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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

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Comment

Reading the Word of God

Louis Patten

Holy Scripture can be a living, breathing, active thing, full of the spirit of God. When properly delivered, it vibrates with the power and authority of the Holy Spirit.

It is our job, as readers, to allow God to use us in such a way that it becomes active and alive. Then those with ears to hear will know that this is no ordinary word, but something full of power and grace, something that is inspired by God himself.

One of the ways we receive God is through his word, as it is read during communion services. It is important, therefore, that we fully understand the awesome and sacred responsibility we undertake when we become readers of the Word. It is not something to be taken casually or lightly.

Thorough preparation is essential to good delivery. It is important to look up the proper pronunciation of any names or words that are unfamiliar.

Direct eye contact with the listeners can add a great deal of authenticity to the reading, so it is important to know the reading thoroughly enough to be able to constantly look up and make this contact, without breaking the flow or losing our place.

If the reading is to come fully alive, one should read the whole chapter to become familiar with the background and circumstances surrounding the text. It then becomes easier to "go back in time and become one with the author"—as though we are actually speaking or writing in real life to real people.

If we "become" the Psalmist in the very depths of our being, the Psalms will come alive in a way we never dreamed possible. If we are reading from the prophets, we might find ourselves speaking with a voice that seems to have the power and authority of God himself. If we are one with Paul when we read his letters, it is like we are writing the letters ourselves to people and churches we are intimately familiar with, rather than dispassionately reading a letter written by somebody 2000 years ago.

The most important aspect of preparation, however, is that it should be done in a prayerful state. Some books are purely intellectual, and we must employ the full extent of our intellectual prowess to study them. Holy Scripture is spiritual, however, and we cannot properly relate with it

unless we are in a prayerful state. The deeper our prayer state during preparation, the more completely we will become one with the Word and the more God will be able to use us.

There are two different ways to deliver the Word: using our human spirit and being used by the Holy Spirit.

Although they might sound very similar to the physical ear, especially if we are gifted with a natural reading ability, spiritually there is a world of difference. When God uses people as instruments of his grace, then the Word truly comes alive with God's own divine power.

We might have years of training in voice projection, acting, and presentation, but if we rely only on this type of training, we are just using our own cleverness and ability and we can only touch the emotions of the listener.

With the Holy Spirit, however, the Word can fulfil its true potential and touch the depths of a person's soul. Even a totally unskilled reader can become a powerful channel of God's grace when used by the Holy Spirit.

Our delivery will usually be improved if we have several "practice runs" beforehand. This is one of the best ways to smooth off any rough edges. When we read out loud, we might find places where we are prone to stumble, or where we put the emphasis on the wrong word or phrase. When practicing, it is usually best if we stand up and relax. The Word should then start to come alive as the power of the Spirit descends on us.

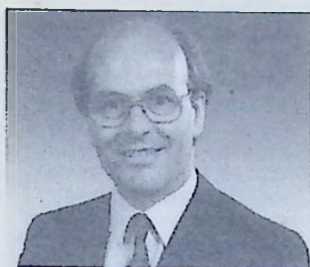
Prior to our actual delivery at church, we should pray deeply that God will truly use us to touch souls and know with confidence that he will. Then, as we stand at the lectern, we need to let go of everything, empty ourselves, and surrender unconditionally to God. When we are in this state, the Spirit can use us to touch those who are open to hear God's Word.

This can be a very subtle experience, or it can be powerful and dynamic; but until we actually experience it for ourselves, any explanations will probably sound rather foreign.

You will know the spiritual reality of what is happening by the unsolicited feedback you receive from the listeners, however beware of false pride, and taking credit for what God himself has done. ♦

Small Churches

UK Author as Spring Conference speaker



Dr Martin Robinson, the principle speaker at the Wollongong Spring Conference (4-6 November) has added another book to his list of publications. *Celebrating the Small Church*, written with Dan Yarnell, is a survey of issues facing smaller churches (defined as churches with 50 attenders or less). Both authors are Churches of Christ ministers in Britain.

Among a variety of themes Dr Robinson will address during Spring Conference, there will be workshops on the small church. The workshops will be designed for churches with up to 100 members and should

prove beneficial for ministers and leaders of smaller congregations. In most states, they comprise 75% of all churches.

The authors describe the life of the small church, analyse some of the problems and suggest strategies for renewal and growth. The material is relevant for city and country churches. Small churches are affirmed, without avoiding the problems. There are excellent sections on vision and leadership.

Information and registration forms will appear in *The Australian Christian* in July and will be mailed to all congregations in August.

Celebrating the Small Church is available from the Australian Board of Church Development and Education, 77 Capel St, West Melbourne 3003 for \$9.95 plus postage.

Conference details are also available from the Board (phone (03) 9326 8900) or the Wollongong, NSW, church (phone (042) 26 5022).

Another Step

New roads lead to Thornleigh

The Church at Thornleigh, NSW, is on the move as larger premises are needed. The property in Pennant Hills Road has been sold and negotiations are well under way to purchase property in Sefton Road. Currently, Sunday Services are being held at the Pennant Hills High School. The new Ministry Centre office is at 263 Pennant Hills Road, Thornleigh. (Same phone number.) In the new office, there is a large room to allow for youth activities and other programs.

The concluding service at Pennant Hills Road was held on Sunday 16 April at 7 pm, followed by supper. This service took the form of a nostalgia service, looking back over the time we have been at Thornleigh, since October 1973, and Hornsby, since 1906. Those who spoke were John Ellerby,

a past secretary for over 30 years, Sybil Garratt, who worshipped in the building when it was owned by the Church of the Nazarene from its inception and then in our early days at Thornleigh linked up with us. Bruce Moffat was the third speaker, highlighting his time with the church as treasurer. Each speaker touched on some humorous highlights, but also on how the Lord had blessed the life of the church. It was great night thanking God for the way he has led the church over the past 89 years. We now enter a new era, a step of faith into an unknown future. The evening concluded with a wonderful time of fellowship over supper. The first Service at Pennant Hills High School was on 23 April. We have the use of the main auditorium and three class rooms. —J.V. Ellerby

A Cross the Road

Alexander Heights' happenings



• A sign on Good Friday

The church at Alexander Heights, WA, has met in two different primary school libraries over the past seven years. They were delighted to be granted permission to use the new community hall from 26 February. A leaflet distribution advertising services was commenced and several special prayer meetings were held leading up to Easter. Attendances have grown each week since they moved.

Easter was a very special time. On Good Friday they met at the hall and walked to their church block site 600 metres

further down Errina Road. Several people shared in carrying a large pine wooden cross. The members stopped along the way to share in some Bible readings. The cross was erected and will remain there until they are able to commence a chapel building program.

Twenty attended a dawn service on Easter Sunday, which was followed by a "sausage sizzle" breakfast. Over 80 then attended the 9:30 am service, which was a time of real rejoicing. Among the visitors were Mr and Mrs Bunyon from Nailsworth, SA.

Inspiration and Challenge

NSW Celebrates 101st Women's Conference

A wonderful day of inspiration and challenge was the 101st NSW Women's Conference Day, ably led by Lyla Beckingham at Auburn church on 4 May, her theme being "Come, Rejoice with Me". Lyla has been on the CWF Executive for 28 years, has been Secretary for 24 years and President twice.

Dawn Fishburn was inducted as the new President and Beverly Beaman as Secretary. Shirley Mansell's conference address was excellent.

200 ladies represented 43 churches.

Focus spots told of the work at Eden and the work of the Australian Church Women.

The atmosphere of Conference was enhanced by the musicians, Dorothy Wilson (organ), Margaret Dickens (piano), Peggy Cameron (violin), and the singing was bright. Duets were rendered by Olive Bagley and Glenys Thomas.

This year's Special Effort will be linen for women leaving the Crisis Centre.

"RISK YOUR POTENTIAL

Vic-Tas CWF Conference

The 109th Conference of Vic-Tas. Christian Women's Fellowship was held on Thursday, 27 April, at the Glen Waverley church. President Sandra Gibson's theme was "Risk your potential with God".

Worship was led by Chris Niven and her team, in song and liturgical movement, based on forgiveness.

Cheques were presented to representatives of the Overseas Mission Board (\$700), DMED (\$3573), Community Care (\$3546), CCTC (\$2267) and Dept Christian Union (\$340). Don Smith, DMED, commented that in his 30 years as director, the CWF had given over \$100,000 to the department.

Merryl Blair, lecturer at CCTC, was the main speaker and told how Ruth put herself at risk when she chose to go on a journey into an alien land. To be on a journey for God is also a risk, but he does not expect us to walk alone.

Lynette Leach, field worker with CWF, interviewed young mothers Leanne Beasy, Mildura, and Andrea Salmon, Ringwood, on how they see their role serving the women of the church. Both were excited about the groups for women in their church and encouraged by the support received from the maturer(!) women as they passed on their experience of CWF.

Another focus was with Pat Greig, incoming President of Vic-Tas Conference. Pat interviewed her mother, May Searle, and then her daughter, Narelle,

who is a civil engineer, the only female engineer with the Gas and Fuel Corporation. Each had a very different life, but the thread running through all three was the encouragement to be your own person as God intended.

The afternoon session concluded with the induction of Lola Adam from Surrey Hills church as president for 1995-96 and a communion service.

The evening session was aimed at women 25-45 and those unable to come during the day. Worship was led by the women of the Sunbury Community Church. The speaker was Mary Dewberry, psychologist, on "Superwomen—Fact or Fiction". As Mary spoke of the roles women fulfil and of the experience, comic and other-

wise of daily life, there were many smiles and nodding of heads in agreement. "The real super-women (and super-men) acknowledge their failings and know they are loved through the grace of God who accepts us as we are and helps us in our journey to become all that we are designed to be."

Other highlights:

- Commitment offering 1996 for the establishment of a network of women's groups for Churches of Christ in Vic-Tas.

- Soloists: Liz Tilson and Amanda Tuohy

- Singing of 275 women and men

- Meeting new and old friends over lunch

- Delicious desserts provided by the Boronia ladies before the evening session.

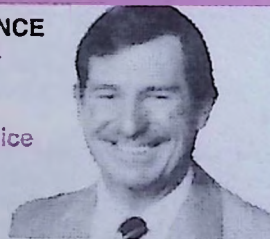
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Calendar

Bible Sunday

The theme for Bible Sunday (23 July) this year is "Listen! Is that all?". It is inspired by the Gospel reading for the day: Luke 10:38-42. In a press release, the comment is made that watching is the great Australian sport. Christians are caught up in watching too. Unless Christians in this country come to grips with what God is saying to us as we approach a new millennium, the church in Australia will become a relic. National Bible Sunday is an opportunity for congregations to affirm the priority place of the Bible in corporate and devotional life. Further information is available from state offices of either Scripture Union or The Bible Society.

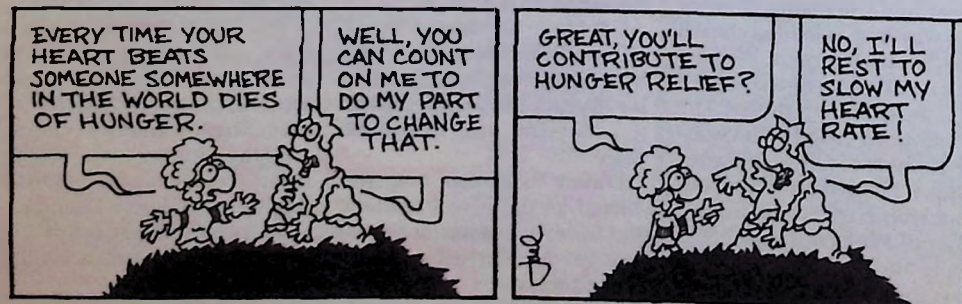
Intimacy Renewed

Members of the SA Synod-based group, Evangelical Ministers in the Uniting Church, are offering a conference entitled "Intimacy Renewed" in Adelaide, 12-14 October. International and local speakers include Dr John White, Michael Cassidy, Dr John Court and Rev Dr Colin Warren. The Conference aims to give expression to a positive theology of sexuality which can enrich all our closest relationships. Details, can be obtained from Owen Davis, 6 Lanark St, Rosslyn Park 5072, phone (08) 332 5686.

The Household of God

More than just another church seminar, "The Household of God" (Melbourne, 19-24 January 1996) will enable lay and ordained people to examine the critical issues for Christians today. How is the church to witness to the unity of faith and the centrality of Christ's gospel? What will sustain Christians amid this change and how do we share our vision of Christ in ways that are authentic to our culture and history? Two unusual features will be the opening celebration and dinner on the banks of the Yarra River and a World Series Debate. The sponsor is the National Conference of Churches in Australia (NCCA). Information and registration forms from "The Household of God", Causeway House, 306 Little Collins St, Melbourne 3000. Phone (03) 9650 4511 or fax (03) 9650 8383.

Pontius' Puddle



News

Australia

Marriage Celebration

1993 marked 20 years since the introduction of private marriage celebrants in Australia. In 1973, 83.6% of marriages were performed with a religious rite. In 1993, this figure had fallen to 57.9%, however most of this fall took place in the first decade (1973-83), so that in 1983 60.6% of marriages were performed by a religious celebrant. Of the major denominational groups recorded in the marriage statistics, only three recorded a higher rate of marriages than their nominal census affiliation for 1992 and 1993. These are the Baptists (1.7% census, 1.8% of all marriages), Churches of Christ (0.5% census, 1.1% of all marriages) and Uniting Church (8.2% census, 9.9% of all marriages).

Aust Religious Activity

In 1992, 3,000 households throughout Australia were asked to report on how their members (aged 15+) used their time. Overall, the average time per day spent in religious activities was six minutes. This compared with 499 minutes for sleeping, 108 minutes watching TV or videos, 27 minutes playing sport or engaged in exercise, 19 minutes doing the washing and ironing, etc, and five minutes playing with their children. The participation rate for religious activities is low—4% of males and 6% of females. (In a two-day period, 4% of males and 6% of females reported that they were involved in some religious activity.)

Catholic Consultation on Youth

Roman Catholic bishops are about to undertake a nation-wide study of the role of young people in the nation's future. The objectives are: to enter into dialogue with young people and hear what they think about the problems and possibilities of Australian society, its future, and their own; together with the whole community to identify and examine the major social justice issues (both Australian and international) that affect young people, and that require action by young people, the church, and others; and to select priority issues with young people and to teach and act on these issues together with the whole community, drawing on the tradition of Catholic social teaching.

Renewing Mission

Mission focus for eleven churches



Leaders of eleven Melbourne churches are meeting together during 1995 in a year-long process to focus on their mission task. Pictured here are Joe Thomas (centre) and Karl Bar-

ber (right) of Werribee church, with Alan Hirsch, the program facilitator. Alan is the Director for Urban Ministry of the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development.

The long-term goal is to renew and re-conceptualise the mission task of each participating congregation. Sessions will include time for the examination of issues such as call, vision, purpose, values, strategic planning, policy, administration and growth, together with theological, cultural and philosophical aspects of local church life. Some 30-40 have already met together in each of the two combined sessions. In alternate months, local leaders meet to work on local assignments. The combined meetings are held at South Melbourne and have been characterised by a high spirit of enthusiasm and commitment to the process.

The participating churches are a mix of inner, middle and outer suburban churches.

Exciting Year

Big changes at Cairns church

The last year has been an exciting one for the church at Cairns, Qld.

The old chapel, hall and manse were sold in January 1994, with a view to a move to bigger facilities because of overcrowding. The old property was acquired in 1986 from the Presbyterian Church and extended with the addition of a new chapel in 1988.

Negotiations on acquiring a wonderful site not far from the old church finally came to fruition at the beginning of this year. The church is currently finalising plans for a 400-seat

chapel and separate Christian Education block on the site.

A "Farewell to McLeod Street" service was held on 19 March. It was a time of celebration, reminiscing and a few tears, as well as a time of looking forward to bigger things.

Since then, the church has begun meeting in a high school assembly hall, which gives adequate room for growth.

At the beginning of the year, Phil Bignill, a Carlingford graduate, took up the new position of youth pastor, working alongside senior pastor, Bruce Warwick. —Wendy Thorne



• Carol Duncan, longest continuously-serving member at Cairns, in front of the old chapel

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Christ's Evangelical Foundation

Training course by extension

Christ's Evangelical Foundation (CEF) is a preacher training course by extension, set up to provide doctrinally sound Bible College training for evangelists and preachers. It is designed to equip with a thorough working knowledge of the whole Bible. It's 22 study books are divided into some 150 topics. There are about 50 questions on each topic and many more facts and truths are taught and explained within the notes, maps, charts and study guides. The program is more than a simple Bible correspondence course. The textbooks are user friendly, simply written, with emphasis on clear thinking and expression rather than memorisation. Examinations are open book and each student can proceed at their own pace. In the near future, it is hoped to be able to hold in-house seminars, workshops, retreats, and tutorials, with

practical help in preaching presentation. This course is designed for those who are unable to attend (on campus) a sound, loyal Bible College. It is offered, without charge, to anyone who is serious about preaching and evangelising our world according to the great commission. The writer is **Guy Humphreys**, a returned missionary from Africa, where he was used by God, leading thousands to Christ and seeing many Bible churches established. The Foundation is based in Arizona, USA, and has recently opened a branch in **Bexhill, Lismore, NSW**. About 1,000 students from over 20 nations, including Australia, have enrolled. The dean of the Australian branch is veteran missionary/evangelist, **Douglas G. Willis**. Information from CEF, PO, Bexhill 2480, for a curriculum prospectus and scholarship application form.

Flame at its Heart

A logo is born

The logo of "The Household of God" conference was born as a result of a "lived experience" of its designer.

Kim Cain, a Uniting Church minister, with a commission to design a logo for the conference, spent a weekend with his family in Ballarat, Vic, home of Australia's famous Eureka Flag based on the Southern Cross.

As he traced the outline of the constellation of the Southern Cross for his young son in the night sky, he realised he was in fact drawing the shape of a house, with a flame at its heart.

Moreover, he became aware that this "designing in the sky" has been done throughout time, especially by the ancients as they configured shapes and "gods" in the stars. Tracing such shapes was, at another level, reminiscent of Jesus stooping to write in the dust and ancient Aboriginal artists telling stories by drawing in the outback sand.



Through this experience, it became a simple task to translate the Southern Cross, the flame and the open house into an expressive design.

In its visual impact and its formation, the logo links the dimensions of faith, the (southern) cross, history, the spirit, the nation and the house—all brought together in "The Household of God".

"The Household of God" is being held in Melbourne 19-24 January 1996. More details will be released closer to the event.

Welcoming Refugees

The Christian Response

18-24 June is National Refugee Week, which aims to highlight the plight of refugees. Refugees are people who have been forced to flee their homelands to countries such as Australia.

There are approximately 23 million refugees in the world. A large number of these people will resettle in neighbouring countries until it is safe to return. However, each year the UNHCR puts forward a number of cases that it feels can only be protected in a third country. In 1995, Australia will welcome 13,000-14,000.

These people will arrive with no furniture, no money, no friends and often no English, but with terrible memories. They come to Australia to rebuild their lives and build a future for their children.

"Welcoming Refugees—The

Christian Response" in Adelaide is being held on 17 June, the day before Refugee Week. Share some ethnic food, hear about refugees living in South Australia and what churches can and are doing. If you have any unwanted furniture, electrical goods or household linen in a clean and reasonable condition, bring them along. Each church will have storage space for any donations—large or small. All donations will be

given to refugee families.

Three churches will be open 11.00 am-2.00 pm. Churches participating are the **Cowandilla Church of Christ**, where food will be provided by the **Croatian Community Church**; the **Seacliff Anglican Church**, where food is by the **Lebanese-Marionite Community Church**, and the **Salisbury Catholic Church**, where food

is by the **Vietnamese Community Church**.

A daily prayer planner will be available for church and private use during Refugee Week. Each day a different country features with prayer points, action ideas and a Bible reading.

—Christine Loveday
(SA Council of Churches, phone (08) 232 0070.)

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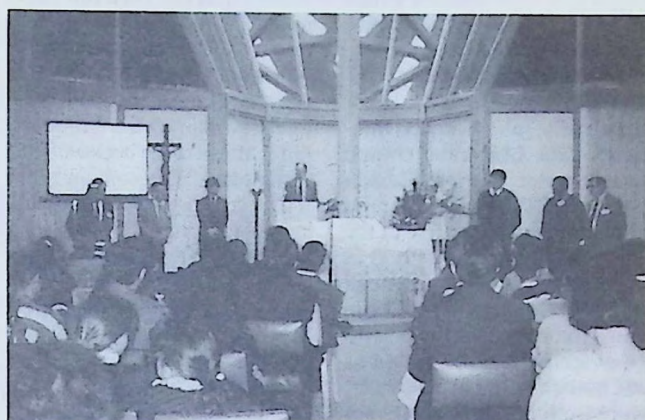
1.15-1.45 p.m.

Lunchtime Service

For further enquiries, please ring (03) 9663 3884

First Anniversary

International Christian Community Church



• International church's leadership Commissioning

Two hundred joined in the first anniversary service for Melbourne's International Christian Community Church at St Paul's College, Wantirna South. During the service some 30 new members were received into fellowship.

Eleven have been baptised since the commencement of the church. Others have made faith commitments and await baptism. The church achieved self support within two months of commencement and achieved

an offering of \$50,000 in the first year.

A highlight of the service was the setting apart of church leaders and elders. Wim Kruithoff serves as a ministry worker. Chek Chia is the minister.

The congregation uses the fine facilities of St Paul's Missionary College in a parkland area of Wantirna South. Facilities are ideal for the congregation's activities. Lunch was served in the entertainment area, following the service.

Small Groups

National Small Groups Conference



• Richard Foster

A major national conference on "Spiritual Formation and Christian Community" will be held in Melbourne at Blackburn Baptist Church, 27-30 June.

Richard Foster from the US will be a keynote speaker. Richard is the founder of RENOVARE and author of six books, including *Celebration of Discipline and Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, which have an effective ministry in promoting personal spiritual renewal. He will be joined by Robert and Julia Banks; formerly from Canberra, now working at Fuller Seminary, USA, for keynote addresses.

Tricia Watts from Sydney will provide music and worship input to the Conference.

A number of key small group practitioners from around Australia will run the seminar program as part of the Conference. One day seminars with Richard

A Younger Church

Church planting record

Ninety Victorian local church leaders heard the good news that the rate of church planting is now the fastest achieved this century. Local church representatives, church planters, Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development members, and trustees of the Properties Corporation came together on 31 March to hear a report on the second phase of the Church Reach Out Plan (CROP).

Since the dinner, many comments have been received about the inspiration and encouragement received from hearing of the new church planting initiatives and the continuing growth evident in Victorian churches.

Among the themes noted were new core values of CROP, the six settings for church planting, how churches may participate and the implications for the Conference of achieving the goal of 50 new churches, 1994-2000. An important outcome of achieving this goal will be that one third of churches will have commenced since 1988. This means a younger church for the future.

Along with the fastest rate of church planting this century, membership growth is now the most sustained in the last 75 years. The last 20 years have seen five years of membership loss and 15 of growth.

—Don Smith



• Ian Cartmel (left) who commenced the first church planting initiative for CROP at Mornington in 1988, Dean Phelan, chairman of the Department of MED, Ken Foxhall, elder and Kerryn Daff, secretary at Mornington

Foster will be held in Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra. Further details and registration forms are available

from Serendipity Christian Resources, GPO Box 1944, Adelaide 5001 or phone/fax on (08) 370 5964.

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Letters to the Editor

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To Create or Not

To the Editor,

In response to letters on creationism it's apparent that many Christians are aligning themselves with popular science and its theories about the existence of the universe and the existence of man, but are we yoking ourselves with unbelieving science (2 Cor 6:14-17)?

The theories and proofs of popular science are built upon shifting sand and will never be fully formed enough to give us the answers for the questions people are asking. Science can only partially explain the relationships of different atoms, molecules and matter in general, but it cannot explain the existence of matter.

We have been given that answer through the revelation in the Bible (Gen 1:1), unless we malign the Word of God. But if we do so, we malign ourselves (Isa 29:16; 45:9).

I would also question those who say that the Bible is part myth, part revelation, part common sense. (Deut 4:2) On what authority do you base your judgement and how can we test your conclusions? "If you are arguing God's method, I would say, 'You would have had to have been there to know'". (Job 38:4)

People seem to think they have enough objectivity to be able to deduce from inferences on subjects that are much greater than themselves. C.S. Lewis said that it is like saying you can deduce the nature and the workings of the farm by the state of the sick chicken and the healing of the chicken; that is, man's fall and God's redemption of man. We should be more humble in our belief of our ability to understand God's workings. (Isa 55:9)

—Jon Sutherland
(Paddington, NSW)

Violet Callanan

To the Editor,

Further to letters by Ken Barton and Gordon Stirling, ("AC" 6 May) I would like to add more

information about Violet Maud Callanan, the first woman minister of Churches of Christ in Australia. In 1931, she commenced her ministry as the pastor of the Church of Christ in Hawthorne, Brisbane.

Gordon Stirling tells how, in 1934 or 1935, she began work in the Victorian Social Service Department. In 1967, on 2 December, the Golden Age Retirement Village at Southport was officially opened. Its first residents were Miss Callanan and Mrs Nell Robbins, who purchased the first unit. Both attended the Southport church and Vi became very active in a number of auxiliaries.

She was particularly interested in youth and Bible College students. So, on 21 October 1976, at the suggestion of Ross Franks, the Board set up a Student Scholarship Fund. The name of the fund was to be the "Vi Callanan Memorial Student Scholarship Fund". It was to be funded by 2% of our weekly offering, later increased to 3%.

The first steering committee consisted of Ross Franks, (chairman) David Capuano, Alex Surtees, and Noel Newton. It has continued ever since, providing 50% of College fees to full-time Bible College students and a contribution towards books for other colleges, such as Cornerstone.

Many students who have attended Kenmore, the Qld Bible College, and even colleges in USA, have been assisted in this way. Current beneficiaries are Lyle Newton, Noel's son, Allan Braysher, and Ken Masterman,

who are at college in Brisbane, plus a number of our young people at Cornerstone.

—Nancy Evans
(Southport, Qld)

Land Mines

To the Editor,

Recently, John Gilmore, minister of the Mulgrave church and Director of Field Education at CCTC visited Phnom Penh as a representative of the National Council of Churches in Australia. At the last meeting of the Department of Christian Union, John spoke with great feeling about conditions in Cambodia. In particular, we were troubled by the statistics related to unexploded land mines in Cambodia. Approximately 300 people each month are injured by land mines, with the result that Cambodia has the largest proportion of amputees per head of population in the world.

Over the first weekend in June this year, an international

conference is being held in Phnom Penh to call for the global elimination of land mines. Australia is not yet a full party to the United Nations convention for the elimination of land mines and we intend to contact Senator Gareth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting that Australia become a full signatory and become a moving force in resolving this problem which is having such a devastating effect in many nations of the world.

We invite readers to support this international campaign. Such support can be expressed in two ways; first, by writing to Senator Evans and, second, by contacting John Gilmore at CCTC (phone (03) 9790 1000) for a copy of a petition being collected around the world for the global elimination of land mines.

—Gwenda Mathieson
(Secretary, Department of Christian Union and Ecumenical Affairs)

Letters to a Travelling Companion

A Hell of a Debate

Dear Daniel,

In your latest correspondence, you attempted to engage me in a written discussion on the nature of hell. Really Daniel, you should know better than that! In fact, I had just recently had a similar discussion with one of the elders of my church. "There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth," he said. "What if you're like me and have no teeth?", I asked. "Oh, teeth will be provided," was his reply.

Seriously, though, Daniel, all this speculation on the specific nature of hell is rather futile, don't you think? I believe the biblical writers simply used imagery and word pictures to give us a very pointed feeling for just how unpleasant eternity will be if we choose to live apart from God. The sad fact is that some people get so caught up in debating the specific details of the nature of hell that they forget that the Bible is really on about encouraging people to do all they can to recognise and experience the life-giving presence of God, both now and eternally. Suffice to say, for a person who is living their life experiencing the presence of God, there could be no more abhorrent thought than that of being separated from him, whether this actually involves fiery pits or not.

So Daniel, unless you like engaging in futile arguments for the sake of it, try debating something more useful. "What Scripture says about how we should live our lives," might be a good start.

Write again soon,
Pastor Salt

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Indian Mission Team

Christian Outreach Ministries in India.

In January 1995, Michael Bishop and Rob Muir of the York St church in Ballarat, Vic, had the pleasure of accompanying 30 other Australian Christians to India to see Scripture fulfilled way beyond their

expectations. They were involved in a short-term mission organised by Christian Outreach Ministries, (COM), a mission endeavour established by the Mt Evelyn, Vic, church in 1985.

Desperate Need

Support for Indo-Chinese churches

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, was the venue for an Asian Church Leaders consultation on ecumenical response to the situation facing the churches and nations of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The consultation was jointly called by the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the World Council of Churches. Forty representatives from countries that form the CCA as well as representatives from churches in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia together with others from funding agencies met for four days.

John Gilmore, minister of Mulgrave, Vic, church, Director of Field Education at Churches of Christ Theological College, and chair of the Refugee and Migrants Committee of Christian World Service, part of the National Council of Churches in Australia, represented the General Secretary of the NCCA at the consultation.

There were four days of listening and being confronted again and again with the enormity of human need and the frailty of the situation in which the churches and peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia find themselves. The delegates from these countries confronted the conference with their desperate need for training, leadership, literature, relief aid, prayer and support. In each country, Christians are in the minority and face varying degrees of difficulty.

The Laotian church is faced with rapid growth, shortage of literature in Laotian, as well as a lack of trained leadership.

The Vietnamese Evangelical churches lack cohesion and are struggling as they seek to respond to a country going through rapid change. They are subject to pressure from churches outside Vietnam that offer money and resources and bring with them an independent spirit that sometimes fosters division.

In Cambodia, the importation of church worship styles and denominational divisions from outside Cambodia (and Asia) is threatening to overwhelm the small and frail Khmer house church. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, in different ways, are being seduced by the affluent world's agenda. Industrial development, commercial development and tourism (including the sex trade) are being identified as the saviours of the economies of these three countries.

The conference closed with the delegates committing themselves to working for the people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. We will be taking a proposal for a 20 year program of relief aid, church development and encouragement to the Christian Conference of Asia General Assembly in Sri Lanka. The delegates of Churches of Christ to this important conference in Colombo will be Lynette Leach and John Gilmore. John and Lynette would welcome your support and your prayers as they go to consider situations such as those that face these three needy countries and the churches and other nations of Asia.

—John Gilmore

The vision of COM has been to take the gospel to some of the 600,000 rural villages of India which have never heard the message of salvation.

In the ten years since it was established, the Christian training centre in Kakinada (Andre Pradesh) has sent out more than 300 rural pastors who are ministering in over 500 villages and planted more than 500 new fellowships. As well, approximately 1,000 "at risk" children have been identified and are being cared for in foster care at children's homes, where they are ensured of having adequate nutrition, proper medical care, schooling and a Christian education.

Each year, two short-term mission teams are sent out from Australia to minister for two weeks in Indian villages. The teams consist of Australian Christians from a wide range of church backgrounds. The two weeks are spent in highly mobile intense village evangelism performed through interpreters. The daily program consisted of street evangelism in two or three villages during the daylight hours and a night rally in the evening. The villages varied from small settlements of 50–60 nestled in rice paddies and coconut plantations, to large regional centres with populations of 5–10,000. Crowds of between 20 and 400 were spoken to, with an average of seven addresses each day, outlining the message of salvation and inviting those who were led to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

In the two weeks, the team of five in which Michael and Rob were involved spoke face to face with about 6,000 people of whom 2,000 made a public



• Rob Muir and Michael Bishop with former gipsy beggar Pastor Paul of Banapurum (India) and his four children

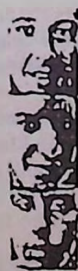
dedication. Conversion is a process and these commitments are only the first step in these peoples' spiritual walk. Many people came forward at obviously great personal cost. Quality follow-up is available to the converts and they are encouraged to seek out their local pastor in the days to come.

The COM pastors were impressive in their dedication and enthusiasm for the Lord and their endurance of obvious difficulties for the furthering of the Gospel. The ongoing vision for COM in India is to:

- continue training more than 150 pastors per year,
- establish a vocational training centre (presently under construction) for the training of children under care,
- build an auditorium to seat 1,000 for the fellowship at Kakinada,
- continue to take the Gospel to the countless villages of India which have never heard of Christ.

Financial support for this ministry comes predominantly from Australia, while all the ministry is carried out by the indigenous church. Pastors in the field are financed by supporters in Australia for \$10/week. Foster care children can be supported for \$11/month.

While in India, we were privileged to be involved in the opening of a children's home to house 100 children. This was made possible by the donation of \$10,000 from members of the York St church.



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CSF, PO Box 17,
Anna Bay 2301

Books

Can we Save the Evangelical Church

by Bill Hull (Revell).

Bill Hull believes the evangelical church in America is in deep trouble. He says that it takes 100 adults one year to introduce 1.7 people to Christ. What is more alarming is that 50% of evangelical churches do less than that. Most churches, he says, are trapped in a bureaucratic morass. The best people are involved in keeping the machinery going, rather than out on the front lines where they belong.

The answer is a fresh touch from God—a renewal of the evangelical church. Bill Hull proposes a set of strategies to accomplish this, including teaching biblically-based methods of church leadership, transforming existing leaders through basic spiritual disciplines, sacrificing form (ie traditional structures) for function (ie ministry), creating a sense of community through small groups and deploying church members to do the work of evangelism "off campus." (ie out in the real world).

Everything Bill Hull says I agree with. However, I found the book somewhat tedious. It seemed to me to be a reiterating of self-evident truths that have become common fare among evangelicals in recent years. Nevertheless, it is a well-written book, easy to read and will probably inspire many Christians who have been less exposed to church growth literature than I.

—Bob Smith

Favourite Psalms of the South

compiled by Cheryl and Mary Bowey, edited by Rosalie Sharpe, illustrations by Fay Neighbour (Favourite Psalms of the South Committee) \$9.95.

The concept for this book grew from a small home Bible study group in Victor Harbor, SA. Those involved shared their favourite Psalms and all were encouraged by the special way the Psalms spoke to their hearts.

This led to several being involved in compiling a book of the favourite Psalms of "everyday" Christians from a range of church denominations and backgrounds in the South Coast area of SA. Several well-known and respected leaders in the community and the state were also asked to contribute.

Where a contributor has nominated a favourite Psalm (or selection from a Psalm) the text is given and this is followed by individual reflections on the significance of the Psalm for the writer. It shows the variety of ways that God talks to and leads his people.

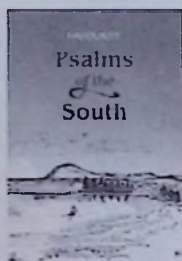
There are some heart-warming stories of God's care and also some very deep reflections on God's nature.

As would be expected, Psalm 23 was the most popular and several other well-known Psalms have various comments made on them. However, there are some lesser-known Psalms that have provided special inspiration for people and it is interesting to read these stories.

A good book to use in meditation or personal study and also possibly to help people in the variety of crisis that we face in life.

Available from Cheryl Bowey, PO Box 433, Victor Harbor 5211 for \$9.95 plus at least \$3 to cover postage and packaging. Profits from the sale will go towards two children's charities (one in Australia and one overseas).

—CRA



The Faith of the Unbeliever

by Martin Robinson (Monarch Publications) \$19.95.

This book offers an overview of the movements which have influenced the mind-set of today's western world: the Enlightenment period, or Age of Reason, which in its beginnings was not anti-Christian; Modernity, with its offspring of secularism and scientism; and Post Modernism, which has given rise to the search for religion in Neo-Paganism. Putting it like that makes the book sound dull: on the contrary, it is fascinating reading.

The author is a Churches of Christ minister and Director of Mission and Theology at the Bible Society in the UK. He is recognised as one of the UK's main thinkers in evangelism.

There are three main sections in the book: The World of the Unbeliever, Beliefs of the Unbeliever and Communicating with the Unbeliever. There are copious annotations, an extensive bibliography and an index.

Robinson states, "The gradual separation and divorce that has developed between Western culture and the Christian faith cannot be characterised as a 'clean break' divorce ... the divorce settlement proposed by the forces of modernisation was that those with religious convictions should restrict their thoughts to the private world of opinions, leaving the forces of modernity free to determine the course of public affairs." And, he comments, "Some very large and inconvenient chickens are coming home to roost."

Robinson suggests that the church "must not come with the sword of judgement or with any other weapon of domination. It must come instead with a basin of water and a simple towel to address the tears of a culture in crisis." However, as well as being a servant church, Robinson infers that the church should engage in debate with proponents of western world view, to retake the intellectual high ground, but he doesn't appear to have much hope that it will. He says, "My observation of the growing renewal of the church in the West indicates that it is much more likely that the church will live as if its message is true, without worrying too much about winning the intellectual high ground. Perhaps, surprisingly, in view of the investment of the church in education, the church seems to produce more activists than thinkers."

The book is intended as a contribution to a debate, rather than a provider of solutions. It is very readable and could form the basis for much serious reflection. It could also arm the reader with a better understanding of the forces which seek to influence our attitudes and thinking.

—Zillah Williams



People

People

YWAM Leadership Change

An important change in leadership has taken place in Youth With A Mission. The new ambassador for the 8,100 strong group will be Jim Stier an American based in Brazil since the mid 1970s. As part of his role, he will emphasise YWAM's commitment to increasing the numbers of non-Westerners serving with YWAM—currently about one in three. Outgoing President is Loren Cunningham who founded YWAM in 1960.

Hostages Spotted

On 7 May New Tribes Mission (NTM) received a call from a reliable source in Villavicencio, Colombia. He had heard that Tim Van Dyke and Steve Welsh were spotted with the guerrillas at a location up a valley on 13 April. Tim and Steve were clearly identified and appeared to be in good condition. Other hostages were also being held, all of whom appeared to be Colombians. These two men and three other NTM workers have been captured and held as hostages by left-wing guerrillas in Colombia. Negotiations for their release have been stalled for a long time. The first two NTM workers were abducted in January 1993, and the other three in January 1994.

Christian Music Awards

Steven Curtis Chapman dominated the 26th annual Dove Awards for Christian music in America this year, winning in six categories, including a seventh consecutive Dove Award for song writing. Some of the awards were: Artist of the Year—Steven Curtis Chapman; Male Vocalist of the Year—Steven Curtis Chapman; Female Vocalist—Twila Paris (third consecutive Dove); Group of the Year—4HIM (third consecutive Dove); New Artist of the Year—Clay Crosse and Song of the Year—"God is in Control" by Twila Paris.

Editor Leaving

Years of contribution recognised

The Board of *The Australian Christian* regrets to advise its subscribers and members of our national churches that Chris Ambrose will complete his term as editor at the end of this year. Chris will have completed 17 years as a member of the staff of *The Australian Christian*.

After graduating from the College of the Bible, Glen Iris, in 1978, Chris joined the staff as Sub-Editor/Manager.

At the end of 1987, when Gordon Stirling retired as Editor, the board appointed Chris to this position.

With dramatic changes taking place in the area of technology in the years during which Chris has been editor, we have been fortunate that he has been able to utilise his skills in such a way that *The Australian Christian* is now being produced entirely differently. Its presentation and layout is now de-

signed on computer in our own office. It is then sent to the printer for printing. Because of these changes, we have been able to decrease our production costs and maintain the standard of the paper at a cost acceptable to our subscribers.

Chris has committed himself completely throughout the years which he has been associated with *The Australian Christian* to producing a paper which we as members of Churches of Christ can be justly proud. The high quality of the paper reflects his ability and commitment. The wealth of ideas and news from our own churches and the wider church have always been a source of inspiration and awareness for our subscribers.

Chris enjoyed recognition from his peers in the Australasian Religious Press Association serving on its executive as



• "AC" Editor, Chris Ambrose

Treasurer (four years), Secretary (one year) and President (two years).

—Keith Aird
(Board Chairman)

Bruce Rock Ministry

Lawton Family Welcomed

Randall Lawton was inducted into the ministry of the Bruce Rock, WA, church on 12 March. There was a packed church to greet Randall, Sue, Evelyn, Joel and Tess, including visitors from Perth and representatives from the Wheatbelt

churches (Mukinbudin, Merredin and Narembene). Members from the local Anglican and Uniting churches also shared in the service.

Trevor Streeton, WA Conference President, together with the local elders (Tom Lewis,



• The Lawton family

Barrie Butler and Robert Butler) conducted the prayer of dedication and the laying on of hands.

The congregation was challenged to support Randall and Sue during their ministry.

At the conclusion of the sermon, given by Trevor Streeton, the congregation joined in morning tea and greeted the Lawton family.

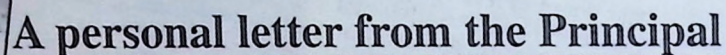


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The challenges facing our churches as we rush towards the third millennium are immense and complex. To respond to these challenges, we need creative and innovative leaders who will be faithful to Jesus Christ and his Kingdom and commit themselves unreservedly to effective servant leadership.

I am greatly encouraged as I look around our country and see the impact of the leadership being offered by our graduates. They are serving in suburban churches and country churches. Some are involved in church planting and revitalization. Others are heading up strategic new mission ventures. You will find them in large churches, small churches and medium-size churches. Some are engaged full-time in ministry, others part-time. Some minister on a paid basis, others serve voluntarily. All are working to make Christ known in relevant ways where they serve. They are scattered throughout Australia—from Darwin (NT) in the north, to Devonport (Tas) in the south and from Dianella (WA) in the west to Ringwood (Vic) in the east.

Providing the environment and resources for ministerial training and theological education requires the ongoing and generous support of friends from all around Australia. CCTC has no large endowments upon which to live. Like the vast majority of local churches, we depend upon the faithful giving of people committed to Christ and his Kingdom.

Each year, the first Sunday in June is designated as College Offering Day. Although we receive gifts from individuals and churches throughout the year, it is on College Offering Day that we call upon the people of our Churches right across Australia to support the College financially.

I am proud to be able to invite you to share with us in our ministry of preparing God's people for vital Christian ministry and leadership.

Please cut out the reply slip opposite and give prayerful consideration to our request for your support.

Dr Greg Elsdon
Principal

3 June 1995

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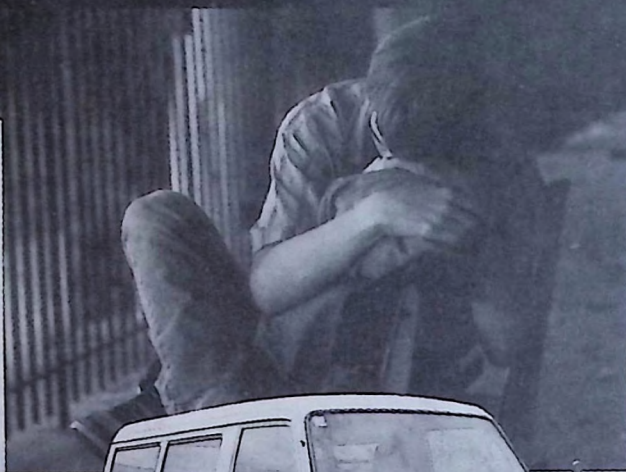
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Recently, ANSVAR purchased a Ford Econovan for Drug-Arm, a group which aims to promote a healthy lifestyle without the use of unnecessary drugs. Street Van, as it is known, takes assistance to the young people on the street, helping them to explore options to move out of this harmful environment.

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157 Ann Street, Brisbane 4000. Phone: (07) 221 8449

International Canterbury Admission

Canterbury Cathedral has announced that it is about to introduce entry charges for tourists. It will become the only cathedral in Britain to charge visitors for entering its precincts, rather than the building itself. There will be exemptions for locals who are merely passing through, visitors who genuinely want to worship and those normally attending cathedral services. The charges of £2 for adults and £1 for children, are expected to commence in July.

Influences on Baptisms

Leadership, training and vision influence a church's baptism rates more than its size and location, according to research done by the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board in the USA. A study of 1,000 churches with a large number of baptisms found common characteristics: a pastor committed to frequent personal witnessing, witness training for lay people of all ages, a variety of evangelistic methods, a vision for growth and a method to identify and visit evangelistic prospects.

Tobacco Lawsuits

In the US the state of Florida has joined Minnesota and Mississippi in suing tobacco companies for the cost to taxpayers of tobacco-related illnesses. In New Orleans a smokers' widow is suing tobacco companies alleging that they knew tobacco was addictive and manipulated the nicotine content to keep her husband addicted until he died.

Refugees' Churches

Mozambicans converted in refugee camps by Baptist missionaries have begun 17 new churches back in their home towns after returning home when the civil war eased.

Egyptian Christian Killed

A report has been received from Minya, in Egypt, telling of a group of Muslim militants killing a Copt Christian they suspect of collaborating with the authorities. Safwat Sabet Kiwan was killed by the group which crept into his house. This killing has brought the number of deaths in Egypt's three-year violent, militant, anti-government campaign to about 750.

More Oxford Excellence

Viney Longthorp

Folk wisdom declares that you can't judge a book by its cover. Maybe so, appearances can be deceptive, but there are always exceptions. Most readers have found that any book bearing the imprimatur of the Oxford University Press is a sure sign of quality contents inside.

Two recent publications by OUP continue to be bearers of excellence. They are *The Oxford Book of Australian Religious Verse* and *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*.

This book of religious verse will be a delight to many, an anthology assembled by Professor Kevin Hart, himself a poet, who is also represented in this collection. He teaches English Literature at Monash University, Victoria. The book fills a significant gap in religious writings in this country.

In a valuable introduction, Hart explains his criteria for selection. As far as Australia is concerned, there are few problems. But some eyebrows may be raised as to his approach to religion and verse. Suffice to say that he treats religion broadly, not specifically Christian. But many poems are suffused with Gospel references, biblical myths and symbols. Surveying all the poems makes one aware of "the varieties of religious experience" which William James so expertly expounded.

Hart takes the high ground with verse, wherein he opts for the deep and authentic poetic qualities. The poems you will meet in his book are not those you normally meet, say, in Helen Steiner Rice's territory. I think our compiler would agree with Edith Sitwell, that poetry is "the deification of reality". This feeling comes through the entire collection; God is never very far away.

Thus Chris Wallace-Crabbe, in *The Secular*, argues the case for creation with brave and honest doubt:

"Whoever the creator
He brutally botched the job,
But how tough his furniture
..."

Peter Kocan's poem, *Cathedral Service*, identifies with the experience of many in this New Age, who find traditional churches forbidding places, empty of worshippers and the spiritual. But the search goes on:

"Yet when did this religion
ever rest

On weight of numbers as the
final test?

Its founder said that it was
all the same

When two or three were gathered
in his name."

Then Geoffry Dutton, in *Twelve Sheep*, reminds us that:

"To be still, to be silent,
Is an act of prayer."

From last century, Henry Kendall's poem *Dedication—To a Mountain*, invokes the sense of wonder of the Book of Job and some of the Psalms:

"To thee, O Father of the
stately peaks,

Above me in the loftier
light—to thee,

Imperial brother of those
awful hills ..."

Space forbids any more samples. But they are all here—our best known songsters: Judith Wright, A.D. Hope, Les Murray and many more.

Father James Murray of *The Australian* summed it up well: "This anthology is a profound revelation of a more contemplative, observant and interpretive Australia, offering an astonishing variety and engaging the reader in an experience that is both satisfying and challenging."

The other piece of excellence is the *Companion to the Bible*. The editors are Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan. They have called upon the insights and understandings of a galaxy of biblical scholars; these range over America, Britain, Europe, Canada and, not least, Australia.

As the title *Companion* suggests, there is offered a very great quantity of subject matter relating to the Bible.

The Bible is addressed from many areas.

The use of the Bible in art, literature, music and dance is explored.

The ways the Bible has influenced literature in most parts of the English-speaking world is expounded; many examples are offered of prose and poetry.

Then, as one would expect, there is the stock-in-trade of articles on all the books of the Bible, including the Apocrypha.

There are some excellent articles on the major characters found in the Bible; other articles examine biblical concepts such as sin, salvation, resurrection, hell and creation.

What makes the *Companion* so useful is its wide scope. There are, for instance, references to humour in the Bible, the geography of the biblical world, the making of the Bible and the whole range of translations of the Bible.

It seems that nothing is left out: feminism rates an article as does the influence of the Bible on the work of Jung and Freud.

For some, a useful resource will be the clues it gives to some unnamed biblical characters, but which later tradition has named, for example, Cain's wife.

The very size of the book, nearly 900 pages, means that it is good value. Added value lies in the wonderful set of maps showing all the important details of the Holy Land.

Here, then, is a resource to be treasured and respected. It will serve well our preachers, those who teach at any level in local programs of Christian education, as well as giving a breadth of information about matters biblical for those times of private study. ❖

Classifieds

IN MEMORIAM

ADDICOTT (BRODIE) Loving memories of my parents, Jean (who died 9 June 1994) and Bob (6 April 1993). Dear Mum and Dad—"May the Lord watch between me and thee, whilst we are absent one from the other." —Glenda

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Rep and 9/96

Church News

NSW

BATHURST (Keith Morgan) 5 May saw recommencement of the years 3-6 youth group for 1995 with five new & enthusiastic leaders ... Ladies breakfast held at church 6 May, very well attended. Vicki Brooks spoke on the theme "Prayer" ... Plans under way to increase seating capacity of chapel with minor renovations in hand ... Men's prayer weekend 26-27 May.

Qld

BRIEBE ISLAND (Colin Smith) Appreciation shown at gathering for Les & Dorothy Armstrong's interim ministry. Bruce & Connie Roberts retired from ministry, but staying in membership at Briebe Island. Church shared in "thank you" luncheon ... Colin & Ailsa Smith welcomed at church dinner. Colin's induction service held 2 April by Alan Hermann ... Easter services well-attended, especially "Sunrise" service on beach followed by BBQ breakfast ... Participated in Evangelism Seminar with Graham Agnew.

TOOWOOMBA NORTH (Daryl Thorpe, Frank Langford) Name change from Harlaxton to Toowoomba North to extend ministry to growing north side of city ... "User Friendly" seminar with Alan Hermann ... John & Ina Grant led to work in Wardell, NSW, with Aborigines ... Newcomers' dinner enjoyed by many ... Men's Society dinners with guest speakers Ron Watson (March), Russell Cooper (May) ... Shopping Centre sausage sizzle outreach followed with night concert by YFC band "This Way Up".

SA

COWANDILLA (Wayne Shepherd) Easter Experience 1995 shared with Mile End. Palm Sunday services, service of shadows, Christian Passover celebration, Good Friday service, Easter Sunday services, picnic Easter Monday ... Men's & Women's Fellowships going strong ... Older group in Kids Club & a young adults group started ... Lunch break special held in May ... Bible studies continuing ... Working bee well-attended ... International dinner & concert held. **MURRAY BRIDGE** (Morrie Muryard) "Sunday at Seven", held in the park December-February, resulted in three decisions. Their baptisms followed later. These special meetings continue in church hall first Sunday of month ... Fellowship sorry to lose valuable ministry of Cathy McNamara ... Basic

budget cookery classes continuing with Wendy Hattam ... Visiting speakers from Leprosy Mission & Bible Society ... Minister concludes ministry end 1995.

Vic

MILDURA (K. Simington, N. Meredith, D. Clark) Kevin Simington inducted as senior minister ... 17 young people attended Wonderfest '95 in Sydney ... Planned giving program led by Ron Brooker brought positive responses, especially from newer members ... Passover Meal celebrated pre-Easter ... Easter youth camp at Lake Benanee. 10 commitments ... Mission Convention 6-7 May with Russell Briggs (APCM) & Moffat Zimba (CCTC). **CASTLEMAINE** (Ross Bourdon) Church relocation program well under way. Plans in train for special final service at Campbell St property ... Church gearing up for 125th anniversary ... Monthly missionary focus continues with most recent being CBMI ... Mid-year church meeting to look at worship issues ... Steady stream of first-time attenders heartening.

DAWSON ST, BALLARAT (Darren Kittel, Tracey Davidson) Easter "Service of Shadows", reflections on cross of Christ, 14 April ... Discovery Classes commenced 1 May ... MOPS (Mothers Of Preschoolers) commenced 2 May. 15 mothers & 23 children attended ... Youth group car wash raised \$159 for end of year camp ... Fishes & Loaves Network "cook up" 13 May produced 500 meals for needy in Ballarat ... Block purchased cnr Ringroad & Western Highway for relocation.

KANIVA (Paul Bauer) Several members attended Global Mission meetings at Bordertown ... Harvest Thanksgiving offerings of \$3,300 to COCOA, balance to missionary project & other causes. Goods to Community Care ... Congregation enjoyed Don Langley's exciting report of Gideons' work in Brazil ... CWF arranged Mother's Day morning service with members participating, also Friendship Afternoon, mainly for those living alone.

LATROBE TERR, GEELONG (David Jones) Church saddened at sudden passing of Mrs Grace Rowe ... David Jones' morning messages on the Beatitudes & evening on topical issues creating interest & appreciation ... Band contributed to Mother's Day service & Sunday School children presented mothers with card & floral magnet, some members paid trib-

ute to their mothers ... Three Bible study groups & three youth groups meet regularly.

BORONIA (Keith Milne, Darryn Hickling) Keith settled back after year as Conference President ... Good Friday service combined with Uniting Church, both churches later joining Anglicans & Baptists in March of Witness ... CWF organised State CWF Teddy Bears Picnic ... Darryn & Anita Hickling received Bachelor of Theology degree ... Merryl Blair (CCTC), John Gilmore (Mulgrave & CCTC), Dr Harvey Miller recent speakers ... Study groups continuing & groups leading some evening services.

MOUNT CLEAR (Dale White, James Leviston) Church worship team provided music for Vic-Tas Conference Celebration in Melbourne ... Youth "Slave Auction" raised \$500 for youth ministry ... Nathan Malpass won Australian U16 badminton championship ... Mother's Day service led by Lorikeets (CWF) group ... Minister speaker at State CWF camp at Halls Gap ... Recent guests included Les Gason (Gideons), David Best (FEBC) & Youth Drama group from Mooroolbark Baptist Church.

BURWOOD (Peter Wing-Tang) Visiting speakers Keith Milne (Conference President) & Brian & Julia Coates (missionaries from Zaire) ... Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday services very meaningful ... During Mother's Day service floral posies were given to newest, oldest and visiting mothers ... Church saddened by the death of Ivy Coates ... Young mothers Bible study group commenced ... Ray & Jean Grayden, Perc Ruff now recovering after operations.

TOOTGAROOK (M. Giezendanner) Easter services well-attended. Offering for COCOA ... 10 attended CWF Conference ... Eric & Val Best, together with minister, delegates to Conference. Val brought comprehensive report. Much appreciated ... Inter-church Bible studies commenced 1 May for six weeks ... June Andrews brought informative news of Hospital Visitation to CWF ... Ian Tippet, speaker 30 April, brought us up-to-date on Community Care ... Several members sick.

DANDENONG (P. Pitts, R. May) Prayer breakfast Sunday morning 6 May ... Family breakfast & worship service 21 May ... Faith healing & reconciliation service 7.30 pm, 30 April ... Church expresses deepest sympathy to Sue & Bruce Crilly on the tragic death of Michelle. Michelle was 14 years old ... Youth outreach weekend 16-18 June. This weekend has been set aside

to focus on youth ministry in our church.

ASHBURTON (I. Lawson) Members participated in "dreaming" (planning) session after Sunday lunch together ... Follow-up, Every Members Present Sunday & further discussion ... Presentation by Jewish Christians of "Celebrating the Messiah" created interest ... Minister conducted Tenebrae service Maundy Thursday ... Local school children participated in Easter competition—"What does Easter mean to you?" ... Encouraged by visit from Richmond members, Joan Pye speaker ... Ken Barton speaker when minister ill & on holiday.

WA

BRUCE ROCK (R. Lawton) David Jolly & family farewelled after three-year ministry with Bruce Rock/Merredin ... Both churches commenced separate ministries after 22 years of sharing pastor ... Conference President welcomed Randall Lawton to Bruce Rock ... Roger Arnold home after university studies ... David Lewis commenced WA Bible College ... Mukinbudin hosted Eastern Wheatbelt Ladies Conference ... Interdenominational "Blessing of the Plough" service ... Plans for family camp, October at Northam.

NORTHAM (David Akesson) New minister, David Akesson, inducted by Des Croot at morning service. Fellowship lunch followed ... Basil Milner & Geoff Oliver in hospitals in Perth ... Special service to honour mothers on Mother's Day ... Church now has eight Bible study groups.

KALAMUNDA (David Shalley) Mid-year mission, 26-28 May, Barry Waldeck, APCM, guest speaker ... Ozreach Forum held to discuss developing local outreach ... Special Mother's Day service with many folk giving loving tributes to wives & mothers ... Benjamin Winter, baby son of Jan & David, dedicated ... Drug Awareness seminar held 14 June ... Youth group 24-hour basketball bash raised \$1,300 for missionary families.

FREMANTLE (J. Caporn) Morning worship Mother's Day conducted by ladies. Kaye Caporn presided ... CWF presented program at Illawong Village where several members reside ... Guest speaker at morning service on 21 May was Robert Webb, chaplain of local High School ... Sympathy expressed to Ruth Connelly (deaconess), whose sister, Margaret, died on 18 May, aged 81. John Caporn conducted thanksgiving & funeral service at church & cemetery.

Leadership

About style, not gender, says NSW president

(ABC-ARPA) Questions about leadership in the church should not be focused on gender, but on the kind of leadership the church should have.

That's the view of Dr Carol Preston, who was installed as the first female president of the NSW conference of the Churches of Christ in Sydney on 6 May.

Leadership issues have been a focus of Dr Preston's work for the past nine years as Dean of the Institute for Contemporary Church Leadership, run by the church in Wollongong.

Dr Preston told David Busch on ABC Radio National's Religion Today program on 4 May that a correct biblical understanding of leadership meant that men and women alike could serve Christ equally in any roles that were biblical.

The problem was, she said, that the church had created leadership roles not modelled on the biblical pattern but on power and authority. The question was not whether women should fill those positions but whether those positions should exist at all.

"I see that God has gifted women in many areas and, as far as the tasks go, I don't see any task or role in the church that women could not be just as gifted as men," Dr Preston said.

"My understanding is that leadership is about servanthood, and the example of Christ is about servanthood, and I would really like to see the churches change in their understanding of leadership.

"We've created a bit of a monster for ourselves. We've put roles and titles and positions on people that give them a great deal of power, and that is often abused.

"That's unnecessary, because it's not a biblical pattern for the church. Women can do any of the tasks in service of the church that are there biblically.

"As far as the roles go that women mightn't be able to be in, I really don't think men ought to be in either. It's a question of power and abusing authority.

"The structure of the church, as an organisation, has brought about problems more to do with the way we've structured the church, than whether it's a man's or woman's role. If we do understand (leadership) rightly, then men and women alike can serve Christ in every way."

Dr Preston said some people saw her role of President as being head of the church, but she disagreed, seeing it rather as one of serving, encouraging and representing.

"I feel sad that people get upset and there'll be strife about these things," she said. "But I'm just hoping that by the grace of God I can handle that with dignity, and trust that I can do God's will and thereby help people to move from the painful positions that they're in."

NSW is the third Churches of Christ conference to have a woman president. The Victorian-Tasmanian conference was the first to do so in 1990, and installed its second, Mrs Pat Greig, on April 30. South Australia elected Mrs Marge Dredge in 1991.



The Last Word

God gives his wrath by weight, and without weight his mercy.

—George Herbert

What do you get if you cross the Atlantic with the *Titanic*?

About half-way.

How did I learn to dance? Simple—when I grew up there were six kids and only one bathroom.

I love jogging, except for the part after you put on your runners.

Years ago, I used to dream about the salary I'm starving on now.

I'm engaged to marry an Irishman. Oh, really?

No, O'Reilly.

A true gentleman is someone who knows how to play the bagpipes—but doesn't.

A psychiatrist is someone who will listen to you as long as you don't make sense.

The minister was invited to speak at the monthly Rotary Club lunch. Also present was a reporter from the local paper, who enjoyed as much as anyone the minister's light-hearted ecclesiastical anecdotes.

At the end of his speech, the minister approached the reporter and begged him not to print too many of his stories as he wished to use them at future local functions.

To the minister's dismay, when he read the newspaper a few days later, the reporter had written, "The minister made an excellent speech, but most of the stories he told cannot be repeated here."



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