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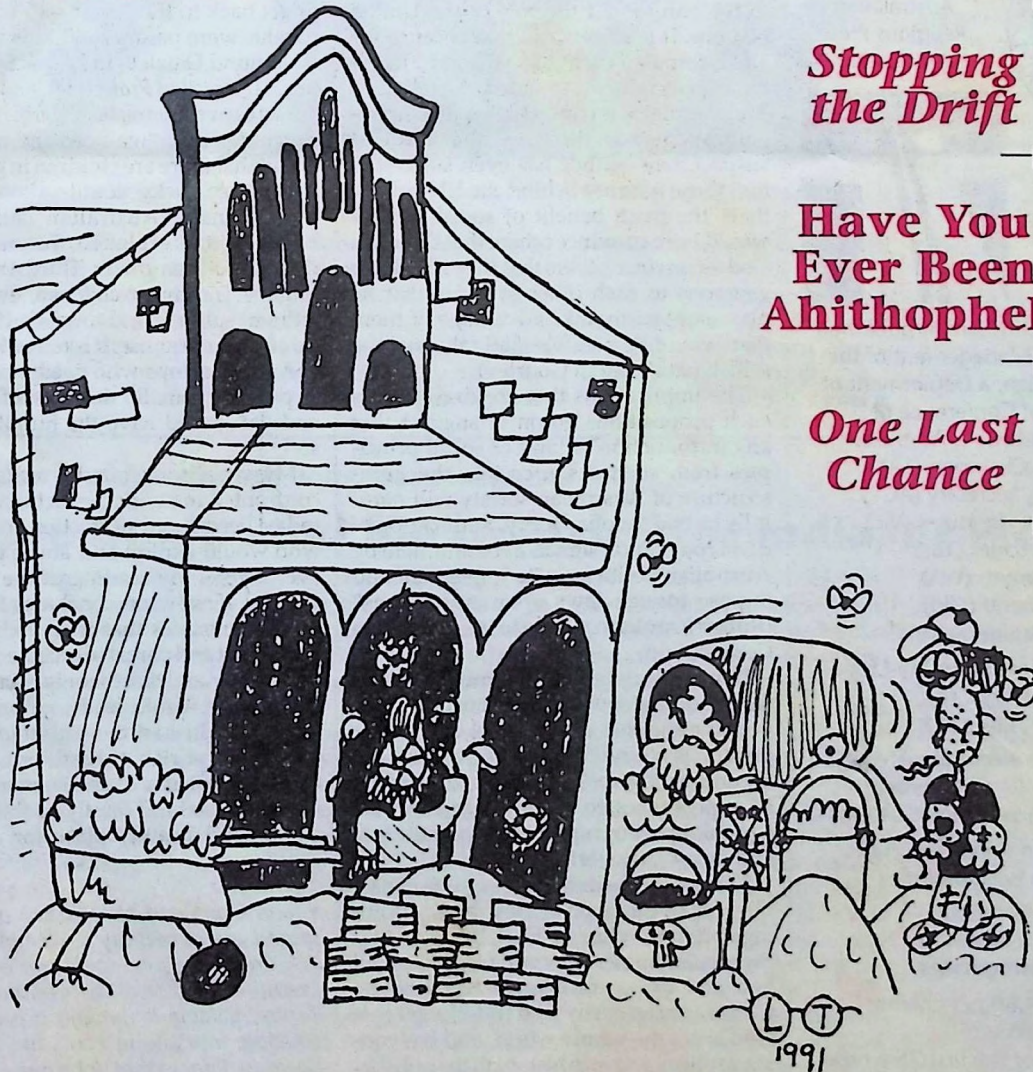


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Guest Editorial

My work in our church's welfare agency confronted me with the fact that children today need more protection from adults who would exploit and abuse them than ever before

The Rights of the Child

by John Clapp

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has been raised again as a cause for concern by Christians who care about where their country is going. This is an important issue for the church to take seriously, but I am concerned that there is a lot of misinformation around that is being given undue credence in our churches.

The first issue that concerns me relates to the nature and the role of the United Nations. It has been said that because the UN is founded on humanist and humanitarian principles it is founded on a religious premise that is incompatible with Christianity and its activities are in the very least suspect. One author has even suggested that those who are behind the UN believe that "the main benefit of social activity would be to convince others that there is a God—convince others that they should be generous to each other in order that he may more easily take advantage of them than would be possible if all followed the selfish path". (Alan Gourley)

The implications that are drawn from such propositions go on to suggest that any introduction of laws or social principles from such a source into the infrastructure of Australian society will naturally be bad for our society. Ratification of a UN convention signals a commitment by Australian politicians "to implement and impose foreign laws upon Australians" (Robert Karolis) contrary to the Australian Constitution.

If you establish the premise that the source of the convention is suspect, then you assume that every detail of the convention is bound to be deceptive, and can argue that "the real purpose is, contrary to all appearances, to legitimise and encourage child pornography, child prostitution and incest". (Robert Karolis)

There are, I believe, two serious consequences of this type of view being promulgated in the church. First, the view that the secular humanist world we live in is all bad and to be completely abhorred by Christians can easily lead us to forget that God loves the whole world, and has constantly been active in history in the political as well as personal fortunes of Israel and

the Nations (Amos 9:7). The Bible also clearly shows that God often used agents outside of his "Chosen People" to enable his will to be done. It may well be that such conventions from the UN can be ways for God's purposes to be fulfilled.

The second consequence I see is that such a view gives us permission to not take the issue seriously—to presume that all is well in our paddock, that, in fact, we need to get back to the "good old days" when parents were parents and kids were kids. Rosamund Dalziel, in *Zadok Series 1 Paper, S47, entitled Protecting Children: Do We Need a Convention on the Rights of the Child?*, concludes that "we need the honesty to admit that there are children in great need in our own 'lucky' country."

"Too many Australian children are homeless and exploited. Too many Aboriginal children die in Third World conditions. Too many children, even in our affluent suburbs and towns, suffer physical and sexual abuse. It is not only children in refugee camps who need a convention to protect them. So do some of our own, and we should have the humility to say so."

My work in our church's welfare agency confronted me with the fact that children today need more protection from adults who would exploit and abuse them than ever before. My reading of the details of the UN convention concludes that many of the principles that it embodies are already part and parcel of accepted state and federal law, and that the only circumstances in which it would lead to a break up of natural families are those in which children are clearly at risk of harm or abuse. The overall emphasis of the convention is to affirm the natural family as the most desirable and healthy place for a child to grow up.

• John Clapp and his wife Eira are in their second year of ministry at Wembley Downs, WA. Previously, John spent two years as the Executive Director of the Christian Welfare Centre, guiding it through a period of re-structure into Life In Focus Inc. as it now operates. Prior to that, John and Eira were in ministry at Brighton, Vic, for seven years.

• **Launceston builds a fort...**

Meeting the Needs of the Children



Board members with John Goodwin and some of Launceston's children and the fort

The Launceston, Tas, church has to meet the needs of a growing congregation. The elders and deacons, aware of the importance of ministry to children, decided to provide play facilities for the children

to use between the two morning services while their parents enjoy fellowship over a cup of coffee.

So a large pine-log climbing fort has been constructed at the rear of the chapel by John

Goodwin, who worships with the church.

Now the children enjoy themselves and the adults are free from the concern of the danger of passing traffic.

—Elwyn Green

• **Cover story**

Epping in a Mess!

Epping, NSW, is in a mess—but not the kind of mess you may be imagining. In fact the mess at Epping is indicative that things are going so well we have to make a big mess to keep them going well.

- Worship attendance is at capacity—which means making a big mess to expand our chapel, with new seating, a new entry and fellowship space.

- Children's ministries are expanding—which means making a big mess creating new activity rooms.

- Outreach auxiliary groups are working effectively—which means making a big mess to provide functional, up-to-date space for a variety of community activities.

- There is a team of four people employed in ministry—which means creating new office space to facilitate their work.

Epping is in quite a mess, at least in terms of bricks and mortar, for the next three months, but everything else is fine.

—Stephen Curkpatrick

...and has a successful missions focus weekend

"Please Don't Send Me to Africa (or India, or PNG)"

The Launceston, Tas, church held a successful Missions Focus weekend 12-14 April. Guest speaker at all meetings was Barry Jenkins, former missionary to South India and currently minister at the Ringwood, Vic, church. Barry was accompanied by his wife Maureen. Wayne and Janet Kerrison, who have recently returned from Madang, PNG, also attended.

The weekend commenced with a youth night on Friday. The whole evening featured simulation games, which highlighted the differences in Australian culture as compared to other countries. The young people were put in the position

of missionaries and had to act out how they would react in various circumstances. Games were also played from India, Papua New Guinea and Zimbabwe.

On the Saturday night a missions dinner was held, followed by a rally in the chapel. The program consisted of an audio-visual from Brian and Julia Coats in Zaire (with the Africa Inland Mission), whom the Launceston church helps support.

An excellent mime was presented on the theme "Please Don't Send Me to Africa" by Kylie Birtwistle and Natalie Hays. Barry then gave a powerful message. He highlighted

a world of poverty, homelessness, sickness, loneliness and hopelessness and stressed that Jesus Christ is the only one who can meet all these needs.

At the two morning services on Sunday Barry spoke on "Freely You Have Received, Freely Give".

At the Good News Celebration at 7 pm Wayne Kerrison showed two audio-visuals about Papua New Guinea. One was a devotional, which was used at the beginning of the service to set the tone for the evening.

The other showed the various areas of life in Papua New Guinea and how the missionaries fit into the picture. An

interview between the Jenkins and the Kerrisons also took place as they shared their experiences in Zimbabwe, India and Papua New Guinea and their thoughts of the future of the church in those countries. A puppet section, by Lyn Blyth and Natalie Hays, on commitment, also challenged.

Over the weekend a number of missionary organisations including the Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board and the Federal Aborigines Board presented first-class displays. Almost 700 attended the services over the weekend, which was very encouraging.

—George Green

• Camp Seaview project

Planning Continues



Colin Orr with Basil Marden, Camp Seaview manager

Good progress continues on the new building program at Camp Seaview, Bicheno, Tasmania. Colin Orr, the project supervisor expects that the concrete slab floor will be poured mid-year. When completed, this will allow for the opening of a number of new facilities at ground-floor level. The new building has been planned by architect Ray Drayton.

The camp is in continuous use by schools, groups and churches along with numerous

families who rent units for holidays. Camp Seaview overlooks the Bicheno township and has a fine view of the sea and coastline. Negotiations to purchase the site from the Tasmanian government are expected to be completed shortly.

A Tasmanian committee assists in both development and operational matters.

The camp is operated by the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development.

• Discovering the gospel through sport

SLM National Conference

Melbourne will host the 1991 National Conference of Specialised Life-Oriented Ministries (SLM) 29-30 July.

SLM was established in Sydney eight years ago when Dr Mark Tronson and his team set out to establish a chaplaincy service to present the gospel to the folk heroes of Australia—our sports men and women.

There are now 80 chaplains working across the whole spectrum of Australian professional sport and they are spreading into entertainment, tourism and media.

Chaplains build relationships alongside those who have great public exposure, but who have very little personal support. As a result, a number of top athletes have come to Christ, and they have been able to provide much-needed ongoing pastoral care with Christians who are already involved in sports.

The conference will include training for ministers and other Christian workers who are interested in sports ministry. It will also outline exciting ways in which sport can be a pow-

erful means of evangelism within the local church.

For the first time the conference will offer sessions for professional sportspeople on marriage communication, public speaking, financial planning beyond sport and self-identity alongside their sports "image".

The North Melbourne Football Club has offered generous use of its facilities and accommodation nearby has been arranged.

SLM's long-term contribution to the church and society will be for sports fans to begin to discover the gospel coming from their area of greatest interest. This will happen because all sports will soon be served by chaplains, and Christian athletes will lead in schools and camping ministry, sharing their sporting and Christian experience in schools, business clubs, sports dinners, churches and the media.

Details of the conference can be obtained from Noel Mitaxa, SLM Victoria, 98 Barrabool Rd, Highton 3216. Phone (052) 44 2464, fax (052) 44 3718.

• CBMI concert held at Croydon

Vision Gives Sight

On 13 April at the Croydon, SA, church the vision of Alice and Robert Stephenson became a reality. The Christian Blind Mission International Variety Concert was born.

Performers were the Adelaide Male Voice Choir, the Oakborne Brass Quintet, Jan Hansen (flautist), Joy Groves (singer/songwriter) and Robert Timbs (comedian, singer/songwriter and guitarist).

During the intermission the church ladies supplied a free supper.

Jim Stallard, SA CBMI representative, attended and at the start of the concert gave an amusing talk about himself and

CBMI. At the conclusion of the concert Robert Stephenson presented Jim with a cheque for \$1,000, which will help to restore the sight of 5,000 children in the Third World.

The show was a great success. The organisers appreciated the efforts of the Croydon church, which not only catered and provided the venue but also paid all expenses in setting up the concert, including the payment of performers.

It was more than a musical evening to many who attended.

Many were touched with appreciation of the work of CBMI.

—Robert and Alice Stephenson

TWO HOURS ON ONE WEDNESDAY EVENING

will be well spent as you listen to Dr Rowland Croucher's views on a Christian Radio outreach for Melbourne. It's the Annual General Meeting of Triple Seven, but our real purpose is to update all interested Christians on the state of this vital work.

Don't miss it!

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• **Christian radio for Melbourne**

Triple Seven Vision Continues

The Rev Dr Rowland Croucher will be the guest speaker at the annual general meeting of Triple Seven Communications, which seeks to provide quality of life radio programs in Melbourne. The meeting will be held at the Camberwell Civic Centre (Parkview Room), 34 Camberwell Road, on Wednesday, 29 May 1991, at 8 pm.

Rowland Croucher has worked full-time in Christian radio. He said: "I think I have a feel for its tremendous potential to reach many more unchurched people than our pastors and church leaders will ever reach. Its very ubiquity is its greatest asset: people can listen to the Christian message on radio, and be anonymous..." The theme of his address will be social justice.

General Manager, Bruce Upton, said that the Triple Seven Vision needs to continue. He said, "Special news and updates of progress concerning our licence procedure and details of the next test broadcast in November will be highlighted. However, the need for new members and increased financial support is urgently required if the Triple Seven vision is to continue." (See advertisement opposite.)

You are invited to
the Church of
Christ
CAULFIELD
206 Bamba Rd
71st Anniversary
Sunday, 19 May
10.30 am
Speaker Ian Allsop
Followed by lunch

• **Telling the Easter story to schools**

Strathmore's Easter Event Popular

Last year the churches in the Mt Waverley-Chadstone, Vic, area put on a special Easter activity for the primary schoolchildren in the schools of the area. The Chadstone church was very involved in this project. The event was so successful that those involved offered their experience and equipment to anyone interested in doing the same thing in their area. The Strathmore Inter-Church Council took up this offer.

The Easter Event consists of presenting the Easter story to the children through a highly visual process of drama, story, puppets and audio-visuals, with part of the Event taking place in a series of "caves" made of wooden frames and black plastic. The whole process is aimed at educating children about Easter and about who Jesus is and what he did.

Churches involved at Strathmore were St Vincent's Roman Catholic, St Aidan's Anglican, Strathmore Uniting and the Strathmore Church of Christ. Tremendous co-operation was received from the schools in the area with the principals being very keen on the project.

The three primary schools in Strathmore all participated and over 500 children in Grades 3-6 experienced the story of Easter. In filling out a response sheet the children were asked: "What will Easter 1991 mean for you?" Many replied to the effect that Easter this year will mean a lot more to them because they now know what it is all about. Most specifically mentioned that Jesus died and is risen.

Before the Event those taking part felt uncertain that they could handle the whole project. It was very much a step of faith and God responded to that



Alan Jenkins, a disciple in Strathmore's Easter Event, standing by the entrance to the caves

faith. The Easter Event at Strathmore was an unqualified success.

One of the benefits from the Event was the sense of Christian fellowship that arose out of working with fellow Christians from different denominations. Over 100 were involved from the four churches.

The children enjoyed themselves and learnt about Jesus in a pleasurable way and the churches made a positive impact on the wider community.

Strathmore intends to put on another Easter Event in two years time and recommends that other inter-church councils consider staging such an Event.

—James Pearce



Liz Booth telling part of the story to the children



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People

• Andrew and Kathy Nichols visit partner church

Tucson, Arizona, Comes to Maylands, South Australia

Dr Andrew Nichols, an elder at First Christian Church, Tucson, Arizona, partner church to Maylands, SA, visited Maylands en route to the World Council of Churches Assembly in Canberra, where he was an accredited visitor. Dr Nichols is Professor of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Arizona.

Dr Nichols gave one of the thanksgiving prayers at communion in Maylands' morning worship and was interviewed extensively during evening worship.

He is a director of the Division of Higher Education of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which has under its wing the graduate seminary of Phillips University, the new president of which is Dr Bill Tabbernee of Australia. His grandfather (one of the Garrisons) was a minister of the Christian Church.

Andy recently represented the American churches in fact-finding missions into Vietnam and Cambodia. He served with the Peace Corps in Peru and has also worked in Nicaragua and Mexico. He was a candidate for the Arizona legislature at the last State elections. He said that his Christian faith was his chief motivation in his work and many community involvements.

On a subsequent visit to the flying doctor base in Broken Hill, Andy was hosted by our Broken Hill church and was impressed by the Christian community there and its wide-ranging involvement in that city.

And Daughter Makes Two

20-year-old Kathy Nichols, daughter of Andy, was one of two United States young people who were stewards at the World Council Assembly: she served the "differently abled", as disabled people were termed.

Kathy visited Maylands following the Assembly, gave the



Dr Andrew Nichols

children's talk in morning worship and was also extensively interviewed during evening worship.

Could any 20-year-old have done more in her time? Kathy is a student at the University of Arizona, and has a campaign manager on hand if she runs for the presidency of the 40,000 strong student body. Last year she spent 12 months studying in Japan (in Japanese) and also teaching English to nine-year-olds there. In holiday breaks, she was sent by her Japanese church to Vietnam for six weeks and to the barrios of the Philippines. She returned home via the Trans-Siberian Railway.

18 months ago Kathy spent a month at Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Switzerland, doing a course on women in the church.

Kathy has a university scholarship as a result of her being one of the top 20 students in Arizona, but to help pay her way through her course she runs her own catering business, Kathy and Company.

Last November Kathy marshalled 2,000 Tucsonians to demonstrate against the war. Earlier in the year she had led a team of women to one of the Nevada test sites to make a stand there for peace. At 16, she joined the great peace march and marched two-thirds of the breadth of the USA—all this because of her Christian faith and belief that God loves all people and calls us all to be

peacemakers. She has spent several summers on work camps in Mexico and Nicaragua, helping build houses for the disadvantaged and paint churches where the resources are limited.

Kathy has a weekly hour-long public television program in which she commentates on Tucson politics, interviews guests, and takes TV talk-back. She sings for a rock band.

Kathy is active in her local church, particularly with children. She is on the board of directors of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and while here consulted Australian Overseas Missions executive director Jeff May. She returned home via a meeting of the DOM in

Indianapolis (after she led a Bible study at New York's famous Riverside Church).

While in Australia, Kathy did a crash course in Australian literature. Because one of her university courses involves her in consulting with the State legislature over prisons, she spent an hour and a half on a personal guided tour of an Australian open prison. She also spent a week on an outback sheep station, where they were shearing 36,000 sheep.

Later in the year she expects to be a translator (in Spanish, French or Japanese) at the world YWCA Conference in Norway.

The spectrum of God's people is fascinating. Through those people God does powerful things.

—Richard Lawton

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• Convention

Gideons at Maitland



B. Hallam (Asquith), Ray Hawkins (minister at Maitland), Noel Goodall (Epping) and K. Mosely (Maitland)

Over the weekend of 15-17 March the Northern NSW Zone of Gideons International held its annual convention at Maitland. The keynote speaker for the convention was the Rev Dudley Ford.

On the Sunday two members of Gideons who are members of Churches of Christ shared in the Maitland service. Noel Goodall told of the work of Gideons and B. Hallam gave the message.

• Different to other homes in the street

Caulfield Manse Dedication



Key people at the dedication of the Caulfield manse

"An exciting stage in the life of the regional church" is how minister Alan McMillan described the event. He was commenting on the dedication of the newly enlarged manse at Bambra Road, Caulfield, Vic.

The manse has been upgraded and extended providing a family room, study and enlarged lounge suitable for church meetings.

At the dedication chairman of the regional board (Bentleigh, Malvern and Caulfield), Duncan Crockett, introduced the key people in the project. Properties Corporation Executive Officer, Allan

Emmett, led in a prayer of dedication. Builder Ian McDonald (I. & L.A. McDonald), architect Lawrie Grant (K.A. Reed Pty Ltd) and Don Smith (Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development) each spoke encouragingly of developments.

Alan McMillan said the manse was different to other homes in the street because of its special link with the church (people and buildings) further down the road. There is no mistaking that people do take particular notice of what happens there.

Similarly each family home

• Financial support for Churches of Christ Christian Projects Update

To the end of 1990 CP1000 grants of \$93,406 and total grants of \$254,329 have been made by Christian Projects.

There have been three significant steps in the growth and recognition of Christian Projects in recent years.

First the decision to go national. This gave CP a unique position as the only organisation now offering a financial service to all Australian Churches of Christ.

The second step was the decision to introduce the CP Grants proposal as a trial in 1987. Introduced to see if more support from churches could be engendered it proved that support was forthcoming and that other states were keen to receive support for ambitious projects that needed financial support. This led to the next and third significant move, which was to employ full-time staff.

The decision to establish an office and employ Warren Murray as Director made it necessary to locate in Sydney. The work is now directed from 141 Victoria Road, Chatswood, NSW 2067 (Phone (008) 24 2904), and Warren is in touch with all states on a regular basis. President Bob Smith is also located in Sydney so it is likely that more and more administrative leadership will pass to NSW. Since its inception, CP was located in Victoria, but the trustees anticipate that the change to professional management and the switch to Sydney will be good for the CP concept.

CP1000 Grants have been made to all Australian states. During the trial period we received and dealt with 130 ap-

is a witness to the church links of its members and other people will notice what happens. We all witness to our faith in our daily living.

The evening concluded with a fellowship meal shared at the nearby Caulfield church hall.

plications. All were worthy of support but the financial restraints imposed limited support to 61 that the committee considered to be most worthy. As all the projects supported are worthy of mention and most of those rejected justified support, a larger and better endowed CP is the only way to support them all.

Examples of moneys well used include outreach in Portland, Vic, emphasis on the overseas scholarship and assistance given to ministers and others seeking support for graduate training courses, seminars and higher learning. ICEM has received substantial support.

A large grant to the Leadership 2000 proposal was hailed as major step in developing our church leaders. A similar type of exercise is needed at least every five years. A wilderness education request and outback church planting also indicate the wide range of support we were able to offer.

My term with Christian Projects has come to an end, but I have greatly enjoyed my years of association with it and I am confident that, given the support of the churches, it can prove to be a major catalyst for church growth and witness.

—Ian Henry

Correction

In the last issue of *The Australian Christian* (27 April) we carried an article written by Peter Burnham regarding the current difficulties at CCTC and Peter's perceptions from history. In writing the biographical material we stated that Peter was a graduate of the College of the Bible (now CCTC). This is incorrect. He is a graduate of Woolwich Bible College, NSW. At the moment he is engaged in research for a MTheol on the history of the concept of ministry in Churches of Christ, hence the historical angle of the article.

Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to 200 words

Band Dropped

To the Editor,

As a young musician from the Boronia church, I am shattered to hear that the band has been excluded from the Victorian-Tasmanian State Conference Celebration.

The conference band has brought enjoyment to many people, both young and old, from our churches.

So why discourage a perfect opportunity to bring all our musicians from within our churches together?

I hope that the Conference Executive will keep this in mind in future years.

—Mandy Ball, age 14
(Boronia, Vic)

[The Vic-Tas Conference office advises us that a decision was made after the last conference celebration to use different groups for each celebration in future. This year a group of young musicians from York Street, Ballarat, church provided the music. It is unfortunate that not all musicians can be used at this special celebration of our churches. Ian Allsop, Conference Secretary, wishes to thank Mandy for her concern regarding the quality of the conference celebration.]

Nunawading Statistics

To the Editor,

Just in case it means something to those who read the statistics first when they receive their Conference Handbook, I would ask those in possession of the 1991 Victorian-Tasmanian Handbook to amend the communicants for Nunawading to 338 (not 238).

—E.C. Keating
(Nunawading, Vic)

Non-credentialed Ministers

To the Editor,

Alan Cant's observations ("AC" 13 April) about the increasing percentage of non-credentialed ministers in Western Australia (and I guess in most parts of Australia) is a challenge and a warning to our colleges, churches and conferences.

Rather than be appalled by the trend, we should respond creatively to it. Obviously some churches are seeking people with skills rather than credentials and this trend may enlarge the recruiting base for our ministry.

Churches who engage a non-credentialed ministers should encourage them to enhance their skills with adequate training and conferences should be applying gentle pressure in the same direction.

Our theological colleges should also continue to respond creatively too, by recognising the experience and prior training of these potential leaders and by being flexible in the required schedules of study.

The traditional four-year college course is historically a recent innovation and it is still to be decided whether the growing emphasis on formal credentials is strengthening the church. I doubt that it is. On the other hand, we cannot afford to have a growing number of people in ministry who have not had their minds broadened or skills developed because of lack of training.

If we take notice of Kennon Callahan (*Effective Church Leadership*, Harper & Row, 1990, pages 11-12) our interest should not be in developing and preserving a professional ministry. We should be seeking "missionary pastors". The importance of credentials should be seen in that light.

—E.C. Keating
(Nunawading, Vic)

The WCC

To the Editor,

Ian Allsop's letter on the WCC ("AC" 27 April) leaves me with a feeling of concern, though it may not be entirely justified. Perhaps Ian is more perceptive than other commentators I heard or read on what happened in Canberra, but most seemed to be convinced that the faith was compromised and the WCC's tendency towards syncretism confirmed.

There is a great need in these days, when indigenisation and contextualisation are basic ob-

jectives, for clear thinking. It is surely one thing to make use of ideas and terms in a given culture in an attempt to make Christ known; it is quite another to assert that the Holy Spirit gives new and Christian meaning to some aspects of indigenous heathen cultures apart from radical re-interpretation. Surely Paul's whole intention in Acts 17, for example, like John's in John 1, is to turn men and women from darkness to light. How can this occur if we compromise by saying that darkness is already light, which seemed to many to be the implication of Professor Chung's statement.

The confusion of thought evident at the moment was highlighted recently by Michael Barnard (*The Age*, 23 April). He drew attention to "the mis-

guided deference to Aboriginal students" by the Roman Catholic Pontifical Mission Societies who have issued school kits depicting Jesus and other historical Christian figures as bush turkeys. A diocesan director even suggested that the drawings will be more helpful to the white population than to Aborigines! This is patently absurd.

As Barnard comments, simple truth gives way to symbolism and symbolism gives way to corruption. Readers of church history will recognise that the process has a long pedigree.

Thus muddled thinking, uncertainty regarding one's own and other faiths, and plain farce walk hand in hand. We need to beware.

—Ken Stothard
(Essendon, Vic)

Letters from Tertius

First and Last

To the Editor,

I heard about an evangelist whose meeting was being ruined by a church dignitary, who when asked to pray went on and on. Apparently the evangelist got up and said, "While our brother is a finishing his prayer, let's sing a hymn."

I must confess that sometimes when our organist has been dragging us in funeral procession through one of the longer hymns, I have hoped that some one might say, "While those who want to, finish the hymn, let's say a prayer." (Maybe a prayer for deliverance!) I've felt the same when some of the so-called contemporary hymns have dragged on and on.

I suppose others have felt likewise, because leaders often call for the first and last verses of hymns, especially when the minister has got up late to preach, or gone overtime a bit.

I'm all for cutting out a verse here and there if it's appropriate, such as verses telling us we are worms or verses that liken death to "crossing the Jordan". I've looked up my concordance and can't find anything in the Bible about "crossing the verge of Jordan". In the Book of Revelation there is a river in heaven, but not as a sort of moat to cross. It runs right down the main street.

But surely if there is to be hymn surgery, to choose the first and last verse is ridiculous. I've been browsing through the hymnbook and usually the first and last verses have no connection without what comes in between.

Last Sunday we were asked to sing the first and last verses of "O God Our Help". It turned out that they were both the same. But we're used to singing every chorus twice, so I suppose no one noticed. But could song leaders be a bit more selective and shorten hymns by more appropriate choices of verses?

But I suppose that in synagogues little Jewish boys and girls are pleased when Psalm 119 is the hymn for the day, and the cantor announces that they will sing the first and last verses!

—Tertius

Letters from the Editor

Thankyou for Prayers

To the Editor,

I thought I'd take this opportunity to publicly thank so many of your readers for their fervent prayers and expressions of their love and care through my sickness diagnosed in late July of last year. I was diagnosed as having a brain tumour and the future was very uncertain. I had my 44th birthday in January of this year.

I was sent by the GP to an Australian neurosurgeon who, after further tests, admitted me to hospital, and after exploratory surgery in early August, determined that the tumour was benign but was most apprehensive about his chances of removing it as it was as large as an orange and was in the area of the brain-stem. After a 14-hour operation, performed a fortnight after the first, which miraculously removed all of the tumour, I was left paralysed on one side and had great difficulty in talking and severe double vision.

I spent some two months in hospital and some four months at home, but gradually I learned to walk again, to drive and to speak without constant slurring. I still limp a little, and the right hand is not good enough to write with (I have learned to write with the left hand) but the double vision has disappeared. I returned to work in early February.

Throughout the ordeal I was supported by the prayers and care of hundreds of people, including family, colleagues and friends. First, I am most grateful to God for allowing me to be spared, and also to friends from all denominations who were so fervent in their prayers. The Lord must have

work left for me to do. To all of you we say thankyou.

—Lindsay Grimison
(Caringbah, NSW)

Unhealed

To the Editor,

This is a true story as told to me by a pastor:

"There was a minister of religion who had definite ideas about women and their place in the church. One woman in particular seemed to get up his nose by her walk with God.

"One Sunday morning the minister awoke feeling very ill indeed. He prayed to God for help, but come church time he was no better. Before the service he called his elders (male no doubt) together and asked them to lay hands on him. Still he was ill.

"Going out to face the congregation he felt so ill that he asked them to pray for him so that he could proceed. God spoke to a woman back in the body of the people and said he would heal him through her. Obediently she arose and went forward to stand in front of the minister. After a while he looked down at her and said, 'And what do you want?' It was the woman he disliked.

"She said, 'I want to pray for your healing.'

"He said, 'Oh, er, well go over there in the corner and get it out of your system.'"

The pastor said that that was years ago and as far as he knew that man was still unhealed. "Guess who has his healing in her hands."

You see, like us, he received just what he accepted, no more, no less. God is faithful to give, but our expectations are our own.

—K. Graham
(Magill, SA)

News

• Helping the needy

Planning a Pantry Pop In



Some of the goods to be popped in needy pantries

On Sunday, 14 April, Mike Esbensen, full-time worker for the Kensington Christian Network, was a guest speaker at the Cheltenham, Vic, evening service. He spoke of high-rise living—poverty, abuse, racial tension, suicide, violence and so on.

One of the congregation members was taken aback at the obvious cry to help from people living in such appalling conditions, with little money to pay urgent bills, let alone feed and clothe the family. Instead of sitting back and ignoring the crisis, the following day she planned a "Pantry Pop In".

She was astounded at the immense response. Just one donation of a can of food grew into an overwhelming supply of canned goods, biscuits, cereals, vegetables, drinks, bread and even a 25 kg bag of rice brought to her house by a Chinese lady who was not much bigger than the bag itself.

The generosity of people who are in a position to lend a helping hand, knowing the desperate state of our economy, has inspired her to pursue this program so that more can be done for the homeless, the unemployed and others in need.

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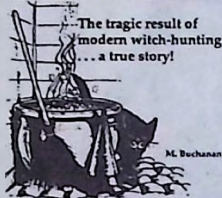


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Books

Salem

REVISITED



The tragic result of modern witch-hunting ... a true story!

M. Buchanan

Salem Revisited

The Tragedy of Modern Witch-hunting—A True Story

by Margaret Buchanan \$2.95

This booklet is the result of the author being accused of practising witchcraft. She had worked with a Christian organisation in Australia and one day she was told not to come to work and various accusations were made about her to the rest of the staff and to the governing body of the organisation. Some of the accusations and the steps made to confront those making them are set out in the first chapter. It is a sorry tale and if what the author writes is true then some questions must be asked about the Christian motivations of some Christian leaders.

The bulk of the booklet is a setting out of the actions that should be taken in circumstances where Christians have been accused of wrong actions. The whole question of discipline of Christians who are acting against the church at large is very difficult. Some of what was raised in this case could well have resulted in lawsuits if the people concerned had not felt it was not Christian to take such matters to the civil courts. Some of the points that Margaret Buchanan makes about dealing with such matters should be considered by anyone who has to deal in some way with discipline in the church.

Available from the author at PO Box 534, Redcliffe 4020. The cost is \$3.50 for an individually posted copy. Discounts are available for bulk orders.

—CRA

The Key to Lasting Joy

by T.W. Wilson (Word Books) \$9.95

In a foreword to this lovely book, R.T. Kendall says that if you do not know "T.W." (as he is known by his friends), you will soon feel that you do after you begin reading this book. He has the joy he writes about.

And in a foreword to the American edition, Billy Graham, a close friend and associate of "T.W.", says: "Joy is not something we can manufacture by our own strength. Nor is it something that comes when circumstances are ideal. It is a fruit of the Spirit which God gives us when we serve him."

To be a servant of God does not only mean to be a full-time world-travelling evangelist, or a missionary to the deep, dark recesses of a South American jungle, or darkest Africa, or even a pastor in a large city church. These images are only partly right. God needs his servants to be in every walk of life and it is only in this kind of servanthood that we, the ordinary people, can find the key to lasting joy.

There are four sections to this book, based on the four commands given by God to Jeremiah: a clear call, a clean life, a courageous message and a challenging purpose, making it an important manual filled with practical advice for the Christian who is seeking to be an effective, joy-filled servant of the Lord.

You will be able to hear the author speaking to you in very positive terms. He has "been there, done that"!

—Paul Payne

Dear Philip...

A Message of Hope from the Despair of Grief

by Donald N. Johnston (self-published) \$4

Grief is an intensely personal experience, one that most people find difficult to cope with. For men the encounter with grief is

often more traumatic because traditionally they have not been encouraged to acknowledge or express their emotions.

When his 20-year-old son Philip was killed in a car accident in 1989 Don Johnston was confronted with a host of emotions that demanded his attention. Like everybody else, Don had to work through the painful process of grief. The result is this booklet.

This booklet is written in the form of a letter to his son, telling of the shock of hearing about Philip's accident, the trauma of the days that followed, and the agonising difficulty of working through his grief to the point of accepting his son's death.

Available from Don Johnston, 17 Norval St, Salisbury 4107. The cost of \$4 includes postage.



DEAR PHILIP ...
A message of hope from the despair of grief.

Donald N. Johnston

The Fruit of the Spirit

by Joseph A. Kotal (Dove Publication) \$14.90

This is an unfortunate book—it was written!

To say it is readable would be telling a lie—it contains some of the worst writing it has been my misfortune to come across, with gross jargonising such as "eternalising" (please excuse the slip, I couldn't resist it). The only good thing about the book is the cover, which I found a pleasing product of the commercial artist. Inside even the paper is second-rate.

What promised to be a study of the Fruit of the Spirit, by which readers could "accurately gauge [their] personal walk with God", quickly became a labyrinth of allegory, types and shadows. The writer argues, "Through a better understanding of the physical typology of the carnal things in God's creation, we will be able to more fully comprehend their spiritual application." (page 12) It simply meant he had a wordy, boring and barely comprehensible production.

\$14.90 is too much.

—Bryan Mee



• Egypt's Copts

Muslim Domination Threatens Christian Minority

Modern-day Egypt boasts the largest Christian population of any Muslim nation in the Middle East—somewhere between 4 and 11 million Copts.

At the same time, this sizeable ethnic minority, while surviving as a strong religious entity tracing its traditions back to the legacy of St Mark in the first century, is integrated into the body politic of Egypt perhaps better than any of the other ethno-religious minorities in the Arab world.

Copts share a common mother tongue with their Muslim fellow citizens, along with other cultural ties and similarities, and since the word "Copt" is derived from the ancient Greek word for "Egyptian", the Copts may be justified in claiming their ancestors were the original inhabitants of the Nile valley, before the Muslim conquest in 642.

Moderate leaders in President Hosni Mubarak's broadly secular administration are fond of quoting the comment made at the turn of the century by Lord Earl Cromer, "A Copt is an Egyptian who worships in a church, and a Muslim is one who prays in a mosque." Coptic politicians helped draft the 1923 constitution, which guaranteed religious freedom and equality before the law and in the civil service for Muslim and Copt alike.

Recent Violent Outbreaks

Nevertheless, these claims of basic religious tolerance and intercommunal solidarity have been seriously eroded during the past year by flagrant outbreaks of Muslim-Christian violence, heightening sectarian tensions and prompting the toughest police crackdown on religious activists in Egypt in nine years.

Starting with a vicious attack against Christmas Eve worshippers on 24 December 1989 in Assyut, the violence spread through Upper Egypt in March to El-Minya, where in

a rampage provoked by Muslim clerics, angry Muslims poured out of their mosques after Friday prayers to burn and destroy Christian churches, shops, vehicles and property owned by the local Coptic minority.

The unrest spread to Lower Egypt in May, when a Coptic Orthodox priest was gunned down with his wife and four other Copts outside their church at Al-Noubaria, near Alexandria.

Historically, the Coptic Orthodox Church has been the only body capable of representing local Christian interests with the government in such volatile situations. Nine out of 10 Copts belong to this branch, while Coptic Roman Catholics claim some 200,000 members, and the Coptic Protestant evangelicals claim another 250,000. (Independent sources place Coptic evangelical membership at 88,000.)

However, Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria, who has led the Coptic Orthodox community since 1971, was himself sent into internal exile by Sadat in September 1981, accused along with 30 other bishops and priests of the church of emphasising Coptic identity "to the extent of fomenting unrest and generally encouraging hostility against the government".

Since President Mubarak reversed this decree, Coptic Orthodox leaders have been diplomatic, if relatively uncompromised, in their public statements and government dealings.

A Rigid Determination To Exclude Christians

Like ethno-religious minorities everywhere, Coptic Christians are accused of harbouring a "minority complex" against their majority Muslim "oppressors."

In political life, Copts have had only marginal representation and influence. Most recently, two Copts have been appointed to Cabinet minister

level, and Butros Ghali, the Minister of State Affairs who heads the President's bureau for political affairs, is a powerful Coptic secularist who has been an adviser at high state levels for many years.

Islamic Law Prevails, Albeit without Official Sanction

While the Egyptian government categorically denies any officially sanctioned persecution on the basis of religious belief, the constitution has since 1980 specified that Sharia or Islamic law is "the main source of the law".

In addition to other harsh penalties, Islamic law would require capital punishment for apostasy—the sin of renouncing Islam for any other faith. Egypt has yet to go that far, at least in formal laws or sentences. But government leaders admit publicly that Egypt is moving slowly toward full adoption of Sharia.

Deliberate Arrest and Detention for Religious Beliefs

While political prisoners dominate the reports on human rights violations in Egypt for the past decade, there is growing documentation of the deliberate arrest and incarceration of citizens for their religious beliefs. A report by the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, released April 1990, stated that "a number of citizens of the Christian faith have been held in administrative detention...exposed to maltreatment and torture...and are still subjected to a double incarceration order...the reason [being] they are suspected of being connected to the conversion of one Muslim person to Christianity".

Arrests of Muslim converts to Christianity in the past three years include a young medical doctor jailed without trial and tortured for 22 months; a middle-aged dentist incarcerated for four months for distributing Christian literature; and 39-

year-old Abdel Hamid Beshari Abdel Mohsen, who, after 10 months of repeated arrests, torture and 55 days of solitary confinement, died of internal bleeding in Abou Zabaal Industrial Prison last April. He was reportedly refused hospital care unless he renounced his Christian faith.

The authorities even imprisoned a Coptic Orthodox priest this past year, finally sending him into permanent exile for his role in the conversion of a number of converts from Islam. Another convert, Yuhanna Bishoy, 56, has undergone two 10-month detentions in the past four years, although he converted to Christianity some 25 years ago.

Three more Muslim converts have been imprisoned in Cairo since late September, accused of the usual round of vague activities "against a heavenly religion". Amnesty International issued an urgent appeal for their release on 18 December 1990 reporting that they were being detained "under an abuse of legal procedures" and reportedly subjected to torture "because they are Muslims who have converted to Christianity".

The watchdog group for human rights went on to observe, "Each year recently, Amnesty International has learned of a number of cases where Muslims who have converted to Christianity have been detained, sometimes for months at a time, apparently because of their non-violent expression of their conscientiously held beliefs."

This is nothing new, according to Coptic Christians, who point to the fact that Islamic law prohibits Muslims from converting to any other faith, on penalty of death. And most church leaders believe that the government is more committed to protecting its own interests than it is to protecting Christians.

—Barbara Baker (News Network International)

Happenings

Former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega has reportedly come to Christ in the Miami prison where he is awaiting trial on a cocaine conspiracy charge. Noriega made his commitment to Christ nearly a year ago and since then he has spent much of his time studying the Bible and sharing his testimony with the few people allowed to see him.

The board of SIM has approved the mission's entry into the South American country of Uruguay for church planting outreach. Uruguay's religious population is estimated at only 6.5% with evangelicals numbering only about 1.5% of the nation's 2.9 million. 80% of the population follow no regular religious practice. Uruguay will be SIM's 6th South American field, added to Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Paraguay.

For the first time in the history of the Soviet State, Easter was celebrated in Red Square. On the morning of 7 April, the Easter service, held in St Basil's Cathedral, was televised live and reported in the Soviet press and radio.

Christians in Riga, the Latvian capital, have set up a travel agency to arrange pilgrimages.

An ecumenical service, attended by about 100 deputies, including one communist, took place in the Czechoslovak National Assembly on Good Friday. It was led by Catholic, Protestant and Hussite clergy. The preacher was Dominican father Jaroslav Duka.

"Ministry to the Cities of Australia" with Dr Ray Bakke is a conference that intends to analyse the trends regarding urbanisation, to look at the biblical descriptions of the city and examine culturally relevant church and ministry models for our cities. It is being held at the Collins St Baptist

Church, Melbourne, 4-6 July, and costs \$105 (students \$60). Details and forms from R. Bakke Seminar, PO Box 336, Glen Waverley 3150. Phone (03) 233 9144.

Rev Murray Robertson from Spreydon Baptist in New Zealand joins Jennifer Turner from Perth and Gareth Icenogle from the US as the three major input persons for the Third National Small Groups Conference. The conference will be held at Mannix College, Melbourne, 1-4 July and will be followed by a 24-hour "Futures Conference", when a small group will seek to discover what the Spirit is saying to the church about the place and role of small groups in the total ministry of the church. Registration forms available from Serendipity Christian Resources, GPO Box 1944, Adelaide 5001.

North Korea's Kim Il Sung University has started offering classes that explore a variety of religions. A class on Christianity is being taught by Dong Hong, a Presbyterian minister and Professor at Carey University's Institute of Korean Studies in California. Most of the students in the class are other faculty members at the university or government officials.

The Vietnamese government has eased restrictions on the intake of students to seminaries. The government has allowed Roman Catholic-run St Joseph's Seminary, based in Ho Chi Minh City, to recruit new students every 3 years instead of every 6 years and to increase its intake to 50 students.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, 85, whose defiance of Pope John Paul II caused the first schism in the Roman Catholic Church since 1870, died on 25 March. Lefebvre was excommunicated in June 1988 for consecrating 4 bishops to help carry on his battle to return to a Latin Mass and preserve

other practices rejected by Vatican reformers. He leaves behind an estimated 100,000 followers and 300 priests in his order, the Fraternity of St Pius X.

In a survey conducted in 15 of Brazil's 26 states, 78% of those polled believe that Roman Catholic priests should be allowed to marry and 69% agree that women should be ordained as priests within the church. The survey was conducted by Rumbos, an association that groups together some 4,000 former priests who are now married.

The Lutheran Church in Liberia has emerged from the country's civil war with all its property and equipment damaged or stolen and with large sums of money needed to put things back in working order. All the church's programs stopped as Liberia's infrastructure collapsed during last year's vicious fighting that killed at least 10,000 and forced 750,000 to seek refuge abroad.

Each year, each "average" Australian man, woman and child drinks 147 large bottles of beer, 28 bottles of wine and 130 nips of spirits.

The Australian Council of Churches announced that the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Donald Robison, will visit the Middle East as a guest of the ACC's partner Middle East Council of Churches later this year. Archbishop Robison will observe how the churches have responded to the disaster in the Middle East and report on the use of funds raised through the ACC's Gulf Appeal. So far \$50,000 has been committed to relief work through this appeal.

Economic factors have forced the closure of British Christian newspaper *Christian Week* (formerly known as *British Weekly*) after more than 100 years and 5,411 issues. *British Weekly* was

founded in 1886 with William Robertson Nichol as editor, and it quickly became a powerful voice of non-conformity.

In the US the costs of alcoholism are estimated to be \$117,000 million per year. About 18 million Americans (8.2% of the population) have an alcohol problem. In Australia 1 in every 7 males drinks at damaging levels.

Prayer teams are to travel to the furthestmost points of the earth's 5 major continents to join in a special prayer circle on 21 September. The special event is being organised by Youth With A Mission to focus attention on Jesus' command to take the good news "to the ends of the earth". Churches individuals and other mission groups are being invited to join in the day of prayer for the nations of the world.

Since banning beer drinking at work, on-site injuries at their breweries had fallen from 471 in 1986 to 80 in 1990, said CUB Managing Director, Pat Stone.

More Americans believe in heaven and hell now than ever, according to the Gallup Poll. In a recent survey, 78% said they believe there is a place where people who have led good lives go to be eternally rewarded. Asked about hell, 60% said they believe there is a place where those who have led bad lives and die without repenting are eternally damned. Previous records for Americans expressing a belief in heaven and hell were in 1952, when 72% said they believed in heaven and 58% accepted the existence of hell.

Following a unanimous recommendation from the board and elders the Nunawading, Vic, church has extended E.C. (Ted) Keating's ministry term until 1997. Ted Keating commenced his ministry at the then Blackburn church in 1974.

Around the world 3,500 new churches are opening each week. In Africa there are 20,000 new Christians per day added to the church, bringing the percentage of Christians in the population to 40%, compared to 3% in 1900. In China an average of 28,000 new Christians are joining the church every day, out of a world-wide increase of 70,000 per day.

At least 9 Christian activists were murdered or died in suspicious car accidents in the Soviet Union in the past year, bringing to 14 the number of deaths since 1986. The deaths include 8 Russian Orthodox, 1 Georgian Orthodox, 1 Lithuanian Catholic, 2 Estonian Lutherans, 1 Latvian Lutheran and 1 unregistered Russian Baptist. 8 of the 14 were clergy. Also an unknown number of believers are believed to have been victims of near fatal beatings and suspicious car collisions.

Renewed violence between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria has killed at least 80, according to eyewitnesses. The worst confrontation occurred on 23 April in Bauchi. A dozen churches were set afire. Thousands of Christians now are trying to flee the Muslim-dominated north to southern Nigeria where more Christians live.

Tobin Brothers, a large funeral company based in Victoria, has reproduced a sermon by Jim Wright, "Where Was God When I Was Hurting?", that deals with the question of suffering. It will be used by Tobin's Education Division to help grieving people who are plagued by the question, "Why?" Jim Wright preached the sermon at the Nunawading, Vic, church on 5 July 1990. The Nunawading church would be happy to send copies to interested readers (please send a stamped addressed envelope).

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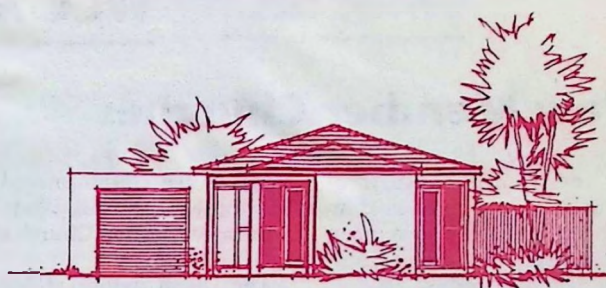
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New Member Churches

At the World Council of Churches Assembly held in Canberra in February a number of churches were recommended for membership.

Full Members

Philippine Episcopal Church

This church has recently become an autonomous Province of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church in the USA.

The church has 150,000 baptised members in 345 local congregations with 18 deacons and 149 presbyters distributed in six jurisdictions: Northern Luzon, Northern Philippines, North Central Philippines, Central Philippines, Cathedral Heights and Southern Philippines.

Iglesia de Misiones Pentecostales Libres de Chile (Free Pentecostal Mission Church of Chile)

In 1974 Bishop Victor Labbe Dias had the vision to found this mission. In 1976 the process of getting approval for the constitution and consequent official registration began. In August 1981 Sinforiano Gutierrez was consecrated and invested as Presiding Bishop of the Corporation. From 1983 onwards the mission grew and by 1989 it had churches in the north and south of the country.

By March 1990 there were 47,934 members. Nationally there are 62 pastors; 14 pastors are ordained missionaries. There are 21 lay missionaries working at home and abroad. There are 62 chapels throughout the country, and 17 preaching stations. Activities include: regular pastoral meetings, national evangelising and health campaigns, prayer meetings, Sunday Schools, Bible studies, Dorcas groups, meetings for young people, inter-church fellowship, ecumenical meetings. There is involvement in social work in the community, including health and training sessions for first aid, training in dressmaking workshops, provision of community-kitchens etc.

Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sending Kerk (NGSR) (Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa)

The Dutch Reformed Mission Church has a membership of over 240,000 confirmed members; its total adherents number about 750,000.

The church is in the final stages of uniting with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (which has 285,000 confirmed members). Both are committed to continue jointly the ecumenical relationships in which they are currently engaged separately, once the non-racial Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa is constituted in July 1991.

China Christian Council

Protestant Christianity began to exist in China with the arrival of western missionaries in the 19th century. It existed in many denominations, a small number of which were indigenous. The establishment of the People's Republic of China gave impetus to the independence movement in Chinese Protestantism with emphasis on self-government, self-support and self-propagation, a missionary ideal put forward as early as the 19th century. In the course of the growth of a Chinese self-hood, denominational barriers were greatly weakened and denominational structures eventually went out of existence. But stress has always been given to the principle of mutual respect on matters of faith and worship. In 1980, the China Christian Council was formed in addition to the National Three-self Movement Committee, as the organisational expression of the new emphasis on self-government, self-support and self-propagation. The China Christian Council is not a Chinese counterpart of a national council of churches. It is the future, one united Church of Jesus Christ in the process of formation.

The China Christian Council aims to serve the church in

China by publishing Bibles, books and periodicals, by maintaining institutions of theological training, by enriching the life and work of the church on the provincial and local levels, by regulating sacramental, ministerial and constitutional practices and by negotiating with governmental and other bodies on matters related to the implementation of the principle of religious freedom and the use of church properties.

During the years of the Cultural Revolution, all church buildings were closed down and put to other uses. Christians could only meet quietly in homes. In the last eleven years churches for the Protestants have been returned or built at a rate of three every two days. At present there are over 6,000 congregations in church buildings and tens of thousands of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating groups of Christians meeting in homes. The number of baptised Christians is above 5.5 million, with 1,000 persons in the ordained ministry, of whom almost one-tenth are women. There are 13 theological schools with 770 full-time students. Classes for full-time lay training lasting several weeks to a year exist in almost all the provinces and larger cities.

Associate Members

Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Boliviana (IELB) (Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church)

The IELB was started by the World Mission Prayer League from the USA. In November 1968, with the support of local churches, an assembly was convened at which the church was constituted under the name of IELB and a governing board elected. In 1972 it was officially recognised by the government on the basis of its constitution; it then declared itself to be an independent national church institution.

The IELB claims 25,000 active members. The work is organised in three departments:

Evangelism, Education, and Social Development.

The IELB cooperates with the Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia and the Evangelical Methodist Pentecostal Church.

Asociacion Bautista de El Salvador (Baptist Association of El Salvador)

In 1911, under the influence of English and US Baptist missionaries, the First Baptist Church of San Salvador was formed with the support of the American Baptist Home Mission Society based in New York.

The Bible School, predecessor of the current Baptist Theological Institute of El Salvador (ITBES), began in 1974 to provide basic theological training for pastors and lay people, mainly in the rural churches and missions.

The Baptist Association of El Salvador is an entity composed of 60 churches and 12 missions in 13 of the 14 provinces of the country. A number of organisations (women's societies, youth unions, etc.) are also linked to it. An approximate figure of 5,676 adult baptised members is given but it is also stated that the number of "persons within the influence of Baptist churches" is 24,407.

Sinodu Luterano Salvadoreno (Salvadorean Lutheran Synod)

In 1954 the first Lutheran missionary to El Salvador came from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, USA. Legal recognition of the church took place in 1970, and in 1985 the Salvadorean Lutheran Synod was declared an independent church.

There are 10,755 baptised and confirmed members in 46 churches. The church is active throughout the country. The Synod is formed by 46 parishes with their missions, plus five secretariats: Salvadorean Lutheran Aid, Solidarity for Human Rights; Lutheran Youth Society; Lutheran Women's Society; Salvadorean Lutheran University.

People

• *A long way from home*

Aboriginal Students at College



Barron and Pauline Bonney

Barron and Pauline Bonney have recently arrived in Sydney, where Barron has commenced his first-year studies at Carlingford College. Barron and Pauline come from Laverton on the edge of the Great Victorian Desert, 360 km north-east of Kalgoorlie, WA.

Barron was employed by the local shire and Pauline worked for the State Community Services Department prior to entering college.

They join another Aboriginal student, Donald Haywood, now in his third year.

A scholarship made available by the College Student Council

has enabled the Bonneys and Donald to pursue their studies.

Barron is the son of Ron and Marjory Bonney and nephew of Alan Bonney, who are well known for their witness in WA.

Remember them in your prayers. They are a long way from home and family; Sydney is a different world from the hot, harsh conditions of the WA Goldfields, and they are coming to terms with a new and demanding field of study. Yet their training will be vital to their future ministry and a valuable asset in the development of the Aboriginal church.

—Avon Moyle

World News

• *Education the key*

Good News for Children in Bangladesh

In a world where more than 40,000 children die each day from malnutrition and other preventable causes, one church agency in Bangladesh is making a difference. The Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh is helping thousands of children and their families gain access to health and education services.

This work is being supported by Force Ten, a joint program of the Australian Council of Churches and Australian Catholic Relief.

"Education for women and children is a vital step towards improving family health and slowing population growth," says Liz Yeo from Force Ten. "It is also the key to escaping the cycle of poverty."

One of many children who is being helped through this project is Shaha, a 12-year-old boy from Bangladesh. Shaha has lived in poverty all his life. He had to leave school and start working when he was eight years old to help the family survive. Shaha only earns 60c for a day's work.

With the help of the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh, Shaha is now able to return to school. For Shaha, the chance to learn reading and writing is a chance to escape the poverty cycle his family has been trapped in for years.

Children such as Shaha also benefit from what their mothers learn in literacy classes. The classes do not just teach women how to read and write—they also learn about children's health and nutrition needs, family planning and how to set up a small business.

Force Ten is supporting this work in Bangladesh through Simply Sharing Week, which will be held 19–26 May.

Force Ten has produced a kit to help youth group leaders plan Bible studies, games and activities for Simply Sharing Week.



Shaha

There are also resources available to help individuals and parishes participate. These resources are available from Force Ten, PO Box C199 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000. Telephone (02) 299 2215 or fax (02) 262 4514.

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Classifieds

BIRTHS

NORMAN (BROAD) Denise and Geoff give praise and thanks to God on the birth of their daughter Jessica Rose, 23.4.91. Sister for Timothy.

ENGAGEMENTS

SMITH—MAIN Graham and Maureen Smith and John and Valerie Main, of Stirling, SA, congratulate Felicity and Jonathan on their engagement. Our love and prayer for God's richest blessings.

MARRIAGES

PAGE (WILD) Bryan and Helen Page of Boronia, Vic, are happy to announce the marriage of Steven to Lorrae, daughter of Helen and Barry Wild, celebrated at the latter's home, "Tywong", Coleambally, NSW. Glen S. Brown officiating.

DEATHS

DYER Reginald W.C., of Kaniva, departed this life suddenly 22.4.91. Aged 60 years. Loved and loving husband of Gwenneth, loved father of Alwyn and Kerryn, Rosemary and Colin and Eric. Grandfather and friend of Neva, Clinton, Jonathan, Angela and Shannon. I needed the quiet so he drew me aside, away from the bustle where all day long I hurried and toiled when active and strong. A place to grow richer, in Jesus to hide. I needed the quiet so he drew me aside.

IN MEMORIAM

MURNANE Cherished memories of Jack, passed away 11.5.73. Loved husband, father and grandfather of Amy and family. "Beyond all shadows."

RANKIN John. Passed to higher service 21.5.80. "Those we love don't fade away, they walk beside us every day." Jean and family.

POSITION WANTED

NANNY, qualified, Christian, seeking employment in babysitting, housework or other. Phone (03) 563 9509, ask for Pauline McHugh.

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Willandra, a new 50-bed hostel at Judge Book Retirement Village, will open in July. It is designed around four courtyards and will accommodate the elderly, and, in a special wing, those suffering dementia.

There is some accommodation for couples.

If you would like to discuss Willandra, or any aspect of Judge Book Retirement Village, please telephone Rev. Trevor Farmilo (03) 431 0100 or Mr. Reg Lumley (03) 489 9666.

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Meditation

• *If God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, why then are so many of his people and projects seemingly in short supply of "meat"? (Psalm 50:10-12)*

Helping God Achieve His Purposes

by Ray Hawkins

Here is one of the great dilemmas of providence and stewardship. The Sovereign God and the free-will of humanity, sin and the forces of evil seem interlocked as we try and understand a complex problem.

Creation belongs to the Creator, which is simple enough to grasp. But we see creation usurped by forces hostile to the eternal Lord and sinful humanity exploiting the world for power and greed. It would appear that such actions are designed to make God look foolish and to undermine his power and the authority of his Kingdom. It is also aimed at creating despair and unbelief within the ranks of those who have claimed God as their Saviour.

Part of the strategy of God through his plan of redemption for his world and his people involved reclaiming "the cattle". Adam had handed them over to the enemy. He did this when he surrendered what God had placed in his hands for a piece of fruit.

God reclaims his territory every time people become Christians. Such people evaluate their lives and resources in the light of the Cross and testify that all they are and have is for the honour and glory of God.

Two things (at least) begin to happen from this moment. God

seeks to train his child in wise, efficient, holy resource management based upon his Word and trust. The anti-God forces seek to stop this from happening through a wide-ranging strategy. God also wants to display the principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive, while the enemy mesmerises the heart with materialism and covetousness.

A superficial glance at the church and its ministry gives the impression that it is struggling, retreating and undernourished. People gain the impression that God and his work are being held to ransom by the poor response of his people, or the seduction of the Devil. To believe that is to make God less than God and to imagine that he is unable to achieve his purposes in the time frame he has set.

God has chosen to limit himself to the resources of his people. He can "make children of Abraham out of the Judean stones" but he doesn't. (Matthew 3:9) He takes a small boy's lunch to feed 5,000, or he highlights the widow's cent to make us realise the truth of the Kingdom. It is not by might, nor by power but my Spirit says the Lord. (Zechariah 4:6)

The church is never meant to be self-sufficient in resources. Who needs God when they can achieve it all within themselves? It is the self-suffi-

cient church in Revelation 2:1 and 3:14 that stands condemned, not the faithful struggling church of Smyrna in Revelation 2:8. The churches with hoarded resources, whether financial, gifted people, buildings or equipment stand condemned by scripture and the cries of the needy. A church needs a vision that is beyond the ability to be achieved by the immediate resources of the congregation.

It is no longer an issue as to who owns the cattle on the hills. Rather it is a matter of who owns "the hill country of the heart"? The people who claim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour should have the cross erected on the "hill country of the heart" and allow him free access to its resources. Then he by his Spirit will be able to direct such resources as he needs to achieve the desire of his heart. It may not appear to be much that is available, but when offered, Jesus is able to "stretch it" to do more than the individual is able to imagine. What may seem a sacrifice or placing oneself at risk will afford the Lord an opportunity to display his grace and power in the person's life and circumstances and deepen faith and maturity.

This requires wisdom and knowledge, which is available through the discipleship training of the church. It requires discipline to maintain the con-

viction when the Anti-Christ forces seek to seduce you through greed, undermine your faith through doubt, pollute your "hill" through mismanagement, or steal your resources by political or heretical tyranny.

God will achieve his purposes. The question is, will you and I be co-labourers with him as part of his miracle of grace and providence? To say "yes to God" means you will be used by God to touch, redeem, nourish, disciple others and include them in the resource management of God.

• Ray Hawkins is the minister at the Maitland, NSW, church.

• *Swan Hill's sad loss*

Stephen Willis

Stephen Willis, associate minister at the Swan Hill, Vic, church, died in the early hours of Saturday, 4 May. Stephen, 34, was diagnosed as having cancer nine months ago. He leaves behind his wife, Yolande, who is expecting their first child in September.

Stephen graduated from the Churches of Christ in New South Wales Theological College at Carlingford at the end of 1989. He had been at the Swan Hill church since graduating.

We offer our prayers and condolences to Yolande, Stephen's family and the church at Swan Hill.

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Richmond is an inner suburb of Melbourne, east of the city and within earshot of the Melbourne Cricket Ground. One of the oldest suburbs in Melbourne, it has been historically associated with factories and workers cottages.

This picture is changing, with the arrival of high-rise flats and a multicultural population. There are many Asians in the area, and the last few years have also seen a change from an older population to one in the 25-35 age bracket predominating, including some professional people.

The building now occupied by the church was originally that of North Richmond, begun in 1889, and later combined with Burnley to form the Richmond church. It was a large church—in 1910, for instance, there was an attendance of 243 and a Sunday school of more than 200. By the 1980s the membership had dropped to the 20s and the Sunday school closed. Now, however, things are on the way up. Attendances at the 11 am service have in-

creased to the thirties and the Sunday School has recommenced—there are now 17 children attending. The age range of members ranges from children and teenagers to nearly 90.

The original chapel on the

11 there are two services running concurrently; as well as Richmond's morning service, there is also a Chinese service in the hall. At 1.30 pm the Richmond Vietnamese Church holds its service. (This separate church, with minister Nathan

completing his studies at CCTC. This is his final year at college and his second year at Richmond. John and Raelene have three children; two live in Adelaide, and the youngest, Leah, 16, accompanied them to Melbourne.

The church is seeking to lift its profile in the community. One of the younger members of the church, Dale Prentice, 18, has be-

gun an inner-suburban youth mission. With assistance from the church and a small government grant he is renting a house and reaching out to graffiti kids and offering short-term refuge. The church co-operates with other churches in the area in an ecumenical food relief centre run by the Church of Christ and the Uniting, Anglican and Catholic churches. This is open three days a week and in these times there is an increasing call on its services.

The Richmond church may still be small, but there is a wonderful atmosphere that things are progressing well and there is a promise of growth as they seek to do the work of God among the people of the area.

Focus on Richmond

site was condemned and demolished in the 1970s, and the large Sunday School hall was divided into a chapel, lounge and hall. The building is used every day of the week. Church groups include a craft group, a playgroup, an active Christian Women's Fellowship and a Bible study, but outside organisations also find the location useful. ECHO, a Chinese counselling group with government funding, use the church daily, Weightwatchers weekly, English teaching classes are held three days a week and there is a Japanese floral art group and a pensioners club.

Sunday is the big day. At 9.15 am a Greek evangelical fellowship uses the chapel. At

Nhan, was last weekend welcomed into affiliation with Vic-Tas Churches of Christ at their annual conference.) At 7 there is an evening service, which attracts people by providing guest artists and speakers. At present the Chinese members of the congregation join in a combined service once a month, however the aim is to have only one service for all members in a few months time.

John Schulze, with his wife Raelene, is the student minister at Richmond. John, who has a background in banking, insurance and the hotel industry and comes from the Riverland area of South Australia, began his training at the Bible College of South Australia, and is now

• What's going on in England ?

Church Census Results

Over the past 10 years, Sunday services at England's churches have lost 1,000 people every week—that's half a million who stopped going to church between 1979 and 1989. Even more disturbing is that seven out of every ten who stopped attending were under the age of 20.

These disquieting trends were discovered by MARC Europe's extensive 1989 census of English churches.

The census project took three years to complete. Surveys were sent to over 36,000 English churches. A "Census Sunday" was chosen, and churches were asked to complete a questionnaire based on attendance that day. Over 70% of the churches responded.

Growth and Decline

Some news was good. On 25 October 1989 over 3.7 million adults, 10% of England's adult population, chose to be in church rather than in bed, the garden or the do-it-yourself store. Also, the decline in English churches is slowing.

Church growth statistics show that independent churches grew 42% during the decade. This includes a 114% increase in house church attendance. Charismatic/Pentecostal churches grew 34%. Afro-Caribbean churches grew 4%. Baptist churches, which were declining through 1985, grew 2% between 1985 and 1989.

Other churches were declining. Falling attendances were reported in the United Re-

formed (-18%), Roman Catholic (-14%), Methodist (-11%) and Anglican (-9%) churches.

In the late 1980s, two types of churches attracted new people: charismatic/Pentecostal and evangelical. Attendance in charismatic churches rose 7% between 1985 and 1989, and by 2% in mainstream evangelical churches. Just over 1 million attend evangelical churches, 34% of all churches. There are 1.4 million adult Catholics.

Who Goes to church ?

The census revealed that young people under 15 declined 14% in church attendance compared to a 1% decline in their overall population. This was evident in Anglican and Methodist churches, which lost 125,000 young churchgoers.

The proportion of churchgoers in their 20s also declined, but the proportion of those over

45 increased. More women than men go to church—51% of the overall population is female while 58% of the people in church are female. Only the independent churches show men and younger people well represented.

Why a Census ?

It is hard to plan where to go if we don't know where we are. Accurate information is especially important as a number of major denominations in England have declared the 1990s to be the "Decade of Evangelism".

—Bryant Myers

Visiting Melbourne?

You are welcome at the Richmond Church of Christ cnr Coppin and Murphy Streets Services: 11 am and 7 pm (03) 428 4844

Ministers' Workshop

• *We can do something about it*

Stopping the Drift

by Ian Tippett

Every church will lose members. There will be transfers out and deaths of members, over which we have no control. Alongside this there will often be transfers in and new births that will help to offset the losses.

There is, however, often a drift of people away from our congregation that we can do something about. The people in this drift are those who have become disenchanted, those who no longer feel wanted or needed and those who never quite made it into the fellowship circle of the church. This drift can be quite evident as larger numbers of people demonstrate a lack of interest or as ones and twos just don't seem to be around any more.

How do we stop this drift away? First, we must recognise that it is happening. What does your worship attendance register tell you? How long is it since some members of the congregation attended worship? How long is it since they contributed financially, attended their small group or were involved in some social activity in the church? Recognition that there is a problem is the first step to stopping the drift. Having recognised the problem, what do we do? We don't wait another week to see if they come then. We drop in on them to show we miss them and that we care about them. They may have some axe to grind or they may just have established a pattern that has less time for church activities. Anyway, you are there and demonstrating that you care about them.

Specific problems may need more careful treatment than we have space for here, but if they are just drifting and need some prompting then try some of the following ideas. Invite them to church next Sunday. That may be all they need to feel wanted and to get started again. Sug-

gest you will meet them there and that you will sit with them during the service. Encourage them to attend by arranging to pick them up in your car and go to church together. Inviting people to church is sometimes the best way to get them there.

You might begin to stop the drift by inviting them home for a meal. Hospitality is a good New Testament principle and an opportunity to restore relationships. Other church members could also share in the meal. Take the people to your small group or Bible study. By doing so you will demonstrate that they are important and are wanted within the group life of the church.

Go out with people for social occasions. Nights out for a meal, at the cinema or theatre, for supper or coffee, provide for times of sharing when barriers can be dropped and genuine care is shown. Barbecues and picnics, bushwalks and bikerides—countless recreational activities build bridges and begin to turn people's faces back towards the body of people who can love and care for them.

Educate your members and the drifters that each has a responsibility to hold together as a caring community. The apostle Paul encouraged the Ephesians to grow together in love, joined and held together by every supporting ligament as the whole body. The body is responsible to express the love of Christ, to counsel and to nurture each member. Every individual has to recognise their responsibility to the body and the importance of their ministry, their gifts and their lifestyle.

• *Ian Tippett is the field director responsible for church growth with the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development, and the author of Effective Assimilation.*

Curkpatrick

Have You Ever Been Ahithophel?

Absalom's plan to displace his father, David, was clear. Part of it involved listening to the people's problems at the city gates and gaining a groundswell of public support. He made all the usual politician's promises—greater justice, equality and a new deal for everyone. And with his promises and empathic ear, Absalom "stole the hearts of the Israelites". He even managed to win over the King's top advisor, Ahithophel, to his cause. News reached the king of the imminent coup d'état, and so with a handful of faithful supporters, David fled.

Ahithophel wisely advised Absalom to consolidate his position immediately by destroying the dispirited army of David. However, David had sent his friend Hushai to go and join Absalom as a double agent working in counter intelligence. Hushai deceptively countered, "The King's men will be as fierce as a she bear robbed of her cubs—let's hold off for a bit." Now Hushai had the advantage of having the last say, and like all last words, everyone thought they were better. Ahithophel, realising the strategic moment was lost and the revolution would fail, went and hanged himself. He knew that unless a great change is quickly consolidated it is forfeited. Well, the rest of the story is found in Second Samuel.

Ever been Ahithophel? How often have you been the enthusiastic proponent of a revolutionary idea but in the end seen someone else get the last say? You were thwarted at the last decisive turn and the whole thing fell flat. Many new ideas for good and the service of others have unfortunately failed—not through lack of enthusiasm, ideas and leaders, but through lack of strategy, which saw the change through to completion, popular endorsement and commitment.

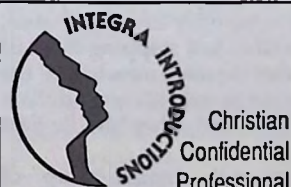
Now the Kingdom of God is certainly about great changes in people, churches and communities, and many of us are keen to see good positive changes occur, but I wonder, in the sincere pursuit of these goals...have you ever been Ahithophel?

—Stephen Curkpatrick

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• Time for the peacemakers

One Last Chance

Now, here is something that will amaze you! Well, maybe not. I don't know your amazement level, but it amazed me!

It happened back in 1978 and made it to the cover of *The Australian Christian*. What they did was hold a peace vigil in Sydney. The amazing thing is that, so far as I can remember, there was no major war threatening that year. The war in Vietnam had been over for about five years, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a year away. Everyone knows that peace vigils and peace protests are usually held only when the armies are gathered and the first shots about to be fired!

The world was reasonably at peace. Why, then, the peace vigil arranged by the Australian Council of Churches? Answer: The United Nations Disarmament Commission was holding special session on disarmament and would need all the prayer it could get.

The session on disarmament was proper and overdue. It was what the UN was all about. Its primary objective was to "maintain international peace and security". Therefore, in 1978, they got down to the business of seeking a balanced reduction of armed forces and armaments, and the elimination of "major weapons adaptable for mass destruction".

The Commission did not actually achieve anything, although both sides of the Iron Curtain agreed that the desired goal was general and complete disarmament. The trouble was that no-one had any idea how to reach that goal. However, a lot of good things were said and there was a warm global glow of having good intentions. Another major effort in 1982 was equally fruitless.

One reason for UN inaction is that there are five permanent members of the Security Commission, the UK, France, the USSR, China, and the USA, and each has the power to veto any proposed action. This means that the UN is usually limited to small keep-the-peace forces in places such as Cyprus.

The UN did act when North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950. At the time the USSR was boycotting the Security Council because Taiwan had the Chinese council seat and the Soviets thought that it should go to mainland Communist China. With the Soviets absent the UN sent in MacArthur. The jury is still debating the result of the Korean adventure.

Then came Kuwait! The Security Council was almost unanimous that Saddam Hussein should be stopped, and there was no veto from the Big Five. The six-months/six-weeks/four-day war brought a notable military victory, although the economic, environmental, social and political costs may not be known for decades.

The UN won the war with the weapons of "mass destruction" it is supposed to be eliminating. Iraq's weapons were supplied mainly by those very members of the Security Council, France, China, etc. Winning wars is not the UN's job, stopping them is! Yet, already, post-Gulf, we are told that the main members of the UN's victorious coalition are arranging to sell billions of dollars worth of new weapons to Egypt, Syria, and other Middle East nations. The mind boggles!

Back to 1978. There was a picture of the "small group" of Christians gathered in Sydney for a peace vigil. There's the thing that amazes! Why a small group? In 1991 untold thousands demonstrated for peace in Germany, Britain, France, Egypt, Australia and even in the US and the USSR! Why could 1978 attract only a small group? And where is the peace movement now? Is it waiting in the wings until the armies mass again?

Now is the time for the peace movement to make a supreme

effort to put pressure on their representatives at the UN to do their real job.

Unless the peacemakers make peace before the next generation of mass destruction weapons comes off the assembly line of death, the future is indeed bleak. Some nations may be declared losers in a war, but there are no winners. In the bomb- and shell-ploughed lands of the Gulf the seeds of the next harvest of hate and death may already have been planted.

The peace-vigil folk of 1978 had a verse displayed in their midst. It was called "Goliath and the Arms Race".

Strong, tall and sure
Goliath stood
Armed with the latest weapons
Military science has devised.
A long-range missile called a spear
And a short-range missile called a sword
And an anti-missile shield
So large that it was borne by another.
Confident and sure, Goliath stood:
Only a stone's throw from disaster!

It is not only Saddam who should take note.

—A.E. White

Celebrating a Centenary of Overseas Mission 1891-1991

1910

News from F. G. Filmer, Pentecost.

My wife is rather poorly again. She spent two weeks in the Ambrim Hospital a short time ago; this was the outcome of malaria. I brought her home two weeks ago, and now she is down again. My health has been much better lately. Am working hard at the language. I find it rather difficult to get the correct names from the natives: whether they have the words in a number of instances is hard to say. After a good deal of explaining this morning, I got the following for "undo": "Oo ted a winnie bet too, ih mard a winnie sac a bengo"—"You make it good, he make it no good." The learning of the language is not to be compared to the getting of it. We practically compiled one dictionary, but when we commenced to use it, found that it could not be understood; unfortunately we got a man and his wife to interpret who had been in Queensland for about 15 years, and now we find that during his stay in Queensland the dialect had changed considerably, so that he is scarcely understood now by the young people. Christian love to all.—Feb. 7.

—THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN, 12 MAY 1910.

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Personal

Baptisms

•Kelly Bridgart, Mrs Marie Seybold, Springvale, Vic •Chris Nesbitt, Bruce Burch, Arie Chan, Jeff Chan, Robert Drury, Margaret Munns, Doug Chambers, Ron & Pat Reed, Linda Fernance, Fiona Paterson, Karen Kelly, Nell James, Tony, Marilyn & Fiona Toft, Manning Valley, NSW •Jill & Norman Shanhun, Michelle Gurry, Kalamunda, WA •April Gillespie, Gardiner, Vic •Mark Dodd, Portland, Vic •Carissa Beeston, Knoxfield, Vic •Ron Moore, Bowral Hill, Vic •Darin Bissett, Bowral, NSW •Mary Buxton, Diana Pompilio, Jan Pompilio, Bronwyn Poole, Grant Miller, Howard Ross, Glen Waverley, Vic

Marriages

•Sue Gohl to Ken Pickersgill, Deborah Playford to David Mills, Wendy Monroe to Roger Hatfield-Dunn, Manning Valley, NSW •Sue Johnstone to R. Hayes, Portland, Vic •Julie Dennehy to Glenn Mill, Preston, Vic •Audrey Gobbart to Bill Murnane, Glen Waverley, Vic

Deaths

•Mrs Grace Anning, Springvale, Vic •John Hay, Nellie Hopton, Bundaberg, Qld •Mrs Muriel Mitchell, Prospect, SA •Mrs J. Green, Hobart City, Tas

Changes

•Vic-Tas Department of Community Care: inquiries for gardening and pick ups for opportunity shops—Phone Glenn Mill on (03) 350 2618.

•Hobart City: Secretary—Mrs E. Cooper. All correspondence to GPO Box 1334, Hobart, Tas 7001.

Batemans Bay

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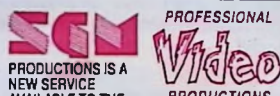
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To commence early 1992

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Noarlunga Centre 5168

News

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Follett, Lois

Lois was born and bred in Cheltenham and Mentone areas. Association with Cheltenham church commenced soon after marriage to Bill Follett. Baptised by late J.E. Allen. Four daughters, all nurtured in life and faith of church. Church deaconess, positions in women's work, church catering convener, and raised much money. A choir member and soloist she also sang in conference choir. With Bill she organised bottling of fruit for college and homes. Worked to establish the Moorabbin Hospital. A person of deep and strong convictions, a tower of strength, generous in her support, an encourager and a wonderful mother.

—Gerald Rose

Lang, Vera Eveline

30.9.90. Born Mornington 1899, died Murrumbena Nursing Home. In 1921 married Clarrie Box in the Northcote church and moved to East Kew where her 4 children were born, then in 1929 to Preston where family took an active part in early development of church. Clarrie died 1941 and in 1954 Vera married Douglas Lang. They lived at Sorrento and were members of Tootgarook church. Several years later Vera was widowed again and in 1965 married Clarrie Lang, minister of the Dareton church. Moved to Mitcham. Vera suffered another bereavement when Clarrie died in 1971. Family included 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

—Jim Wright

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NSW

BALLINA (Roger Foletta) In the past 15 months our membership has doubled, partly due to the strong foundation work done by Malcolm McArthur ... Evening service is held at Lennox Head, a small town 12 km to the north ... Sunday School is now operating & women's fellowship is underway, also Bible study ... In March 1991 a church board of four elders & three deacons was elected.

MANNING VALLEY (Barry Rice, Ross Norling) Recovery Group commenced for people with drug, alcohol & emotional problems ... Meetings commenced at Purfleet Aboriginal community ... Mark van der Zee new leader for Christian surfers ... Peter Playford working as full-time elder ... Gavin Williams, Campaigners for Christ, working in training & evangelism through 1991 ... 730 attended Sunday services with singer Ian White & evangelist Bob Brown in Manning Entertainment Centre.

SEVEN HILLS (T.J. Beaman, Neil Dickinson) Monthly home group held Beaman house best attendance with 16 ... Church installed sound system. Many thanks to Neil Dickinson & John Willis ... Laurie Allen moved from Seven Hills to new unit at Doonside ... Matilde Granero spent few days in Westmead Hospital for tests. Her daughter Anita came from WA ... Church moving out to Christians in district who cannot attend & will take them communion weekly.

EPPING (S. Curkpatrick, D. Moyes, J. Lee) Successful family camp with 140 attending, many young families from our extensive children's ministry & outreach ... Morale very high with great enthusiasm for further growth developments ... Margaret Farmer guest at regular young mother's "sanity night" ... Epping to commence Callahan's 12 Keys to an Effective Church program with Ron Hewitt after State Conference. "12 Keys" steering

committee has been selected.
THORNLEIGH (Franklyn Elliott, Stuart Wesley) Annual Faith Mission Promise Giving program held 27 & 28 April. Guest speaker Alan Webb, minister, Swanston St, Melbourne. Program commenced with men's breakfast. Evening meeting featured dessert & coffee soiree, film "Peace Child" & message from Alan. Alan Webb was speaker at both Sunday services. Target was \$22,000, amount received \$57,344. At close of pm service Sunday two young people responded for mission service.

Qld

BUNDABERG (Alan Leane) Hayden Francis occupied pulpit while Alan Leane on holidays ... Good attendances Easter ... John Hay & Nellie Hopton passed away ... Church family picnic Easter Monday ... Alan Hermann to conduct board retreat & leaders seminar ... Dept of Men's Work visiting ... Rod Tippett of Kenmore will be speaking to us ... Stackaby chairs purchased for ease of handling while multi-purpose situation. Pews stored until new facilities ready.

SA

PROSPECT (S. Schmaal) Willie Stewart presided over morning service. Stephen & family on holidays. Basket supper before pm service. In preparation for service Endeavourers presented "Secrets of the Kingdom" ... Nick Kuiper addressed home fellowship group on "Living Waters" ... Successful church camp held at Victor Harbor ... Combined church picnic held at Ridge Park with Nailsworth & Enfield Heights churches ... Mrs Muriel Mitchell, a long-time member, passed away 11 April aged 101.

OWEN COMBINED (Doug Walladge) Implementation of Callaghan's 12 Keys commenced after study weekend ... Sunday

School picnic held 14 April with 50 attending. Students also took part in service ... Morning coffee group commenced, attracting several "fringe" ladies ... Successful Lenten study groups ... Members received various challenges through Filipino lay worker Ada Estepa; Rodney Minniecon at Northern District Conference & Aboriginal deputation at Balaklava ... Several new people attending regularly.

BALAKLAVA (Graham Lawrie) Northern Districts' Conference held Balaklava with Rodney Minniecon, guest speaker, conducting healing service in evening ... Russell Craig, Manager, Rural Affairs Unit, Dept of Agriculture, addressed church & later spoke at Adult Education group on positive steps in rural crisis ... Easter Day saw large contingent of Roediger family from WA revisit old home church for reunion. 8 am service followed by whole church gathering for breakfast.

HAPPY VALLEY (Russell Allison) Jeff May held training session for those involved in leading worship services ... AGM held in March. Jan Riessen elected elder ... Guest speakers from Scripture Union, Aborigines Mission ... Monthly evening services held. April featured Blackwood puppeteers ... Youth group held fortnightly ... Many new faces at worship is encouraging.

MUNDULLA (K. Wray) Presentations of real meaning of Christmas & Easter well received & attended by community ... Successful breakfast and Dutch auction realised over \$300 towards Boat Fuel Project for Banmatmat College ... Sunday evening study "The Christian Attitude to the Environment" resulted in 20 participants becoming better informed & gaining a greater awareness of personal responsibilities to restoration and preservation of their God-given environment.

COWANDILLA (Russell Mountford) Easter Outreach Program having continuing effect ... "Wednesday at Ten" commenced

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Church News

as a time for praise, healing and renewal ... Successful youth camp at Victor Harbour ... Community outreach concert featuring Kinderkrist held in council auditorium ... After-church "get to know you" luncheon commenced ... Church Bible study focusing on spiritual gifts.

Tas

HOBART CITY (J. Weston, G. Hush) AGM approved change of name to Hobart City Church of Christ ... Last service held in Collins St chapel on Easter Sunday. Moved all furniture & equipment into store. Congregation is meeting in a city Uniting Church 9 am & 7 pm ... Barr family moving from NSW. Gordon taking up position as Music & Arts Director early May ... Graeme Hush & band involved in Bill Newman Crusade.

LAUNCESTON (Rod Foster, Craig Spaulding, Darryl Tobler) CWF Sunday celebrated on 21 April when Jeanette Foster preached on "Where There's Life, There's Hope" ... Much sickness continues among members ... CWF attended Bill Newman Crusade instead of their normal meeting on 24 April ... New children's play area much appreciated.

Vic

SPRINGVALE (P. Lyne) 1991 Prayer Partner program launched. 65 participating ... Blind member, Grace Anning, died Elanora, aged

94 ... Kelly Bridgart baptised in sea at Cowes during church camp. Marie Seybold baptised in sea at Mornington ... Jeff Hales working with HCJB in Ecuador for three months ... Missionary speakers include Munyards, Indonesia & Gwen McKelvie, PNG ... Darren Baensch working at CYTA Cooma ... Church planning for 50th anniversary 15 September.

GARDINER (Paul Creasey) Work at Gardiner growing steadily. Recently rejoiced in baptism of April Gillespie ... Bible study & prayer afternoon & evening TT group led by our minister, are proving both instructive & inspirational ... The Friendship Club, held weekly, is well attended & meeting a need in the neighbourhood. As a further outreach members held a Grand Concert in Malvern Town Hall on 1 May.

PORTLAND (R. Hough) Good Friday service well attended ... Youth group attended Happening, Belgrave Heights ... Minister on holidays during school break ... Charles Lazaro from Hamilton took services 14 April ... Looking forward to Chuck & Peggy Rook's ministry May & June ... Coffee Shop in Heywood & Portland going well. Young people in Heywood showing most interest ... Youth service in Heywood fortnightly ... V. Crouch honoured at Government House, Senior Citizens Week.

KNOXFIELD (Rod Brown, Craig Allan, Brian Tunks) Appointment of youth minister, Craig Allan, extended to three days per week ...

Evening services for youth extremely popular. Also SAMPLES group established for young adults ... Recession has been affecting us but church contributed \$3,363 to Christmas Bowl & contributes to Brotherhood, chaplaincy & CCTC ... Church Life Committee meetings being preceded by looking at videos by Rowland Croucher on church life & growth.

PRESTON (T. Armstrong) Open Door has celebrated its 16th birthday ... Iris & Alan Page spoke at CWF on their experiences in the Philippines where they represented Churches of Christ at the Christian Conference of Asia's Seventh Assembly ... Ladies entertained folk from Fred Cambridge House ... Louis van Laar welcomed into membership.

BOX HILL (Jim Longbottom, Peter Hunt, Martina Osswald) Celebrating 80th anniversary ... Ron Moore baptised ... Recent speakers have been Jim Longbottom, Martina Osswald, Peter Hunt, Gerry Doyle, David Akesson ... Working bee at Morwell church planned ... Builder has been chosen to lower church floor & build new church entrance ... 50 people ranging in age from two weeks to 83 years enjoyed fellowship & inspiration at church camp at Adanac ... Missionary offering \$10,199.

GLEN WAVERLEY (Ron Elbourne, Lindsay Croxford, Howard Sanders) Prayer ministry extended whereby elders pray for specific needs in morning services ... Church

gives thanks for commitments made over recent weeks, & for April communicants being at an all-time high ... Bike-a-thon (return ride to Ballarat) raised money for Building Fund ... Small group ministry continues to develop with approval. 100 people involved ... Full-day youth planning conference held.

WA

KALAMUNDA (Mark Proud, Paul Sanders) Jill Shanhun appointed part-time chaplain to Walliston Primary School ... Series of messages on kingdom culminated in two sermons "The Kingdom in Kalamunda" leading to program for outreach into community involving areas of special need. Church enthusiastic in response & committed to sharing & caring ... John Castledine appointed as intern with ministry team 1991 ... Mid-year mission weekend, 17-19 May. Larry & Barbara Podmore, missionaries from Manila, will be sharing.

CARNARVON (Don Bone) Phil & Lorraine Sheedy of Mobile Mission Maintenance spent some time helping at Olive Laird Hostel on their way round Australia ... Don Bone had successful heart surgery. He & Aileen attended wedding of son Bruce to Lisa Novasel in Perth and Don officiated ... CWF held mother & daughter night at Olive Laird Hostel.

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Growing Spiritually

When Resentment Rears Its Head

by Barry Benz

"Put down" ... "overlooked" ... "overworked and underpaid" ... and resentment stirs within us. "Why me? After all I've done for them...How could they do that to me?"...and we explode. The experience is common to most of us. And sometimes reactions have a shattering effect on the relationship with those who have hurt us.

Some of us bury these feelings deep within; we don't deal with them constructively. And as a result, our emotional and physical wellbeing is threatened.

Is there a better way of handling resentment? The apostle Paul has a significant word in Galatians 5:16: "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." (NIV) How then can we "live by the Spirit" when resentment rises within us?

I am learning to acknowledge these feelings of hurt, anger and resentment: to face up to what is really happening inside me on an emotional level. And I am learning to admit my feelings to God. God deals with reality. When Adam and Eve had negative feelings, they ran from God. (Genesis 3:8) They should have run to him. We sing those words "Just as I am I come",

and apply them to the experience of conversion. But can't I come at all times to God "just as I am"? I can turn to my God and Saviour when I feel overwhelmed by negative feelings and pour them out and release them to him. (It can also be helpful to express these feelings to a good friend who will listen to me and pray with me.) I can ask for the steadying power of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 4:14-16). He can help me look at the other people and situations involved from God's viewpoint.

With his help I take control of my feelings and my life and choose to act as he would have me to. It may be to go to those people to tell them I was hurt by their words or actions (this can lead to a much better understanding and relationship); it may be to forgive, as God for Christ's sake has forgiven me (Ephesians 4:32); it may be to do some thoughtful thing for them, thus overcoming evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

Facing resentful feelings is not easy, but I am glad that with Christ there are constructive ways of handling them!

• Barry Benz is the minister at the Gatton, Qld, church.



The Last Word

To love to preach is one thing—
to love those to whom we
preach, quite another.

—Richard Cecil

The minister beamed at the two-year-old leaving the church. "God bless you," the minister said.

The child beamed back and, without an instant's hesitation, responded, "Ah choo!"

In an effort to conserve petrol a church purchased a rickety old bus to assist people in getting to services. On the first Sunday few took advantage of the free ride, but the next Sunday the bus was filled to capacity. The explanation was the sign that had been added to both sides and the back of the bus: "Free Pick Up and Deliverance".

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Yourth thincerely,
Tham

Mouse, to child mouse: "Don't squeak until your squoken to."

Flower, to small flower: "Hi ya, bud."

Diner: Waiter, I demand to see the chef. I've never seen anything as tough as this steak.
Waiter: You will if you see the chef."

Parent: The sky is the most wonderful roof in the world.

Child: Yes, but it leaks badly.

A farmer once called his cow "Zephyr". She seemed such an affectionate heifer.

But when he drew near

She bit off his ear

And now he is very much deafer.

Prison Chaplain: How long are you in for?
Prisoner: Two months.

Chaplain: What's the charge?

Prisoner: There's no charge. Everything's free.



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