shepherding. Shepherding is neither micro or macro. Shepherding is neither lacking in boundary nor constricting in definition. Shepherding does not expect of sheep independence or dependence.

Shepherding is an art of raising sheep that recognises that sheep thrive best when cared for as a flock, when "bonded" with the shepherd, and when practical care and tenderness is demonstrated unreservedly. These are characteristics evident in the successful shepherding by my parents and grandparents.

Particularly as we move into a new millennium with a renewed thrust as a movement to be missional, I'm wondering if we should be careful to safeguard the pastoral role as that of shepherd, rather than that of manager. Urgency lead to farming sheep by the most efficient means. I believe people both in the church and without are craving for a flock and for a shepherd. God is calling for the pastor with a shepherd's heart rather than a manager's mind. What are we looking for?

So what is the shepherd's heart like? A worthwhile description is in 1 Peter 5:2-4. First, a shepherd has a heart for the whole flock. As described by Jesus (John 10), the shepherd watches over everyone, without discrimination and with a concern for sheep as individuals and as part of the one flock. As we learnt in *Babe*, sheep aren't stupid, just easily bewildered when the flock's dispersed. I was always taught that if you see a sheep by itself, then begin a rescue, because it is either blind, sick or confused. The "good shepherd" continually seeks out the lost sheep, knowing that sheep function best in the community of the flock.

Peter also points out that the shepherd has a bond with the sheep. Shepherding in my family was about a desire to nurture and propagate sheep. There wasn't a compulsion—such as to be profitable or to be exalted as great sheep farmers. There was a desire to shepherd sheep. There was a bond passed down through generations, from parent to child, from chief shepherd to under-shepherd.

We can ask, as I often did trudging around a paddock on many a cold, wet night during lambing season, "Why sheep?" Beef cattle are so much easier to care for!



Somehow, with all the annoyances of sheep, the shepherd is still pleased to care for them. The shepherd has a "calling" to sheep-herd! There's a specialness about this that is reflected in the bonding of sheep with a true shepherd. The shepherd's heart motivates one to practically and tenderly care for the sheep. As described in Psalm 23, traditional shepherds of the Middle East were known to apply oil to the head of sheep to protect them from a parasite which hatched in wool above the eyes then burrowed down through the eyes into the brain. My parents anointed the other end of the sheep! Either way, the shepherd is alert to the sheep's need for protection and practical care. The shepherd tends the sheep. Jesus commissioned Peter, "Tend my sheep". Jesus, the Good Shepherd, even lays down his life for the sake of the sheep. The shepherd's heart is for the well-being of the sheep—even when it costs. Could we re-visit the shepherds—David, Jesus, Peter and the shepherd of my childhood—as we consider what it is to be gifted, anointed and appointed as pastor? In our zeal to grow the Kingdom, let's not lose the shepherd in preference for a manager of sheep.

Chris Cohen is Associate Minister at Mandurah City Church of Christ in Western Australia.



# Pentecost

## Teachers

ALAN HERMANN

**A**s a teacher, I am biased enough to emphasise the crucial importance of the teaching gift both in the New Testament and the contemporary church. It is one of only two gifts that occur prominently in all three of the major gift lists in the New Testament (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-12). Paul claims this gift for himself (2 Tim 1:11) and Jesus, of course, is the greatest of all teachers. Both Jesus (Matt 28:20) and Paul (Col 3: 23-24) emphasise the importance of teaching in the church.

Who teaches is as important as what is taught. We need to think Christianly

### *The learning for which we aim is nothing less than transformed lives*

about all aspects of our teaching. Our personal beliefs influence all of our reasoning and conclusions. We begin with a Christian world view based on the facts that this is God's world and all people are made in his image and need a relationship with Jesus to be whole. We think Christianly about all aspects of life as we work from the centre which is our relationship with him.

Here is the crunch. Our teaching ministry involves much more than our membership classes of the past, often experienced in a world where acceptance of Christian values was more common. Now the thrust is fundamentally about discipling and establishing disciples in their Christian faith and journey. The learning for which we aim is nothing less than transformed lives as evidenced in three interrelated areas of belief, faith and action.

**Belief** includes a knowledge of God and his people interacting with the world he has made in the past, present and future.

This knowledge must not only be heard and understood, but must become real and true all over again in the experience of every person before it can become part of their own individual lived faith.

**Faith** is a lived relationship with God, other people and the world in Christ. It results from the transformation of our attitudes, ideals, responses and priorities by the Spirit of God, and produces the fruit of the Spirit in the believer's life. As belief becomes more and more a reality throughout the very essence of our living, so trust grows and we give our lives over more and more completely to our Lord and our Christian family.

**Action** is the practical outworking of faith in life which Jesus saw to be so essential. (In Matt 28:20 he tells his disciples to teach people to do everything he had commanded.) Both internally, as our character is transformed and we grow closer to the model given by our Lord, and externally, in interaction with others, our faith will be shown as we take our stand on the great issues of peace, truth, justice and morality, in God's name.

An atmosphere of affirmation establishes the learning environment. It sets the basis and climate for learning. The atmosphere of the learning experience needs to be, as it always was with Jesus, one of welcome, warmth, trust, security and love. The participants need to feel, see and believe that they and their contributions will be valued and taken seriously. There must be genuine acceptance of people for who and what they are, and real interest in



them as individuals loved by God and made in his image. Thus with their human dignity and self esteem secure they will be prepared to reach out and grow.

Scripture provides the content and substance of growth as it is explained, discussed and applied to life. The spiritual gift of teaching accomplishes this task. The Word needs to live in the experience of all participants.

In summary, learning is the process by which new or previously known truth becomes true on a personal, individual basis for those involved in the learning experience.

We are not just transmitting facts, but translating and transplanting faith into the life and experience of the learner so that it may become real in their situation and grow anew. It is not enough to know and believe, they must experience faith, and it is through this experience and their response to it that God is truly known.

Alan Hermann is the Executive Director of the Queensland Department of Church Development and Education.



# Turning Cheeks, Changing Lives

ROD CURTIS

**G**unfire at night is so familiar in Rwanda they casually call it "pop-corn".

Deborah was praying one night last year when she heard movement in her village compound and then the night was punctuated by the sounds of "pop-corn".

By the time she opened her door, her son and four other young men had been shot dead. A strong Christian, Deborah refused to be bitter, instead she invited Hutu and Tutsi into her small house to mourn the loss. "I praise God that all these people, Hutu and Tutsi, are gathered here in this house talking

about God's wonders," she said. "Through this death God comes to glorify his name. This gives us hope God shall bring back peace in our country."

Three months after the funeral, Deborah was resting in her room when told there were three men outside to see her. Worried, Deborah came out to see the men sitting down, looking upset. Their insecurity added to her fear, but she swallowed it down and offered the men smiles and hugs, as is the custom.

One young man, a soldier named Elias, looked especially distressed and when he asked to speak to her in private

Deborah was concerned. "In an insecure environment like ours you expect anything to happen because you do not know who is your enemy," she said.

Trusting God, Deborah left the other men and followed the young man out to the garden. When she asked what the man wanted, he immediately broke into tears and sobbed for more than ten minutes.

Deborah was shocked at this well-built stranger suddenly vulnerable before her, because Rwandan culture forbids men to cry in public.

Deborah will never forget the man's first words after he wiped away his tears.

*He said, "Do you know I am the murderer of your son?"*



*Deborah adopted her son's murderer*

He said, "Do you know I am the murderer of your son?" Deborah's heart beat like a drum and tears welled inside her and all she could answer was "No".

He continued, "I have come here to ask you to take me to court and I am ready to be judged, convicted, put in prison and be hanged. Wherever I go, sleep or sit, I always see you in my mind, praying for me and asking God to forgive me. This image disturbs me so much I have lost peace and can't sleep. I feel guilty and am worthy of punishment."

Deborah told him that by admitting his error, the young man had become human.

"I told him it was God's Spirit who convicted him."

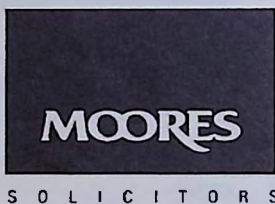
She forgave him immediately, telling him she could not turn him in because if she did he

would be tried and sentenced to death.

She said: "I don't want to lose you as well as losing my son. Instead, I would like to ask you to love me in turn and be my son in replacement of the son, your brother, that you killed."

Before adopting her son's killer, Deborah had a dream from God. In her dream, she saw a path to the Cross. Across the path was a chasm—the pit of hell—and over the pit a house on a raised platform. Deborah now preaches that "the only way to God is through the house of your enemy". "Mother" and "son" are testament that dreams and miracles do come true.

Article supplied by World Vision Australia.



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# The Media at Easter

VINEY LONGTHORP

**"T**elevision is scared of religion."

This was a comment, in part, by that veteran media critic, Dennis Pryor, writing in the *Melbourne Age* last Easter. He hit a nerve with many people, because there are those who consider that the mass media never quite knows how to present religion. However, looking at many media offerings about the activities and messages of the churches last Easter, most reports and presentations were objective and sympathetic.

*But the ambiguity remains. What of the church visible and gathered?*

In Melbourne, as in a number of other capitals, the print media especially gave extensive coverage. Alan Attwood in the *Age* gave a highly informed pastiche of what Melbourne's faith communities were saying and doing. Pam Kerr, of the Uniting Church of Australia pointed to

the high incidence of poverty in the city: "In the light of Easter, this was unacceptable". The Rev Timothy Langley of the Wesley Mission spoke about those events which were on everyone's mind at the time: "We cannot plead innocence and stand by whilst Kosovo is ethnically cleansed". Attwood then wrote about the service at St Patrick's Cathedral where, appropriately, the focus was on the passion of Jesus Christ. Then down Flinders Street way, Anglican Archbishop Keith Rayner led a three-hour devotion at noon—a "time of silent contemplation away from the busyness of life". There were also pictures aplenty of Good Friday marches by Christians in several localities; then some television news programs showed in graphic detail an Easter celebration in the Philippines where one Christian was literally crucified as an act of penance. The "voice over" was quick to point out that the church authorities did not approve.

But the media cannot help itself. It lives by reporting "triumphs and disasters" in all things. So, on the perceived triumph side, Peter Ellingsen positively glowed in reporting the great increase in numbers at Peter McHugh's Christian City

Church, Box Hill (an eastern suburb of Melbourne) where 900 attended and where the congregation is still growing. Ellingsen marvelled at McHugh's "marketing expertise". But the disaster side of church was also given prominence, as the media keeps on harping on statistics which relate to mainline churches. Ellingsen related the Anglican Church's 17% loss in membership in 50 years, and that there was a 35% increase in the last ten years of those throughout Australia who claim that they have no religion. He also noted the throwaway line of one leader: "The Bible does not say, 'God so loved the world that he gave it church services'".

And our oft-quoted friend, Hugh Mackay wrote: "Even at Easter 77% of Australians don't go near a church service, preferring to observe the more ancient, pagan ritual of exchanging eggs as a symbol of Eostre, the dawn goddess." He also observed that going to church was now, "highly eccentric behaviour". Mr Mackay has a knack of telling it as it is.

Then there was that BBC program where some young people on a March for Jesus were asked whether they "would worship Jesus" in the beautiful old parish church they were just passing. The kids' grimaces reinforced their response: "No way". Maybe Britain's Archbishop of Canterbury had been watching that program when he was led to say: "Modern western culture seems to have developed an allergy for Christianity"—or at least certain manifestations of it.

But the overall picture is very ambiguous and the media reflected this. For in sundry editorials, special reports, and in



many reflections, the world's "cries from the heart" all focused on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the media seemed to know where hope, reassurance, meanings and directions for daily living were to be found. Thus: "in an age of insecurity, the need for a resurrection belief remains immense. It is the duty of those claiming to see beyond a life-threatened world to present a spiritual rationale that gains intellectual assent." Again: "[The resurrection] pushes us to find new hope that somehow emerges from within our rage and despair".

Hugh Mackay was moved to write: "Being attentive to the spirit of love within us could be a kind of resurrection". A Catholic leader was more specific: "We should embrace Easter's sense of mystery to renew our lives". Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane John Bathurst wrote: "Easter should draw Australians' attention not just to the end of Jesus' life but to its entirety." Another editorial stated: "Christians hear the rending of a tomb. So in the dark valley of the shadow of death in Kosovo we hope for a resurrection."

These media reports reveal the spiritual yearnings of a nation. In this regard one feels that the media has got it right. But the ambiguity remains. What of the church visible and gathered?

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WAYNE BETTS

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## DEATHS

**NOTMAN (Scaife)** Violet Amy on Tuesday 13 April, aged 90. Loved wife of Alex (dec). Dearly loved mother of Ron, Jan and Marie. Mother-in-law of Joan, Phill and John. Much loved grandma of Wayne and Teresa, Vikki and Dave, Lynne and Mark and Ian; Heather, Trevor and Cheryl; Paul and Mandy, Lisa and Troy, David and Sue, Michelle and Mick, Katie and Rebecca. Great-grandma of eight. In God's loving care.

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I have a confession to make. I'm afraid I have a perverse fascination with awkward parts of Scripture. You know, the passages that don't fit into our neatly-constructed religious categories, which we spend a lot of energy explaining or harmonising, which don't get preached about or given out as memory verses. I think the reason they're part of Scripture is not so they can be explained away, but so God can use them to rattle our comfortable theological cages.

*It's comforting to know that the Scriptures acknowledge, even demonstrate those same loose ends.*

Seeing as we're confessing, let's consider the "confessions" of Jeremiah—a series of prayers where we see, as nowhere else, "inside" the relationship between God and the prophet (Jer 11:18–20; 12:1–4; 15:15–21; 17:14–18; 20:7–18). And, to be perfectly honest, it's not pretty. Jeremiah's obedience to God's call came at enormous personal cost, and his confessions reveal the inner struggle such obedience induced.

The language of 20:7, for example, is shocking—the word translated "deceived" or "enticed" carries strong overtones of sexual violence. Of rape. It is an astonishing accusation to throw at God. But it expresses Jeremiah's sense of violation in maintaining obedience when all



it has brought him is ridicule and alienation. You don't hear too many sermons about that! But isn't that an outstanding example of truly authentic prayer?

And while the vehemence of the language may shock us who are used to polite, carefully-worded petitions, isn't it also evidence of a person whose intimacy with God was such that there was no subject or expression considered "off-limits". So, like many of the Psalms, even expressions of anger and questioning God's justice become expressions of faith.

The prayer of 20:7 eventually moves onto an expression of praise in 20:11–13, but then plunges into a despairing conclusion (20:14–18). Hardly a neat little ending.

Why? Because for Jeremiah, prayer was not a quick-fix, miraculous escape route from his trials. It was a lifeline which enabled him to keep going in the midst of those trials. No happy ending, but somehow the strength to remain faithful emerged.

Life is not always as neat as many testimonies would have us believe.

It's comforting to know that the Scriptures acknowledge, even demonstrate those same loose ends.

Jeremiah's confessions are, indeed, confessions of faith.



## CHANGES

**YARRAWONGA, VIC**—Secretary Joy O'Brien, PO Box 552, Yarrowonga Vic 3730.

**HORSHAM, VIC**—Minister Julie Trinnick, 9 George Street, Horsham Vic 3400.

**NATIONAL LITERATURE DEPARTMENT**—Chairman Geoff Alves, PO Box 101, Essendon North Vic 3041. Phone (03) 9379 1219. Fax (03) 9379 0015.

## BAPTISMS

•Michael Horgan, Scarborough, WA  
•Pushpa Nandu, Essendon, Vic  
•Jamie Towns, Loraine Towns, Jessica Piper, Launceston, Tas

## MARRIAGES

•Lesley Jolliffe and Andrew Cassidy, Scarborough, WA •Wendy Hales to David Stumbles, Wollongong, NSW  
•Catherine Trimnell and Stephen Nemet, Hamilton, Vic

## DEATHS

•Roy Arnold, Alf Adams, Tootgarook, Vic •Marion Mel Hartvigsen, Surrey Hills, Vic •Ivan Hill, Hamilton, Vic

## SA

**TUMBY BAY** (Trevor Simpson) Church welcomes new minister, Trevor & Paulyne & family, ministering at Tumby Bay & Ungarra, residing at Ungarra ... Red Cliff men's camp study leader Wayne Shepherd conducted studies from Colossians. Men from Port Lincoln, Whyalla, Ungarra, Tumby Bay attended ... World Day of Prayer held in our buildings. Hostesses AOG ladies ... Women's Fellowship meets monthly. Parcels to Community Care & others.

**SEMAPHORE** (Mike Esbensen) Roger Brown completed ministry in January. Mike Esbensen inducted 7

February ... Nina Corlett-McDonald commissioned as Coordinator, Ministry with Women. Music by the Prospect Youth Music Group ... Fred Heinrich returned to Victor Harbor & will be missed ... Ted & June Coyle celebrated 40th wedding anniversary & Gabe & Gwen Bywaters their 60th ... 3 new families attending.

## NSW

**WOLLONGONG** (E.C. Keating, B. Bruce) Church hosted Leadership 2000 Follow-up ... Graeme Agnew, speaker at vision dinner ... Holy Week retold by musicians and artists. Easter services augmented by Maundy meditation and sunrise celebration ... Growing youth group sponsored friends to "Youth Alive" ... Enjoyable parent-teen camp at Koloona ... Over 70 attended seniors' musical morning with Anzac theme ... Singles' dinner discussion, "A Path Through Depression" ... 40+ to new worshippers' lunch.

**TAREE** (R. Foletta, S. Kelly) Church participated in 3-day community event, "Godfest"—drama, music, art, prayer, praise ... Monthly mid-week music mornings commenced ... Dot Nicholls led ANZAC Day service assisted by other WW2 veterans & young people ... Combined area Churches of Christ picnic held at North Haven ... Church platform redesigned ... Modern computer systems & musical instruments purchased ... Preaching series on Second Coming commenced.

## VIC

**RED CLIFFS** (Ian Hunt) Harvest thanksgiving held February. Goods sent to Churches of Christ nursing home, Melbourne & local nursing home ... Ladies morning retreat held weekly ... Several ladies attended World Day of Prayer at Uniting Church ... Early Easter morning ecumenical service held at the cliffs by the Murray. Uniting Church joined us for Good Fri-

day services ... Alpha courses to commence after school holidays.

**YARRAWONGA** (Ron Goodwin) Ken Stothard elected elder at AGM, also 2 new board members Joy O'Brien & Maureen Mann ... A dinner & presentation was given to honour 3 long-serving officers: Bill Nothrop, elder, Trevor Jones, secretary, David Starr, treasurer ... Bright Easter services & Darryl Goodwin of SA blessing with song.

**ESSENDON** (Paul Kingston) Church in good heart under ministry of Paul Kingston, who was inducted 7 February by Alan Niven ... AGM 23 March. Eldership voting 11 April resulted in Mrs J. Strack, Mrs B. Hartney and Mr C. Wood-Burgess being elected.

**TOOTGAROOK** (M. Giezendanner) Easter services commenced with an ecumenical service with the SPIC choir on Maundy Thursday at the Anglican church. Good Friday & Easter Sunday at Tootgarook very well attended ... During March two valued members, Roy Arnold & Alf Adams, died ... CWF excellent meetings with special speakers ... Garden party at Bests successful.

**KANIVA** (Paul Bauer) With combined Sunday School "leading the way" in recent years, shared ministry began with Service of Celebration on 21 Feb. Ray Foster of UCA Wimmera Presbytery & John Gilmore for Churches of Christ participated ... Services now alternating between UCA & our buildings. Larger congregations & fellowship appreciated ... Paul conducted funeral service of Laurie Rogers, district identity & UCA stalwart for many years.

**OAKLEIGH** (Keith Pitt) Church enjoying ministry of Keith Pitt who has provided stimulating messages & continues excellent pastoral oversight of former ministry (Don Milne) ... Jean Hillier elected as secretary. Ken Masterton re-elected as elder ... Appreciate musical assistance from Alison Carr (Pitt) ... 8 ladies attended Motor Neurone fundraising event at Blackburn ... Mary Dorning

transferred membership from Swanston St & Adrian Hughes from Stonnington.

**HAMILTON** (Roy Hope) Church well represented in Easter March of Witness ... Ladies attended World Day of Prayer ... Phil Hopewell sharing ministry ... Roy Hope conducted wedding for Catherine Trimnell and Stephen Nemet ... Church saddened at death of Ivan Hill ... Children enjoy Sunday school activities ... Bible study "Love building healthy relationships" appreciated.

## QLD

**DALBY** (Tony Ochse) Church camp held at Bunya Mountains. Dale White (Toowoomba) led studies ... Members participated in hospitality Sunday ... Iain & Leanne Thomas have accepted responsibility of organising music for services ... Easter services well attended ... Hank Hendricks (Melbourne) guest soloist at service organised by young people.

## WA

**SCARBOROUGH** (Lester Sutton, Ken Doran, Richard Webster) Marjorie Britza visited Borneo & the Penan people she had ministered to ... Freezer meal ministry for those in need of urgent practical assistance ... Richard Webster appointed pastoral intern.

## TAS

**LAUNCESTON** (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison, T. Gray, S. Fitzallen, A. Fair) Up to 90 young people (16-25 years) meet every Monday evening for tea, worship & Bible study ... 55 Hobart & Launceston young people shared Easter camp at Bicheno ... Hymn sing-a-long on 11 April enjoyed by many ... 3 baptisms & a baby dedication recently ... Retired florist Hinton Lloyd delighted Wednesday afternoon fellowship with reminiscences.



# Armed with a Smile

JANET THOMPSON

**A**ll the patients were afraid of the receptionist. There was always a scowl on her face, and she snapped at everyone. The specialist was friendly, but my heart sank each time I needed to go back. As I prepared to face the "dragon" again, I considered a counter-attack.

"I can be just as abrupt and unpleasant as she can, and she's asking for it. Why not?"

But while I was driving to my appointment, I had a better idea. I greeted her with a broad smile, as though I had been looking forward to seeing her, then I admired the flowers on her desk. The response was amazing. Her whole face lit up, and she pushed her paper-work to one side and chatted as though I was an old friend. It only took one smile!

When our local newsagency changed hands, I had another chance to try this magic trick. The man behind the counter scarcely spoke, and there was no expression on his face. It took more than one smile, but I kept at it. Then one day I ventured a cheeky comment, and he raised an eyebrow. The corner of his mouth lifted, and his eyes twinkled. The barrier was down, and he was talking to me.

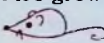
Wow!

I had reached two human beings. Whether they were busy, shy, or unhappy, I never discovered. But the responses showed that there was more to both of them than met the eye. I wondered if I was only doing this



to brighten my own day, but I decided that it wasn't important. It had worked, and both people had relaxed for a few minutes. Putting it in terms of profit and loss, I had nothing to lose, and each of us had something to gain. Pop star Jon English once said, "There's no percentage in not being nice".

I admit that this strategy is easier than loving your enemies. But I don't have many enemies and this is one way to keep in trim for the tough battles.

My latest target is the supervisor at the Post Office. I have yet to see her in a good mood. She's proving to be a tough one. I'm beginning to hope that she will be there every time I collect the mail—the stockpile of smiles is large enough. (I think it's growing!) 

## The Last Word

**O Lord, deliver us from the need to build ourselves up by cutting others down.**

—Ernest T. Campbell.

*What's long and green and always points north?  
A magnetic cucumber.*

*"Waiter what's this fly doing in my soup?"  
"The breast stroke sir."*

*What do you call an elephant that flies?  
A jumbo jet.*

*What would happen if pigs could fly?  
Bacon would go up.*

*What gets bigger the more you take away from it?  
A hole.*

*No one in the world has more courage than the one who can stop after eating one peanut.*

*Where do forest rangers go to get away from it all?*

## Late News

### 500 at Tasmanian Youth Event

Launceston, Tas church reports 500 young people at "The Factory" youth outreach night. Numerous commitments, many new contacts, outstanding success. Report to follow.

### Conference Youth Commitments

Thirty faith commitments made by young people at Vic-Tas Youth Vision Conference rally. Approximately 750 attended event at Crossway Baptist Church. Speaker Christine Caine.

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