

THE AUSTRALIAN

# Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 102 No. 9, 9 June 1999

PRINT POST APPROVED PP349181/00418

*r e l a*  
*t r i e l a* relationships  
*t r i o n*  
*s h i p s*  
*s h i p s*  
*s h i p s*





Editor: Don Smith, Production Manager/Sub Editor: Nigel Pegram Issue 23 June Deadline 10 June, Issue 7 July Deadline 24 June, Issue 21 July Deadline 8 July. Address for all correspondence: PO Box 101, Essendon North Vic 3041. Telephone (03) 9379 1219. Fax (03) 9379 0015. E-mail <aceditor@ozemail.com.au>. World Wide Web <www.ozemail.com.au/~aceditor>. Member publication of the Australasian Religious Press Association. Published by the Board of Management of The Australian Christian, a Department of Churches of Christ in Australia. Keith Aird, Chairman (SA); Lindsay Mott, Treasurer (Vic); John Batchler (Tas); Tom Glynn (NSW); Bev Grenfell (Qld); Lea Nelson (ACT); Allen Smyth (WA). Printed by New Litho Pty Ltd, Surrey Hills Vic. Responsibility for electoral material is accepted by Don Smith, 2 Larkspur Ave, Doncaster 3108. This publication is indexed in the Australasian Religion Index. ISSN 0004-8852. Advertising Rates: Displayed: \$6.00 per column centimetre. Classifieds: \$15.00 for the first 25 words and 25c for each additional word.



# Editorial

## Cohesive Relationships

DON SMITH

**T**he health of churches springs from within. Being bound together by effective relationships will enable us to achieve a growing sense of purpose and unity in our mission. Bad relationships occur through factors such as labelling, misconceptions and sheer distance. It is comparatively easy to label people far from us and to develop stereotyped pictures of them because we don't know them and are seldom likely to meet them. \* We have been fortunate that in recent decades there has been a process of convergence in our midst, which has drawn us together as a national church. We can be thankful for



the measure of unity we have amid our diversity. It is noticeable how well we relate when we are together. This hasn't always been so. It is significant that we have integrated dimensions of the charismatic movement into our life, without tension or turmoil. On other issues which were once divisive there is a much greater understanding and acceptance of diversity. \* Our unity and sense of common purpose in 2000 and beyond is fundamental if we are to become a truly missional church. The tasks of reassessing our role as a reforming movement and those of development and integrating the basic sweep of ideas from the Stanwell Tops Summit of 1998 will only come as relationships are sound and we are confident in each other. \* At a state level, the relationships between local churches and state leadership are again fundamental. In part we see ourselves as a loose coalition of churches within a Conference network. There are differences. We shall increasingly experience the old and the new. The task before each congregation and state structure is to build strong cohesive relationships so that we are about a common purpose as a reforming movement. This will mean a continuing process of relationship building and increasingly experiencing the sense of being bound together as a missional fellowship. \* Each local church will be as good as its internal life and relationships. From a sense of well-being and optimism there springs new life and zest. Such life doesn't trickle down from the "top", but comes from a burgeoning local body which shares its life and offspring in an adventure with the wider body. \*




## Relationships

As individuals and as members of churches and other groups, relationships form an important part of our lives. Our contributors raise a number of issues.

<i>Organisational Relationships</i>	16
<i>Relationship Essentials</i>	17
<i>Effective Church Boards</i>	18
<i>No Soft Skills!</i>	19
<i>The Scriptural Dimension</i>	20

## News

<i>What's the Catch?</i>	5
<i>The Gurdies—Blink and Miss It</i>	5
<i>A Full Year</i>	6
<i>Women's Work to Widen</i>	6
<i>World Day of Prayer</i>	7
<i>State Youth Games, Qld</i>	7
<i>Church Leader Beheaded</i>	8
<i>Indigenous Training</i>	8
<i>Reach Up and Reach Out</i>	9
<i>Reinterpreting Ourselves</i>	11
<i>Big Donation</i>	11
<i>Greensborough Ministry</i>	11
<i>Seventy Years Young</i>	13
<i>Lower Blue Mountains</i>	13
<i>Release a Joint Effort</i>	13
<i>Troubled Neighbours</i>	15
<i>International Christians</i>	15

THE AUSTRALIAN




# Christian

SUBSCRIPTION FORM PO BOX 101, NORTH ESSENDON 3041

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT CAN BE MADE BY AMEX, BANKCARD, VISA OR MASTERCARD

☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS ☐ BANKCARD ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD

NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRY DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

☐ NEW ☐ \$19 REST OF YEAR ☐ \$47 TILL END OF NEXT YEAR

☐ RENEWAL ☐ \$32 FULL YEAR ☐ \$60 TWO YEARS

Your subscription continues until you cancel.

**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.**

## Worship Styles

To the Editor,

I have read the recent letters about worship with great interest. There is little doubt that style of public worship is one of the most contentious issues in the church these days. We all agree, I'm sure, that the most important thing in worship is the attitude of the worshipper. The style of the service is more a reflection of the cultural preferences of those who organise the worship services. I have long felt that there is a definite correlation between people's preferred styles of worship and their musical preferences. I, for example, belong to that relatively small group of people who love classical music and dislike pop music. My preferences in public worship reflect something similar.

I long for the opportunity to worship in an environment that gives a sense of the transcendence of God. I find most contemporary worship styles jangling to my nerves. But I know that that is not so for many others, who are quite uplifted by the very experience that leaves me cold.

I suspect that the preferences of most of my fellow church members are different from mine.

They prefer pop to classical, and contemporary worship styles to the more reflective and liturgical styles that lift my spirit.

It's not a question of who is right and who is wrong. It's a question of how churches may best enable people to express the love they have for God.

In this, it is likely that the current emphasis on contemporary worship in Churches of Christ is, for the most part, appropriate. I just wish there were more alternatives available in our churches for people like me.

—Robert Smith  
(Wombarra, NSW)

## Prophets

To the Editor,

I refer to the article "The Prophet Profile" ("AC" 12.5.99) and to a sermon by Dennis Ryle on Pentecost Sunday 1999.

Dennis linked the Numbers 11 reading with Acts 2 and noted that Moses had hoped that all God's people would be prophets. He noted also Martin Luther's word that preachers proclaim the Word to the Church gathered in worship, who then have responsibility to take the Good News into all the world.

May God give us the spirit of boldness to declare the word of grace and truth as we are scattered everywhere.

Hear the promise of Jesus in Luke 21: "I will give you the wisdom to know what to say"; the challenge of Peter in 1 Peter 3: "Always be ready to give an answer when someone asks you about your hope"; and the prayer of Paul in Romans 15: "May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope".

—John Somerville  
(Wembley Downs, WA)

## Urban Mission Symposium

To the Editor,

I would like to advise readers concerning the Urban Mission symposium at Mile End Church of Christ, SA to be held in July fea-



# Letters to the Editor

turing guest reflections from Greg Elsdon. There will be numerous papers presented by leaders at the symposium. These papers can be viewed and downloaded from the web site: <www.churchesofchrist-sa.org.au> after 10 June. They will provide stimulating reading concerning issues confronting churches in South Australia over the next five years.

—Mike Esbensen  
(Urban Ministry Training,  
Adelaide, SA)

## Apostles and Prophets

To the Editor,  
Milton Oliver regards Eph 4:11-12 as the primary justification for a five-fold approach to modern ministry, which includes apostles and prophets.

He argues that poor exegesis has led us to adopt only a three-fold ministry (evangelists, pastors, teachers) and that we should believe "all of what Ephesians say, or none of it!" ("AC" 12.5.99)

Apostles and prophets jointly are mentioned twice elsewhere in Ephesians.

In Eph 2:20 Paul speaks of the household of God being built up on the foundation of the apostles

and prophets, with Christ as cornerstone.

In Eph 3:5 he speaks of the mystery that has now been revealed through apostles and prophets. In Eph 1:1 Paul describes himself as "an apostle".

The reasonable reader would conclude on this evidence that the ministries of apostles and prophets were foundational and for the purpose of establishing the church.

Most reputable commentators agree with the reasonable reader.

—H.E. Hayward  
(Pymble, NSW)



## Christian Fellowship Tours

Licensed Travel Agent 32063

### Norfolk Island

Sound & Light Show, Walk in the Wild, Mutiny on the Bounty, Wonderland by Night.  
*Quality Motel Accommodation*

**8 Days - from \$1757**  
**Dep. 17 October**

### Kangaroo Island

Fleurieu Peninsula, Goolwa, Kangaroo Island, Hahndorf, Mt Gambier, Ocean Road Highlights (Ex Melbourne)

**7 Days - \$795**  
**Dep. 15 November**

### New Zealand-2000

Bay of Islands, Rotarua, Waitomo Caves, the Homer Tunnel, Milford Sound, Queenstown, the Tranz Alpine Express.  
*Quality Motel Accommodation*

**17 Days - from \$2850**  
**Dep. 18 March**

## Christian Fellowship Tours

65 Belvedere Ave. Montrose Vic 3765

Phone (03) 9728 5286  
Fax (03) 9761 8009

## Update

Dear Readers,

We welcome cartoons from Martin Gillespie, minister of the Mitcham, Vic, church, included in this issue. Martin also provided the cartoon for the *Pentecost* issue. We have reports from New South Wales and South Australian Conferences in this issue.

In the last issue we included an advertisement from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute. The information supplied to us concerning the closing date for applications was incorrect. The correct date is 1 July 1999.

Church News report forms are available for churches wishing to have their reports included. A guide to the presentation of news items is enclosed with the report forms. Back copies of issues are al-

ways available. Requests are being received for the *Pentecost* issue. Our WA Conference has requested 100 copies. Back copies can also be used for promotion. We would gladly supply copies to assist with the recruiting of new subscribers. One approach would be to distribute copies among members of study groups, alongside other methods that would seem appropriate in your situation. We shall be offering special discounts for new subscribers. Tom Glynn, our NSW Board member, recently sent a list of ten new subscribers. We welcomed these!

*Sam Smith*



330-350 Frankston-  
Dandenong Road  
Seaford Vic 3198  
Phone (03) 9786 8679

Managed by  
Church of Christ  
Frankston

1- and 2-bedroom villas  
Motel-type lodge suites

Waiting list open



## What's the Catch?

**Nambour, Qld, providing a solution to a practical community need**

Can you begin to imagine what it is like to live in a world that is dominated by the written media and yet not be able to read or write? The issue of literacy has recently become highlighted at the political level, in the context of Prime Minister John Howard's speech on unemployment. Reading and writing has been recognised as a skill with which a significant segment of our population has difficulty. Recent research suggests that up to 50% of the population has some problem with literacy.

As a response to this need, the Nambour, Qld, church, through its community-care arm, "Solutions", has made moves toward offering courses for those who need help with developing or improving their reading and writing skills. With a series of funding grants from the Queensland Department of Training and Industrial Relations, "Solutions" is able to offer nine hours per week of adult-literacy training. Three hours per week of tutor training is also available for those who would like to develop their skills

to help people improve their literacy level.

Alison Spencer, a member of the congregation and a highly-credentialled and experienced literacy teacher, has a passion for working in the area of adult literacy. Alison is currently working with eleven adults who are at various levels in their ability to read and write. It is the growing level of confidence and the development of new skills that gives Alison such a buzz, as she works with people who are often struggling with low self-esteem and a sense of rejection. The most common questions Alison has been asked by both literacy students and tutor-training students are, "What's the catch?", "Why would a church be involved in adult literacy?" and "When is someone going to hit me with the hard sell?" The image of the church as an organisation that gives, but with a hidden agenda, seems to be a common perception among people in our society. So we find ourselves on the long and sometimes difficult path of being a people of God who are seeking to genuinely

give and love "without strings attached". Gradually, we are being seen in our community as offering to people without a hidden agenda.

Through the men's accommodation project, "Solutions" community courses and the adult literacy program, people are discovering that the church is approachable, can be trusted and doesn't always have a sting in its tail.

This latest program gives the church further opportunities to care, encourage, love and be seen to honestly seek to be offering with open hands the love of Christ in the community. With that question, "What's the Catch?", Alison has had many opportunities to



*Alison Spencer working to develop people's literacy skills*

share the love of Christ in a non-threatening and caring way in a context of trust and genuine love.

## The Gurdies—Blink and Miss It

**A not-so-inaccessible World President**

Ever heard of "The Gurdies"? It's one of those places that you can't

blink while you are driving through or you'll miss it. And if you keep your eyes open while driving along its one road, you might find the home of the President of the World Convention of Churches of Christ (WCCC). His name is Ron Brooker. But he is not as inaccessible as you think. In fact he knows everything about Brisbane 2000 the next World Convention, 2-6 August, 2000. You can fax him on (03) 5997 6404 or you can phone him on (03) 5997 6227. And he has an answering machine. By the way, "The Gurdies" is on the road from Melbourne to Phillip Island.



**Save  
on  
Insurance  
and  
Support  
Churches of Christ  
Provident Fund  
No. 1 Fund**

Lyn Carr Office Manager  
Jim Ashley Secretary

Rupert Taylor Insurance Consultant Pty Ltd invites you to say

**"YES"**

to

- Conducting business through an Australian underwriter—QBE Insurance Ltd
- Conducting your business with a Church of Christ insurance consultant
- Conducting your business where you will receive a special discount

When policies fall due for renewal, simply telephone  
For an obligation-free quotation please telephone Rupert on  
1800 023 270 or (02) 9680 4680.



## A Full Year

### Report on NSW Conference 114



*Good crowds at NSW State Conference at Stanwell Tops*

The NSW Annual State Conference began with nearly one hundred guests at the President's banquet on 14 May. Most denominational leaders were present. Lindsay Jacobs (Secretary, World Convention of Churches of Christ) spoke on the importance of unity at the local church level. Tim Foot was the guest artist. Great things are anticipated from his leadership contribution at World Convention in August 2000. Conference meetings on Saturday 15 May reflected a well-oiled presentation of hi-tech reporting from our ministry-team leaders. This has been a full year, with good progress.

Stanwell Tops, where Conference 114 and Ministers' Refresher were held, will redevelop a major segment of the accommodation to increase the present burgeoning occupancy rate.

Australian College of Ministries is handling over 200 theological students. Mission Cross Cultural is gaining ground, informing and coordinating our ethnic connections.

Seniors is serving the active adults. Community Care, Aged and Welfare have handled important decisions this past year.

The reports were adopted and a new executive was elected. Mem-

bers for 1999-2000 are John Bagley, Judith Cayzer, Neville Cox, Ray Fitzpatrick, Harold Hayward, Dennis Nutt, Rosalie Rofe and Stephen Toomey. President elected for a second term is Richard Menteith. President Elect is Ray Hawkins.

Guest presenter was Dr Steve Addison, National Director of Church Resource Ministries and a member of the new Eastgate Church of Christ in Melbourne. He dealt with the characteristics of a dynamic movement and the life-cycle of a movement. Tapes are available from the Conference office (02) 9630 7533.

Well-attended business sessions heard that church membership

### Here and There

#### Evangelical Uniting Churches

Evangelical congregations in the Uniting Church recently formed their own association. Churches joining agreed, among other things, to adopt their own statement of faith, refuse to financially support any UCA agency which endorses or affirms homosexuality, and use the title 'an evangelical congregation of the Uniting Church' on their notice-boards and letter-heads. (*Southern Cross*)

requirements will stand as-is for the present, and that membership figures need closer scrutiny. Three new churches affiliated with Conference—St George Community Church of Christ; Agape Indonesian Christian Fellowship and Korean Covenant Church of Christ.

Prior to State Conference, ministers gathered for the annual Refresher. Peter Corney from the Institute of Contemporary

Leadership, Vic, made a very constructive contribution to the event.

Other contributions were made through electives, and a presentation by Dr Carol Preston reporting on a survey among the wives of ministers.

Ministers' Association President is Ray Hawkins with Don Smallbone as president elect. The association now employs a secretary five hours per week.

## Women's Work to Widen

### NSW women celebrate 105 years

At the NSW Women's Conference, delegates voted on the recommendation of the Task Force that a Women's Ministry Team be established in an endeavour to cover all aspects of women's work throughout NSW churches. This represents a major new initiative for the ministry with women in New South Wales churches.

At the opening event, Evelyn Sansom, florist from Salt Ash church, featured vases and created three floral arrangements as her message at the coffee and dessert evening held at Auburn church. At Conference on 7 May, representatives from other denominations and organisations were welcomed. Lots of memories flooded back during the very moving "Roses of Remembrance" ceremony. Past Presidents were given a Presidential Scroll.

"Friendship of Jesus" was the theme of Elizabeth Foord's message. Conference President, Richard Menteith conducted the dedication of officers and paid tribute to CWF President Jean Porteous's



*Jean Porteous Past President (left) and incoming President Diana Catts*

gracious leadership. The Presidential Bible presented to the incoming president, Diana Catts, was unique. Diana had worked on the translation of the New Testament whilst a missionary, until recently, in Papua-New Guinea and this was a bound copy of the first complete print-out. Throughout the year, Diana will challenge women to "Grow in Every Way".



## World Day of Prayer

### Launceston woman elected world chairwoman

Yvonne Harrison of the Launceston, Tas, church has been elected international chairwoman of the World Day of Prayer movement, which is active in more than 170 countries. For the next four years, Tasmania will be her base for this important role among the world's Christian women.

During her term, she will be involved in international travel to represent the movement. The role will involve continuing contact with the New York international office. This year she will visit the New York office and Jamaica. Yvonne expects her fax and e-mail links will facilitate her many overseas contacts.

The World Day of Prayer movement has a specific focus on the first Friday of March each year. The international committee has two representatives each from eight regions—Caribbean, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, Pacific and North America as well as the chairwoman.

The service for this year was prepared by women in Venezuela. Indonesian women will prepare the service for 2000, using a theme from Mark 5:4.



*Yvonne Harrison*

The World Day of Prayer movement began in the USA in 1887 and was introduced to Australia in 1927. It has become a ministry of international significance and acceptance among Christians. Australian Churches of Christ women have welcomed the appointment as a great honour for Yvonne for the contribution she has made to the movement and for her overall commitment to ministry among women.

## State Youth Games, Qld

### A fun and sport-filled weekend



*One of the games in the busy Qld State Youth Games weekend*

Queensland recently held its second State Youth Games. Youth aged 13–25 from eight churches played sport over the weekend of 14–16 May. Unlike other states, in Queensland the event isn't held over a long weekend, so we have to try to fit more into our schedule. On the Saturday, if you were super-fit, you could theoretically have competed in five different sports.

While mixed, touch football was on in the morning, some girls were playing women's basketball in their breaks between touch

games. In the afternoon, the guys were the busy ones, as they tried to combine mixed netball with men's basketball. As soon as these events were over we raced to an aquathlon, which combined one person swimming in a pool with another running around the camp-site. For those who were still standing, squash was played in the early evening. Sunday's pace was a bit slower, with soccer and volleyball the only games on. Of course we didn't just play sport non-stop. Mixed in with the games were two concerts by local bands E320 and Elementary Penguins, a speaker, a thought-provoking communion service and games with an earth ball. In the end, Springwood Church of Christ emerged as the overall winners, successfully defending their title from last year. Sunnybank came a valiant second, with Southport in third place. It was a great weekend. Next year we hope to have it even bigger and better, with more teams from more churches.

—Stephen Parker



## Help Make the News!

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

—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

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



## Church Leader Beheaded

**Baptist church leader reported beheaded in Chechnya**

The leader of the Grozny Baptist church in the Chechen capital is reported to have been beheaded and his severed head displayed at a local market. Aleksandr Kulakov, 65, was last seen on 12 March when he boarded a bus. Later a church member saw to her horror Kulakov's head on display in a stall at the Grozny market. Amid widespread lawlessness in Chechnya it is not unusual to see

similar sights to instil fear in opponents. Kulakov had taken over leadership of the church after the previous pastor was kidnapped last October. No news has been received of him since then. The Russian Baptist Church has advised its members to leave Chechnya. With the exception of two men, the church now consists of 100 members, mostly orphans and elderly women. (*New Life*)

## US School Shooting Survivors

**Disciples members among survivors of Denver-area shooting**

Five members of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation in Denver, USA, escaped injury during the 20 April massacre at a local high school. The carnage at Columbine High School left 15 dead; 12 students, one teacher and the two gunmen, who committed suicide.

Four of the surviving students and a teacher are members of South Suburban Christian Church. The church is approximately 11 km east of Columbine High School, according to Deral Schrom, senior minister.

"Everything began to happen around 11:30 [am]," Schrom said. "As we became aware of it, we were concerned about some of the families in our own congregation." Word began to "trickle in

over the course of the afternoon" after church officials made several calls to inquire about members' safety. Schrom said music teacher Leland Andres "really did a tremendous job in keeping a number of students safe". While the gunmen were on the rampage, Andres, a South Suburban member, locked several students in an assembly room and instructed them to get on the floor, to stay calm and to pray.

"They were in there for about fifteen minutes," said Schrom. "After the shooters passed that area, a custodian was able to come by and let them out."

Also escaping injury was Andres' son, who teaches at Columbine High School.

*Disciples News Service*

## Indigenous Training

**Learning from Indigenous New Zealand Christians**



*Natasha Lawrence*

Natasha Lawrence, part of the Vic-Tas Conference Indigenous Ministry Unit, and daughter of Reg and Marciel Lawrence, who are working with indigenous people in Gippsland, Vic, has commenced training with Maori

Christian leaders in Wellington, New Zealand.

Her hosts, the Te Ho Ora movement, has seen over 10,000 young Maori people come to Christ in the last twenty years. Nearly all the leadership of the movement has come from converts.

Natasha's training experience includes: living in a Maori women's home, helping lead two youth Te Ho Ora youth clubs, seeing various models of indigenous ministry, and doing a certificate in youth work and indigenous cultures.

By being involved in a model like this for a year it is hoped that Natasha will help the Indigenous Ministry Unit develop in Victoria and Tasmania. Support for her training fees is sought and can be sent via the Churches of Christ Conference, 77 Capel St, West Melbourne Vic 3003.



**Your compassion will direct her future**

A needy child needs your sponsorship today.  
Call today  
**1-800 029 725**  
**Compassion**   
AUSTRALIA

### 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.



## Reach Up and Reach Out

### SA State Convention



*Ruth May, President Elect for SA Conference*

From lollipops to Harley Davidsons, from the "good old days" to New Age, the SA State Convention had it all.

Attendance was up on previous years, new events had been added to the program and people of all ages participated freely.

Throughout the week the Convention theme (Reach Up and Reach

Out) was explored, expounded and celebrated.

The week commenced with the Kidsmin SA Peter Combe Concert at the Woodville Town Hall. Kids, parents and grandparents had a ball singing and dancing to "Wash Your Face in Orange Juice", "Newspaper Mama", "Spaghetti Bolognaise" and other favourite Peter Combe songs. In the midst of all this, State Youth Minister Tim Clark launched the expanded, all-new Kidsmin SA program. Convention Week continued with Seniors' Day at Brooklyn Park, Women's Event at Brighton, the G.R. Stirling Lecture at West Lakes, the Ministers' Association Lunch at Flinders Park, Friday Night Live at Marion, the Conference Business session at Marion, and the final Convention Celebration in Gillingham Hall, Annesley College.

Some highlights included:

- Keith Miller talking at Friday Night Live about his cutting-edge ministry among outlaw bkie groups as chaplain to the Longriders Motorcycle Club.
- Lyn McCredde (Deputy Chair CCTC Board) inviting attenders at the G.R. Stirling Lecture to challenge the false dichotomies that are all too often set up within church culture.
- The ordination of Dorne Stevens (Retirement Services chaplaincy) and Andrew Whalland (Prospect church), during the Convention Celebration.
- The participation of a diverse range of guests to remind us of the breadth and diversity of the mission of our movement. These included, Lindsay and Lorraine Jacobs (Executive Secretaries,



*Keith Miller spoke during Convention about his work as chaplain to the Longriders Motorcycle Club*

World Convention), Ron Brooker (President, World Convention), Bob Smith (National Coordinator), Avon Moyle (Executive Director, FAB), and Philip Johnson (New Age Mission, NSW).

- The creative use of technology, especially video and computer-generated graphics, in Friday Night Live and the Celebration.
- A powerful sharing of communion at the close of the Celebration. In addition, Conference affirmed the appointment of Ruth May (minister at Prospect) as President Elect for 1999-2000. When she becomes State President in

May 2000, Ruth will be the first ordained woman to hold that office in SA (and perhaps in Australia). There is much more that could be said about the 1999 SA State Convention. There was a high level of energy flowing throughout the week, and a high level of enthusiasm among participants for the challenges and opportunities that confront us in our mission. One couple summed up their experience of the week as "a wonderful time of sharing and learning and worship".

—David Brooker  
State Minister

### Here and There WCC Appointments

At the Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Harare, Zimbabwe, December 1998, US Disciples General Minister and President Richard Hamm was appointed to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Ian Allsop of Australian Churches of Christ served on the Central Committee of the Council in the previous seven-year term. Robert Welsh, President of the Disciples Council on Christian Unity, was elected as moderator of the board of the WCC-related Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Celigny, Switzerland.

### Bethel Funerals

The Caring Australian Alternative



*A unique Christian funeral company  
supporting the work of missions*

24-hour, 7-day service

Pre-arranged and pre-paid funerals

(03) 9877 9900 (all hours)

fax (03) 9877 0544

Servicing all areas



# WHAT DOES ANSVAR MEAN TO YOU?

*"I've been with EIG-Ansvar for a very long time. In my position, it would be easy to say that I insure with them simply because they fund projects for our community - especially those that help young folk."*

*"But closer to home, I haven't yet found anyone who can offer a more competitive rate on my household policy - or provide such prompt service when a claim is made. In fact, their service is simply fantastic."*

*"So, whilst I really value the fact that they care for the community, my decision to insure with EIG-Ansvar is based on the care they show to me".*

If you'd like to find out more about the advantages of an EIG-Ansvar Household, Motor, Pleasurecraft, Church or Business insurance policy, please contact us on the number below.

Phone: 1300 650 540

Website: [www.ansvar.com.au](http://www.ansvar.com.au)

E-mail: [insure@ansvar.com.au](mailto:insure@ansvar.com.au)

John Dalziel, Communications Director,  
The Salvation Army



**ANSVAR**

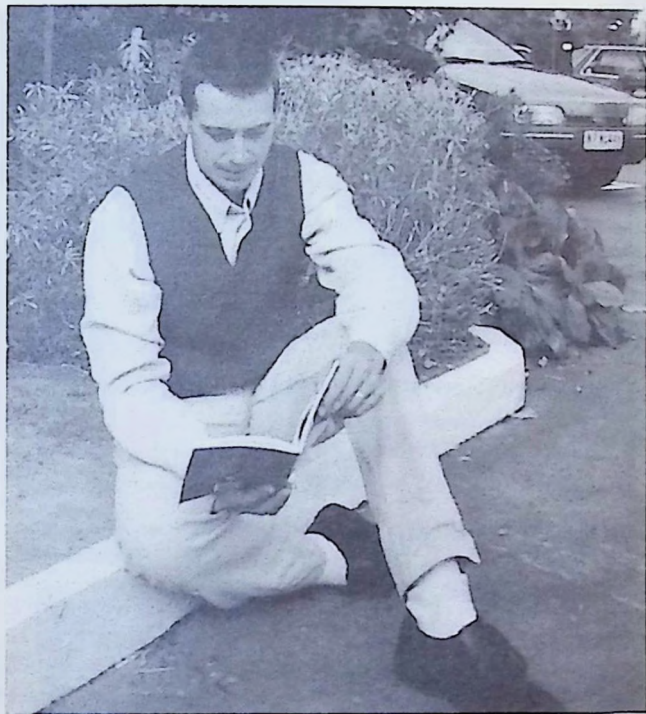
INSURANCE YOU  
CAN BELIEVE IN

▲ GRUTZ 2377A



## Reinterpreting Ourselves

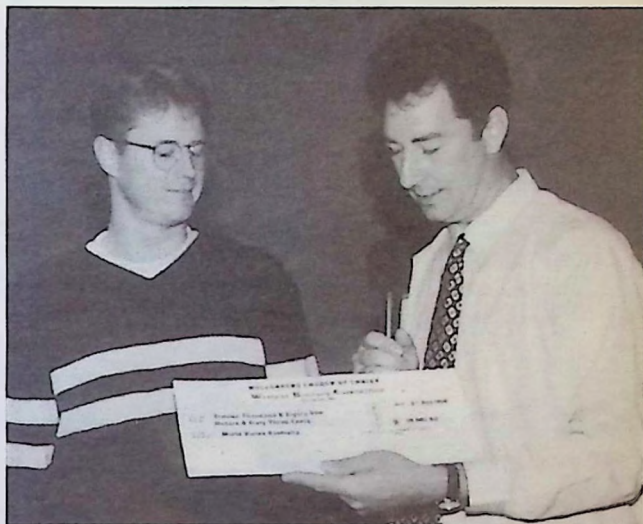
Recent release selling fast



*Norm Fitzgerald of the South Yarrowonga, Vic, church purchased his copy of Churches of Christ: Reinterpreting Ourselves for the New Century at the recent Vic-Tas Conference. He is seen here in his lunch break taking a first look at the new Vital Publications best-seller, written by Gordon Stirling. Sales since its release in May have been so strong that the first edition has almost sold out. Phone Vital (03) 9379 1219 to reserve your copy (\$8.50 including postage).*

## Big Donation

Large cheque for large amount given to poverty programs



*Brian Bruce presenting the large cheque to Michael Palthorpe of World Vision*

A "big" cheque for over \$16,000 was presented to Michael Palthorpe of World Vision recently at the Wollongong, NSW, church. It was the Christmas offering made by the church to help a World Vision project with Indian women trapped in a cycle of temple prostitution.

Brian Bruce, who visited the project in September last year, presented the cheque. Brian made regular reports to the congregation about the impact of his trip, which helped inspire the congregation to donate a record amount to third-world poverty programs.

## Greensborough Ministry

**Adrian Clark moves to Greensborough**

Adrian Clark, formerly minister at Brighton, SA, was inducted as minister of the Regional Church of Christ in Greensborough, Vic, earlier this year.

Adrian trained at the College of the Bible (now Churches of Christ Theological College) and, after student ministries at Essendon

and East Kew, moved to Victor Harbour, SA, for the start of what would become a 15-year ministry in South Australia, covering Colonel Light Gardens, Blackwood and Brighton. The church community warmly welcomed Adrian and his wife Maureen and three of the couple's six children.

**Dianella Church of Christ, WA**

is seeking to fill two positions:

**Coordinator, Children's Ministry**  
(two days per week)

and

**Worker**  
(week)

Details from:  
Riley St, Dianella WA 6059.  
5 3773.

Applications: June 30.

For full  
40-60

2nd  
starts 26



## ESCORTED CHRISTIAN TOURS

At Special Group Tours, we place a very high importance on our escorted Christians tours.

Take one of our feature tours such as  
18 day "Exodus to Israel" or  
22 day "Paul's Journeys"

Both encourage you to embrace the richness of the regions as our escort brings the Scriptures alive for you!

Or we can **tailor-make** a tour for your own group of friends, with your escort or ours!

Call us or view our web-site for more information <[www.specialgrouptours.com.au](http://www.specialgrouptours.com.au)>.

Or may we bring a dynamic and informative talk to your church or home group?



PH: (03) 9523 5600 or 1800 337 026

(Lic No 32167)

### Churches of Christ Federal Aborigines Board Inc

is calling for applicants for the position of

### Assistant Executive Director

The FAB is a national body responsible for work among Aboriginal and Islander people. Its ministry takes many forms.

#### Duties

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

- Field visitation and pastoral care
- Deputation visits to churches and state conferences
- 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.



## Make sure your Will says what it means.

There's no room for guesswork in a Will. Which is why we all need expert help in making our last wishes completely clear.

Permanent Trustee will prepare your Will and act as your executor, either solely, or jointly with a relative, friend, accountant or solicitor. Settling an estate can be a full time job carrying personal liabilities should a mistake be made.

By having a professionally prepared and up to date Will in place now, unnecessary problems can be avoided in the future.

To discuss your needs in detail please call Brian O'Donoghue in NSW, Suzanne Jones in Vic. or Tony Steele in Qld. toll free on 1800 622 812.



PERMANENT TRUSTEE

COMPANY LIMITED - SINCE 1887

## Embark on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Israel with Geoff Bullock

### FEATURING:

#### ISRAEL:

Nazareth, Sea of  
Galilee, Golan  
Heights, Jerusalem  
AND MUCH MORE.

A worship concert  
on the shores of  
the Sea of Galilee.



### BONUS OFFER!

For each tour member, one complimentary ticket from Inner Faith Travel and Geoff Bullock: Milan/Rome return airfare to over 86 European destinations, including London.

For more information phone -

**TOLL FREE 1800 074 426**

Lic TAG 261



**INNER-FAITH**  
travel PTY LTD





## Seventy Years Young

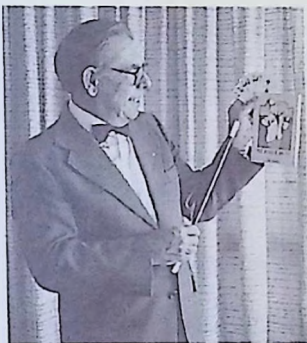
**Victor Harbor, SA, church celebrates**

The church, situated in South Australia's premier holiday spot 80 km south of Adelaide, was commenced at Easter 1929, as a fellowship which would provide for "adult baptism by immersion and weekly communion". These were not available in existing churches in the town. Sunday 11 April 1999 was chosen as the day to "Focus on Christ our Future and our Hope", and thus there was an emphasis on the future, building on our past.

Pastor Graeme Rogerson introduced the church's Vision 2005, and also dedicated the church's Internet home page as an outreach resource. The home page ([www.granite.net.au/~vhchurch](http://www.granite.net.au/~vhchurch)) is being developed by Chris Aird and was demonstrated and explained on a large screen, and illustrated the potential of this medium to arouse curiosity and to reach those who spend time "surfing the net". Keith Aird led a tour of the property to explain the proposed redevelopment.

Pastor Ron Holmes was the special guest on the day and used his conjuring tricks to captivate young and old alike, while explaining to his youthful audience the meaning behind the Easter eggs and hot cross buns. Music at the morning service ranged from the old faithful hymn "Crown Him with many Crowns" to contemporary songs led by the youth band with praise group, and the choir. A medley of Elim choruses brought back memories. Music over lunch included violin, piano, vocal duet and choral.

Miss Mona Verco, the church's longest-serving member, cut the birthday cake. Seven other long-



*Ron Holmes, guest speaker, under no illusions about the real meaning of the Easter traditions*

serving members who joined in the late 1940s and 1950s were acknowledged. Two of the gathering, Mil Smith and Graham Yelland, could remember the Sunday School meeting at the Masonic Hall before 1939, when the existing church building was opened. A history of the church, given by Ken Collins, was based on the 22 ministers who have served in Victor Harbor since its inception.

### Here and There

#### McMurtrie Ranked Fifth

One of our US sister journals recently published a list of churches with memberships over 1000. Barry McMurtrie, who has ministered in Victoria and New South Wales, had his church ranked fifth of 59 listed, with a membership of 3,720. From recent contact with Barry, the Editor learned that the church has now reached over 4000 attenders, with 408 baptisms and 236 transfers for the year. The largest church has a membership of 10,800.

## Lower Blue Mountains

**First team member for growing church**



*Lower Blue Mountains Church of Christ, NSW, appoints its first team member as it continues to attract new people. Debbie Cox has joined Stephen Templeton as part of the ministry team, as the church moves into the next century.*

## Release a Joint Effort

**Disciples minister co-leads delegation to Yugoslavia**

Readers will be aware of the release of three US soldiers by Yugoslavian authorities some weeks ago. Reporting concentrated on the major role of the Rev. Jesse Jackson. The facts not reported are that there was a nineteen-person religious delegation, with Jesse Jackson and Rev Dr Joan Brown Campbell as co-leaders. Dr Campbell is the General Secretary of the US National Council of Churches and a Disciples of Christ minister.

Upon return to New York, Dr Campbell expressed some irritation at the media coverage of the team's visit. She praised Jesse

Jackson's part but said the focus on him had ignored the ecumenical nature of the trip. She commented that the news media literally turned off their cameras when someone other than Jackson was speaking. The delegation comprised representatives of the US Serbian Orthodox Church, a Methodist bishop, Baptist pastor, the president of the Muslim Council, a Jewish rabbi and a Quaker expert in mediation. The idea for the delegation's visit is said to have grown out of the friendship over some twenty years between Dr Campbell and Jesse Jackson.

*Crosslight*



## Churches of Christ in Queensland

Conference Council  
invites expression of interest for the position of

### EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT

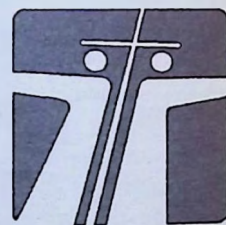
The Executive President will be directly responsible to Conference Council, who are an elected body of people representing the interests of the local churches within Queensland. The Executive President will be responsible along with the Conference Council for the overall operation of Churches of Christ in Queensland to achieve the goals and implement the Strategic Plan of the organisation.

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.

## Oberammergau – Passion Play 2000

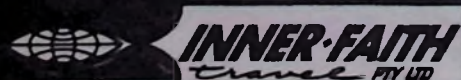
LIMITED  
VACANCIES

Opportunity of a Christian Lifetime  
Only Once Every 10 Years

LIMITED  
VACANCIES

<b>Rev. Ken Anderson</b> <i>Depart:</i> 30 May 2000 22 Days <i>Featuring:</i> Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland + Passion Play	<b>Rev. Cec Schloss</b> <i>Depart:</i> 1 June 2000 51 Days (with options) <i>Featuring:</i> England, Israel, Scotland, Africa, Ireland, Europe, + Passion Play	<b>Rev. Dr. Lew Born</b> <i>Depart:</i> 3 July 2000 35 Days (with options) <i>Featuring:</i> England, Israel, Scotland, Ireland, Europe, + Passion Play	<b>Pastor Graham Carslake</b> <i>Depart:</i> 12 July 2000 17 Days <i>Featuring:</i> Israel, Europe + Passion Play	<b>Rev. John Pearson</b> <i>Depart:</i> 9 Aug. 2000 24 Days <i>Featuring:</i> Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Europe + Passion Play	<b>Rev. Tom Reuther</b> <i>Depart:</i> 17 Sept. 2000 22 Days <i>Featuring:</i> Passion Play, Europe, Places of the Reformation + Musical Greats
---	---	--	---	---	--

Call Now Toll Free 1800 07 4420



Inner Faith Travel

Lic TAG 261



## Troubled Neighbours

### A Call For Prayer for the People of Asia

Our national office has just received an urgent request from the Christian Conference of Asia (of which Churches of Christ in Australia is a part) asking for prayer for the people of Asia.

Like many other Australians, I have watched the unfolding events to our north with increasing alarm. It appears that economic woes have lifted the lid on a Pandora's box of simmering eth-

nic and religious tensions that, with the kind of weaponry available in these areas, threatens dangerous times ahead. We, as Australian Christians, cannot but be deeply concerned by what we see, both from compassionate concern and our own self-interest; for what happens in South East Asia is certainly going to affect us.

The Christian Conference of Asia report says, "The roots of Asia's

many problems today lie in its shattered economy, which has resulted in food shortages, high inflation, unemployment and social unrest. Political uncertainty is looming in several Asian countries and democratic principles are in shambles. Deep mistrust and frustration exist, leading to ethnic conflicts and communal violence.

Religious fundamentalism is growing and a culture of intolerance persists. The minority religious communities in these countries are experiencing discrimination and persecution. The people of East Timor now face terror and cold-blooded massacres. Territorial disputes create havoc and threaten peace and stability in dif-

ferent countries. A frantic race towards nuclear conflagration has started in South Asia. East Asia has also been on the brink of a nuclear threat.

The emerging balance of power configurations and strategic security alliances bring anxiety and uneasiness to the minds of East Asian people. We appeal to Christians around the world to pray for the ceasing of conflicts and violence that are taking place, especially in Indonesia and East Timor."

I urge all readers of *The Australian Christian* to join with our sisters and brothers in Asia to pray for peace and justice.

—Robert Smith  
(National Coordinator)



Churches of Christ  
Theological College

### Getting Started! 5 options

for those wanting to commence study  
in theology and ministry in 2nd semester

#### Interpreting the New Testament

with Dr Greg Elsdon on Monday; 6.30–9.30 pm (BN101.15)

#### Introducing the Hebrew Bible

with Merry Blair on Wednesday; 6.30–9.30pm (BH101.15)

#### Youth Ministry 2: Context and Culture

with Tim Corney on Tuesday evenings; 6.30–9.30pm (DC132.15)

#### Christianity through the Centuries: From Reformation to Modern Times

with Ken Manley and Marita Munro on Wednesday; 2–5pm (CH112.15)

#### Pastoral Care in Crisis and Growth

with Alan Niven on Thursday; 2–5pm (DP102.15)

For further details ring Graham Warne on (03) 9790 1000  
40–60 Jacksons Road, Mulgrave Vic 3170 (Mel. ref. 80K3)

E-mail Address: cctc@cctc.com.au

2nd Semester  
starts 26 July 1999

enrolments close 20 July

## International Christians

Discussions begin on international  
issues of "the Christian"



Martin Robinson of Churches of Christ in the UK (centre), Nigel Pegram and Don Smith of The Australian Christian discussed possibilities of our publishing issues in association with Churches of Christ in the United Kingdom. Preliminary discussions, initiated from the UK, took place in Melbourne in May, with a view to the production of six joint issues in 2000. Discussions are proceeding, subject to agreement between the Board of The Australian Christian and UK churches.



# Relationships

## Organisational Relationships

JOHN BAILEY

**T**he Board of Directors of a major international company made an important decision in 1998. They decided that new appointees to chief executive positions in any of its companies would need superior "relationship skills". This particular company has experienced difficulties in recent years with extremely bright, intelligent executives who have offended community groups, business partners and employees because they could not create effective relationships. When I was informed of this situation, I reflected on the many organisations

*The dysfunctions always occur because the relationships have broken down.*

in which I have the privilege to operate as a management consultant. My reflections indicated that the majority of dysfunctional units or divisions in my client organisations are not suffering because of inadequate financial or management strategies. The dysfunctions always occur because the relationships between leaders and their teams or between teams and other teams, have broken down.

Unfortunately, we are able to find examples (few I hope) of Christian organisations in which relationship-breakdowns feature.

Why?

When we look at reasons for poor relationship management in organisations, we are struck with the close parallels with relationship breakdowns between friends or family members. Self centredness, competitiveness, inability to communicate, lack of clarity about

expectations are all observed in the organisational setting—as they are experienced in our interpersonal situations. Some companies have realised the importance of the relationship dimensions in organisational life. It is pleasing to see evidence in organisations in which special attention is paid to relationship management, a higher level of economic performance is observed. Of course, the general culture of the organisations is more likely to exhibit care, empathy and collaboration than impersonality and competition.

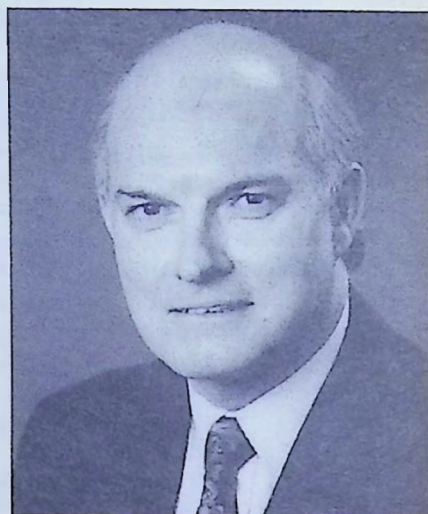
### **Evidence!**

At a forum held in the USA in November 1998, one of the speakers was Bill O'Brien, former Chief Executive Officer of Hanover Insurance Inc, a multi-billion dollar financial services corporation. Bill had brought about significant change in Hanover over many years. He said that unless he demonstrated "profound reverence" for people in his organisation when trying to introduce change, he could not expect them to accept the changes needed. (Nothing new here for followers of Christ, but it was refreshing to hear from the CEO of a multi-billion dollar corporation.)

### **What Can Be Done?**

Relationship building in organisations begins with individuals who take the trouble to develop self-awareness. An understanding of self and the impact of self on others is essential. This understanding will naturally involve seeking feedback and taking corrective action if the impact on others is affecting the relationship. Receipt of negative feedback is not easy, but self-aware individuals know that it will assist in enhancing relationships.

A second element of improvement in relationship management is the capac-



ity to engage in reflective conversations or dialogue, rather than debate or discussion.

Dialogue involves putting preconceived positions on hold and listening deeply to others, with the genuine desire to understand and learn from the perspective of another person. Dialogue, when applied effectively, often leads to outcomes that could not be conceived of, if using processes of argument and debate.

### **Next!**

There appears to be movement in some of the world's large corporations towards enhancing relationship management and genuine concern and respect for individuals. This movement is occurring not only because it produces economic outcomes, but also because some leaders have finally realised how important relationships are in the creation of sustainable organisations. Let's ensure that our church-based organisations continue to be leaders in the relationship management movement.

Dr John Bailey is a member of the Doncaster, Vic, church. He is involved in international and Australian consultative work with corporations and government.



# Relationships

## Relationship Essentials

KIRRILIE SMOUT

I often ask people to tell me their happiest memories. Without fail, people answer by telling me their memories of relationships. They tell me of their wedding days, the birth of their children, favourite times with friends and special times with family. It seems that personal relationships provide us with the most rewarding and most fulfilling experiences in life.

Yet, as a clinical psychologist, over 90% of people I see every day, are agonis-

*At times it appears we just can't live with people, and yet we can't live without them.*

ing over relationship problems. When people are stressed about work, it is rarely the work itself which is causing the problem, but bosses, colleagues and customers. When people are feeling anxious, it is less often snakes and spiders they are worried about, but situations involving other people and what they will say and think about them. Depression is often related to unhappy relationships. When people are angry, although they kick the car door, it is most often the actions of another person they really feel frustrated with.

It seems most of our anxiety, stress, depression, worry, anger and frustration arise from our relationships. What a paradox! At times it appears we just can't live with people, and yet we can't live without them.

In the last few decades, there has been an ever-increasing avalanche of "self-help" information designed to help us improve, cope with and fix our relation-

ships. We can learn listening techniques, assertiveness systems, conversation starters and "The Rules" of creating a relationship (a published book!). We can learn about the differences between men and women, how to divide people into personality types and to relate to each type, we can be taught tips on how to relate to our children at each of their ages, and so on. If you want to improve any relationship, there will be a technique for it or theory about how to do it!

Just about all these techniques can be useful and helpful. But all the techniques and theories in the world, can't replace the right underlying attitude and value system. Technique without the underlying values, is like a copy watch. It looks like a Rolex, it kind of feels like a Rolex, but there is something about it that is not quite genuine. What is the underlying attitude or value essential for fulfilling and genuine personal relationships? Love. To have meaningful and fulfilling relationships with people requires that we love them. Love must underpin every listening technique, every parenting strategy, every conversation trick or relationship technique. If it doesn't, then ultimately our relationships will be empty and unfulfilling. Good relationships require that we stop trying to get people to do what we want them to do and to start pouring love into their lives.

How do we love people? There are a thousand ways, but if I had to identify the two most important it would be these: listen, and invest time. True listening powerfully communicates love like nothing else can. To love people, we need to turn off the advice tap, stop interrupting, turn down the judgemental voice in our head and truly listen to people around us. We need to listen



with a genuine desire to understand. With listening comes the investment of time. Time is a precious commodity. But loving others cannot be achieved quickly. If we want to love someone, we need to sacrifice our time. To spend time sending a card, making a phone call, praying for someone, cooking a meal or providing a listening ear. This all takes time that we sometimes feel we don't have. But there is a clear choice: unless you give and invest your time with people, they will not know true love from you.

Loving others doesn't require special skill, education, training or complicated techniques. We have each been born with an immense and wonderful capacity to greatly love people around us, whether we be younger or older, shy or outgoing, male or female. Admittedly, true love is hard, long and expensive work. But this work pays a great salary. There is more joy possible in one moment of true connection with a person than decades of achievement with "things". The more you love, the more you live.

Kirrilie Smout is a Clinical Psychologist who attends Edwardstown Community Church, SA. She provides clinical counselling and works as a professional speaker for schools, churches and community groups.



# Relationships

## Effective Church Boards

DEAN PHELAN

**B**oards of Management are commonly formed to be the governing bodies to oversee the work of local churches, state conferences and our national work.

From my experience, effective boards have two core things in common. Board members are clear on the role and function of the board and they demonstrate effective working relationships.

### Clear role and function

In the 1998 text *Strictly Boardroom*, Professor Frederick Hilmer summarised the outcomes of a high-level Australian working party convened to ex-

*Boards should periodically take time out to review how their meetings and work are structured*

amine what is known about the theory and practice of good governance. Their work was directed at boards generally, not specifically churches. However, the findings are applicable. They determined that a board's key role is to ensure that management (i.e. the ministry team, however formed) is continuously and effectively striving for above-average performance, taking account of risk. This is not to deny the board's additional role with respect to protecting the members' or shareholders' interests.

Each board should clearly define what is meant by sustainable, above-average performance in its particular situation. In other words, the board of a local church, state agency, conference or national entity must each define what is meant by "performance" in their situ-

ation. Each board must then monitor performance, particularly scrutinising performance on the issues important to the organisation.

The Working Party determined that boards should define their roles in each of the following five areas:

- Appointment of the CEO or key person (generally the minister in churches) responsible for the day-to-day performance of the organisation, determining the terms and conditions of appointment and reviewing performance.
- Critical review of strategy proposals put forward by "Management" and determination of organisational policies.
- Budgets and longer-term financial planning.
- Reporting to members and ensuring any legislative and regulatory compliance.
- Ensuring its own effectiveness—each board should regularly review and assess its own performance and that of its members, and ensure that its own composition, committee structures and support are appropriate to its tasks.

### Effective working relationships

The key to an effective working board is the quality of the working relationships. What are the behaviours and characteristics that are demonstrated when relationships are working effectively? Research identifies a number of issues. (See sidebar.)

Boards should periodically take time out to review how their meetings and work are structured, that their agendas are consistent with their role and function (as described above) and that the process of meetings is efficient, as well as effective. A good chairperson can be a valuable resource.

Dean R. Phelan is a member of the Blackburn, Vic, church and the chair of the Vic-Tas State Board. He is a psychologist and business consultant.

### Characteristics of Effective Working Relationships

There is trust among all members and each member feels able to be themselves.

People are honest with each other and are able to tell it how it really is.

Individual differences are accepted.

Feelings are respected.

There is a good spirit, with appropriate laughter and good humour.

All members have a passion and commitment for what the organisation is about.

All valid information is freely exchanged.

People listen to what is said and what is felt.

Honest feedback is given and valued.

People summarise where things are at.

Problems and issues are properly defined.

Plenty of thoughts and insights are contributed.

Ideas are tested and challenged.

Facts are distinguished from opinions.

Everyone makes their reasoning explicit.

People encourage each other.

Members negotiate their needs and wants in relation to meetings.

Fair praise and recognition is given.

Differences between what people say and what they actually do, are discussed when necessary.

People think positively rather than negatively.

Statements are balanced with questions.

Individual styles are changed to meet the group's needs when required.

Conflict is managed and worked through.

Defensiveness is identified and talked through.

Genuine consensus is achieved when needed.

Time is managed.

Brainstorming is balanced with analysis.

There is a clear sense of purpose for meetings shared by all members. In other words, "Why are we all here?"

In a church setting, there is a genuine time of prayer together at each meeting.



# Relationships

## No Soft Skills!

CAROL PRESTON

**G**od says a great deal about loving relationships, but often it seems we pick out the bits that are easy and avoid the tough love, which enables us to enter into honest, often emotional encounters that are needed if we are going to build significant relationships.

Some use the phrase "carefronting" to encourage the loving confrontation which is often required in building deep relationships. I find that more often people are "careful not to confront". I think too many believe that to be "Christian" in relationships means be-

### *But it's better than pretending we have good relationships*

ing nice, accommodating, and pleasing. We have trouble saying "No", and reconciliation is often cheap grace which does not address problems, but simply buries conflict, rather than dealing face-to-face with another person where there might be unpleasantness or rejection.

If we take Jesus as an example, we find he was not often "nice". He was honest. He asked for what he needed. He confronted friends, followers and antagonists when he found their behaviour or words needed challenging. He was able to say "No" to ungodly demands from friends and enemies alike. Yet he was always loving, always wanted what was good for the other. It takes courage to say and to hear what is true and good. It is much easier to say and hear what is pleasant and non-threatening. We settle for keeping the peace and protecting egos. "I couldn't say that, it might hurt her feelings",

often means, "I don't have the courage to test our relationship with honesty", or "I don't believe in myself enough to be real".

As soon as we care about other people, we become vulnerable and, inevitably, we get hurt. We misunderstand each other, let each other down, and sometimes we are selfish or thoughtless.

We need feedback, sometimes confrontation, often forgiveness. It is those who care about us enough to honestly let us see ourselves through their experience, hurt, or anger, who love us best, who are most likely to help us to grow toward maturity.

When our children are young we tell them they shouldn't hurt each other, and when they do they must say sorry and make up, because we know that God wants his people to love each other that way. When we are adults and people hurt us or are angry with us, we more often live by the "forgive and forget" motto. This usually means pretend it hasn't happened, try to put it out of your mind, or just stay away from that person. We forget about tough love, because that requires what we expected of our children: vulnerability and courage, facing our true selves, taking the risk of being rejected and learning more about relating in love and forgiveness.

If we follow Jesus' example, we will value ourselves and others enough to learn skills of authentic sharing and genuine listening, which offer the other restorative grace. That means we will work through our hurts and differences with a person, establish true understanding and negotiate a better way of relating. This takes humility and often requires support in the form of a third person. But it's better than pretending we have good relationships and



that we know what it is to love each other, when often we don't even know each other.

It behoves us to examine the quality of our relationships. After all, we are supposed to be known by the way we love each other. Nothing will impact a person in the home, workplace or community, like coming face to face with someone who deals well with conflict or criticism, who can really listen to others, be honest without being destructive, negotiate boundaries confidently, offer and receive forgiveness. These are certainly not soft skills. They are the core of loving relationships which are all too scarce in our world.

Dan Allender, writer of the great book, *Bold Love*, has the best last words. "Bold love promotes disruption that leads to solace, repentance that leads to rest; but far more, it invites both giver and receiver to stare into the eyes of mystery, the wonder and the meaning of the Cross."

Carol Preston, psychologist, is currently coordinator of Counselling Services, Wollongong Church of Christ, NSW, and teaches pastoral counselling skills for Australian College of Ministries.



# Relationships

## The Scriptural Dimension

HAYDN NELSON

It has been said that every human being lives in a three-dimensional relationship: to God, to other human beings and to the creation. From the biblical viewpoint, the one dimension that takes priority, and indeed the one that informs, gives understanding and provides ultimate truth and meaning to the other dimensions, is our relationship with God. Let's spend a few moments to examine more closely the first two dimensions of relationship—human to God and human to human.

### The God-Human Relationship

The foundation to a correct understanding of the nature of the relationship between God and ourselves is the explicit statement that we are created in the "image of God" (Gen 1:26-27). Originating from the interaction of perfect relationship within the triune Godhead ("let us make man in our image"), humanity is made both male and female. God's creation of humanity and imprint of his own image on both male and female, all within the context of his creation of the cosmos, lays the foundation stone of the dimensions mentioned above. Not only do we exist in relationship with God because he made us and made us in his image, but we also exist in relationship with each other and with the creation. All life derives from him and human life finds its goal in him.

This relationship with God, however, was broken by the Fall and the "fallout" has inflicted damage on our relationships with each other and with our world. The image of God in humanity, once so perfect and so clear, has been distorted but, thankfully, not destroyed by the Fall. Consequently, it is only within the context of redemption that the restoration of this image and of this relationship becomes possible. There-

fore, God sent Christ, "the image of the invisible God", to become one of us and "through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col 1:15, 20).

### The Human-Human Relationship

Relationships between human beings receive expression in a number of biblically-sanctioned ways. The foundation relational unit is that of husband and wife. This in turn leads to the parent-

*The "fallout" has inflicted damage on our relationships with each other and with our world*

child relationship and extends beyond the family unit to encompass others. However, these relationships within humanity, often termed "horizontal", do not exist in a vacuum. They can only be truly meaningful, that is, attain to what they were originally intended to be, when they are in harmony with a meaningful God-human relationship—the "vertical" dimension.

This is why Jesus, when asked by a scribe which of the commandments is the most important, mentioned both dimensions (Mark 12:28-31). We are both to love God with all that we are and love each other as we would hope to be loved ourselves. True God-honouring rela-

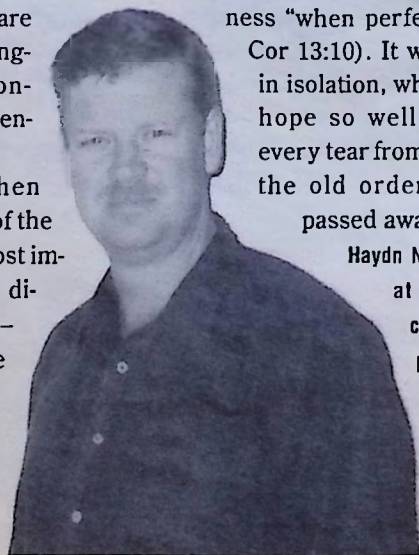
tionships should be characterised not only by a love for God which seeks to reflect God's love for humanity, but also by a love for each other which seeks to reflect the perfect love expressed within the triune Godhead.

For the Christian, the restoration of the vertical relationship brings with it this sometimes totally unexpected added benefit, the restoration of human relationships to their created and intended level. The sheer depth and strength of relationship between believers is all bound up in that remarkable word *koinonia* (fellowship).

Yet, the reality of congregational life is often one in which we experience the wonderful highs of this Christian fellowship interspersed with periods of conflict and strained relationships. In this regard we are no different from the church of the New Testament, which also experienced fractured and strained relationships (Gal 2:11-14; Acts 15:36-41).

Such highs and lows are all evidence of our being in what theologians call the tension between the "already" and the "not yet". One day, though, perfect relationships will exist in all their fullness "when perfection comes" (1 Cor 13:10). It was John, writing in isolation, who put this future hope so well, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes ... for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev 21:4).

Haydn Nelson is in ministry at Applecross, WA, church and is completing theological studies. He previously worked as a secondary teacher and later as a police officer.





# The Hallelujah Chorus?

VINEY LONGTHORP

**F**or most of this year, Melbourne's three commercial television stations (and doubtless those in other centres) have been broadcasting a series of half-hour religious programs between 4.00 and 5.30 am. All originate in America. An ever-watchful media commentator, Ross Warneke named them *The Hallelujah Chorus*; no doubt he had

*They are shameless, loud, gross and frighteningly superficial.*

in mind Handel's well-known masterpiece. However, our columnist wrote very much tongue-in-cheek.

Then, when addressing a companion series of programs on the same stations, David Millikan of *National Outlook* (March 1999) named them *The Blab and Grab Gospel*; for his part Millikan did not write tongue-in-cheek.

Interestingly, Ross Warneke, who may be described as a fair sample of the "man in the street" was quite aghast with one of these, namely Creflo (Dr Dollar).

He wrote "(It is) one of those shows that has to be seen to be believed. Dr Dollar is one of the many new faces of American TV evangelism ... which is not dissimilar to marketing snake oil. Dr Dollar claims that if a 'righteous' man prays to God, the good Lord will deliver to him vast personal wealth and success." The Doctor claims that, "You can get out of debt within 24 hours and even be a millionaire within three days." A somewhat bemused Mr Warneke felt that this "was plain greed and that I had been taught that greed was sin".

But there was more. Also on Channel 9, Jesse Duplantis has a format which is "lots of fun". "(Duplantis) has a wicked sense of humour ... (in one program) he had his audience in stitches with jokes about Jesus being

born to a virgin. Marilyn Manson would not have got away with it."

What gives here? Warneke continues: "This new audience ... does not believe, or want to believe, all that stuff about hell-fire and damnation." Nor does this audience appear to have any sense of reverence. Is this the "gospel" for Generation X, of globalisation, an expression of post-Christian veneration? This is a far cry from Robert Schuller's *Hour of Power*.

But it was David Millikan who gave a theologically-informed examination of these TV evangelists. He focused on the programs by Benny Hill, Kenneth Copeland, and Marilyn Hickey. He pulled no punches. We offer the following brief extracts, with his permission.

"(These three) have the predictable style of American evangelists. They are shameless, loud, gross and frighteningly superficial. But they are making inroads among uncertain Christians and those who are looking for comfort from the churches in Australia. As the mainline denominations slowly decline, this fringe of barely Christian preachers are showing the way ... They are selling a form of Christianity which turns it into a cornucopia of financial security, perfect health, and success in business and marriage. It is based on a series of beliefs which are driving some of the fastest-growing churches in Australia and even reaching into the lives of main-line denominations."

"Here is Benny Hill leading his congregation through a recital of one of the foundations of the prosperity Gospel: 'Christians are little messiahs and little gods on earth ... say, I am a God-man (audience responds). This



spirit-man within me is a God-man ... Say: I'm born of heaven - a God-man (audience responds). I am a sample of Jesus. I'm a super-being. Say it! Say it! (audience responds wildly). You want to prosper? Money will be falling on you from left, right, and centre. Say it after me: Everything I ever want is in me already."

"The trouble is this is not what Jesus was on about. In fact what drives this 'gospel' is almost the opposite to what Jesus taught. The first thing you will notice about this movement is the similarities to parts of the New Age Movement. It has taken over the 'affirmation movement': that is, the belief that our words and affirmations have a magical capacity to realise themselves in our lives. Everything in this theological system depends on the belief that we are gods. This is the source of the power to do what we want or to have what we truly believe is ours."

"(These) people are like fleas on the body of Christianity. They live off the strength of the Gospel, but have a separate life sustained by beliefs which are antagonistic to the host."

All of this reminds me of that saying attributed to G.K. Chesterton: "There is only one thing worse than having no religion. It is having a bad religion."

## Resource Christian Music

### PRAISE & WORSHIP!

- ★ Cassette/CD—live! Learn & enjoy the latest songs twice yearly.
- ★ Best of the best songs—for cong. worship.
- ★ Music supp. \$14.95
- ★ OHPT's © cleared or on disc (no fuss make your own)
- ★ 600+ song resource
- ★ Much more

For brochure or  
FREE SAMPLE PACK:

RCM,  
4/2 Garden Blvd.,  
Dingley Vic 3172.  
Ph (03) 9551 7476.



## L. C. F. Higgins

7 The Parade  
Norwood SA 5067  
Phone (08) 8362 1665  
e-mail <lh@camtech.net.au>

- Accountancy Services
- Business Management
- Retirement Planning
- Taxation Returns



Chartered Accountant



## Classifieds

### 90TH BIRTHDAY

**WHITTEN** Merlyn (McIntyre) nee Clay Dear mum, your family congratulates you on your 90th birthday on 24 May 1999, and we celebrate with grateful thanks for your love and Christian witness in our lives. Noelle and Lester Cox, Graeme and Glenys McIntyre, Janette and Michael Avery, and families.

### DEATHS

**BANNER**, Alice Louise (nee SEAL). In her 88th year, died peacefully in hospital on 1 May, 1999. Sister to George, Albert, Violet (Mrs W. Wright), Gladys (Mrs H. Barnes), all deceased. Aunt to Shirley, Lois, Graham, Beverly, Ronald, June, Keith and Margaret. At rest after bravely coping with many illnesses.

**CALVERT**, Kathryn Vanessa Passed away in hospital 10 April aged 41 years. Cherished daughter of Leita and Les Brooks (Croydon, SA) loved sister of Gavin, loving and dearly loved mother of Belinda and Amanda, and grand daughter of the late Glad and Wally Bartlett. In God's care.

### CARS

**PEDIGREE MOTORS** Specialising in quality used cars, general repairs and servicing. Let us help you when buying your next car. 658 Canterbury Rd, Surrey Hills Vic 3127. Phone (03) 9898 9391. LMCT 4376.

### HOLIDAYS

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

**NEED A QUIET PLACE** to write, study or rest? Colonial farmhouse in the Flinders Ranges, SA, available mid-July to end September. Close to many attractions (including the Heysen Trail) and only 13 km from all services in Port Pirie. Call Allan or Meredith on (08) 8634 3021 or e-mail <daviesa@telstra.easymail.com.au>.

### WANTED

**CASSETTE DUPLICATING MACHINE** required by Edwardstown Church of Christ (Adelaide). Either a single or multi-copying machine would suffice. Contact the Church office Phone (08) 8293 5754.



## Executive Director for OMS Australia

The Board of Directors of OMS International—Australia Inc is seeking an Executive Director. This is a challenging, full-time, senior missionary appointment, with remuneration based on a missionary team support package.

OMS worldwide works in eighteen countries; ministries in Mozambique and the Republic of Ireland have been commenced in the last three years, with other fields under consideration. Opportunities abound for evangelism, church planting and training national workers.

OMS Australia headquarters is in Box Hill, Victoria, but the appointee will be expected to spend a considerable amount of time visiting the constituency throughout Australia. The specific goals of the position are recruitment of workers, expanding the constituent base and ministry to the church at large.

Enquiries in confidence to:  
The Board Chairman, OMS International—Australia Inc  
PO Box 897, Ringwood Vic 3134.

## Thinking Biblically It's No Picnic

WAYNE BETTS

**T**he apostle Paul is pretty well "up there" when it comes to spiritual giants, wouldn't you agree? To him we owe much of our understanding of the significance of Christ's death and resurrection, life in the Spirit, and the dynamics of the early church. And he contributes more of the writings which make up the New Testament than any



*It was  
apparently no  
picnic being  
Paul.*

other human author. Not a bad résumé! Yet this mighty man of God was also aware of his own frailty, as even a superficial reading of Corinthians shows.

It seems that the two biblical epistles addressed to Corinth form part of a rather convoluted sequence of visits and correspondence between the apostle and his gifted, if somewhat frustrating, friends in that city (1 Cor 5:11; 2 Cor 2:1, 4; 12:14). One of those visits had been "painful"—for both Paul and the Corinthians. Some scholars believe that Paul may have been publicly humiliated by people challenging both his apostolic authority, and his public speaking ability. (2 Cor 2:1; 10:1-2, 10) Certainly he is on a mission in Corinthians to defend his standing as a legitimate apostle.

Sometimes he resorts to the same kind of self-promotion as his op-

ponents (3:1-3; 5:12-13; 6:3; 10:1-12:21) and is aware of how such "boasting" can sound. But what makes Paul's testimony really attractive is his insistence on his personal weakness, and the great strength of God (4:7-10; 7:5-7; 12:5, 7-10). It was apparently no picnic being Paul.

And that mysterious "thorn in the flesh" ... what was it?

The burden of ministry? A painful physical condition? Some besetting sin?

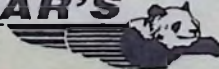
Thank God we don't know. Its very ambiguity means that we "fill in the blanks" with our own "thorn". And we can join with Paul in hearing God say to us, "My power is made perfect in weakness."

James Stewart comments, "This is the answer—that always it is upon human weakness, not human strength and confidence, that God chooses to build his kingdom; and that he can use us, not merely in spite of our ordinariness and helplessness and disqualifying infirmities, but precisely because of them ..."

So, my friends, if your "jar of clay" is frustrating you, take heart—you're in good company!

Sydney  
Adelaide  
Local  
Country

**BEAR'S**



- Free quotes • Packing
- Insurance • Storage

7 Swift Way,  
Dandenong Vic 3175

**Moving and Storage Pty Ltd.**  
Member of the VRTA

Twice weekly to Qld

(03) 9706 5616