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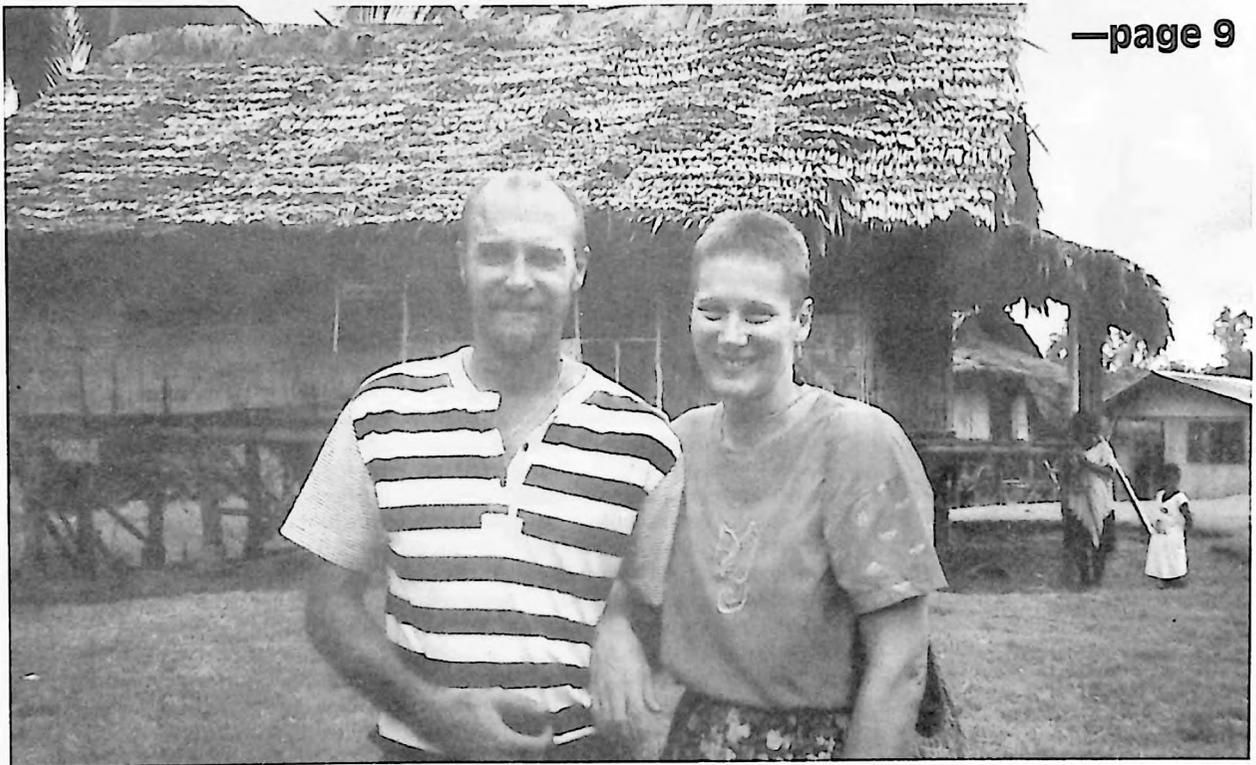
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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

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Guest Editorial

Church of the Frontier

Maurice Hodgson

Don Stewart's recent Pamphlet on the history of our churches in Queensland ("AC", 19 June) led me to think about the culture of our churches. Churches of Christ began in the United States on the frontier. Here, amongst pioneering peoples, our early leaders were very successful in evangelising amongst people who were moving out, who were on the edges. It seems to me that, in many ways, in Australia we have incorporated this into our church culture and remain a church of the frontier. We are—or have been—very good at being at the forefront of certain aspects of evangelism and of church life. Looking at a map of our churches in Sydney (and, I think, of the other capitals) you will see a predominance of "dots" (representing our congregations) around the edges. This is where people are moving into new areas; we are still on the frontier. This frontier thinking seems to affect us in many different ways and is one of the reasons we have been less successful in inner city areas and in older suburbs where our methodologies are not particularly appropriate.

A sad truth facing us in the last 20 or so years is that we do not seem to be as effective as we used to be. Many "answers" have been suggested for this. Our "culture of the frontier" has not been amongst the answers given so far as I am aware. Yet it seems that, in remaining "culturally true", we have found ourselves presenting a message that has not had the same ready response of previous years. Perhaps it's because the Australian culture had (and has) changed and we have not; our church culture has remained static in a changing world.

Interestingly, in his recently released book "Reinventing Australia", Hugh Mackay offers us some valuable insights. The first chapter of that book sets the scene for Mackay's analysis of Australia's current situation. He talks of the high level of stress being experienced and suggests (p. 6) that the changes of the last 20 years make us all pioneers. That chapter concludes with the words: "The Big Angst is no fun, but at least it is no mystery either: we have simply lost our bearings."



Pioneers who have lost their bearings! Surely that presents to a "Church of the frontier" an enormous possibility. Part of our original success as a Movement was because we offered people something new and vibrant to take with them into their pioneering. We offered a new understanding of faith and life. For those pioneers

the Restoration message provided the resources to gain a sense of direction and inspiration in the uncertainties of a changing world. Now we have a similar opportunity. Taking this opportunity will mean offering Australia's new pioneers: resources for finding their own directions (not providing simplistic answers); strength to endure in stressful circumstances (not rigid dogma); understanding of life which enables renewed discovery of individuals' sense of identity in a world that is constantly and rapidly changing (not restating yesterday's identity).

We will be able to do this as we remain true to the spirit of the Restoration movement. That includes the wonderful insights that we worship and follow the God who is the God of today and tomorrow; that we are not bound by, or to, the past, nor are we committed to past "truths" but rather to the Eternal Truth which continually comes as new vision, new understanding, new equipping. As a hymn says: "The Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word".

Perhaps this opportunity is a special gift from God. For it is certainly the possibility of ministry out of weakness. From our cultural weakness as "Church of the Frontier" we are offered a new opportunity to share the gospel with new relevance. This will not excuse us from examining and reshaping our church culture, but does call our attention again to the graciousness of God.

Maurice Hodgson was appointed NSW Conference Secretary in April this year. For the past 20 years he has worked for Lifeline, the last 8 years as their National Executive Officer. Maurice and his wife, Una, are members of our Wollongong church. Maurice is interested in socio-cultural issues in church life.

Triple Seven FM

Licence delays



Christian-run radio station Triple Seven Communications Inc. held its third test broadcast in March this year. This was to show the government that they have the expertise, experience, equipment and enough public support for a full-time professional operation.

But a change of government this year mean a new broadcasting tribunal calling for further submissions and, ultimately, further delays, before one of the contending groups is granted that special licence. This will now be in 1995.

The dates for a further three-month test broadcast are 26 March–26 June 1994. As before, the program will be pre-evangelistic, targeting non-Christians. There will be a music mix of light hits, plus news, sports

and interviews. Trained telephone counsellors will be available to help inquirers or to connect them with their nearest church.

A Supporters' Dinner is planned for Friday 29 October 1993 at the Box Hill Salvation Army Citadel, featuring Fusion's national director, Mal Garvin. Book now and bring your friends.

General Manager, Bruce Upton reports that Triple Seven will soon receive a control room console. It is worth over \$6,000 and was recently donated by a country station. "We are rejoicing in this provision," he says, "and will install it in the Lambeth Lodge workshop in mid September.

Triple Seven's immediate needs are: \$70,000 for equipment, \$7,000 to complete the transmitter, a permanent office site and, of course, more supporters.

For bookings and inquiries call Jenni Howell or Bruce Upton at Triple Seven Communications on (03) 560 1700.

—Jenni Howell

Foundation Member Day

A happy, positive event



• Part of the foundation membership

On 5 September, the Church of Christ—Upper Yarra Region, Vic, celebrated Foundation Member Day. This was timed

to coincide with the second anniversary of services in the area. Eunice Reidy, representing the parent church at Mon-

Carnegie Partnership

Working together in outreach



• Mang Chung Cheong with a group of students at a recent service

This year the Carnegie, Vic, congregation has welcomed assistance from the Clayton church to help give Carnegie a broader base for outreach. Clayton church, through its senior minister Barry Cutchie, arranged a small team of people to work with Carnegie.

The Carnegie congregation is looking to reach out to the diverse population groups now living in the area. The team comprises students, an Anglo-Australian adult, and Mang Chung Cheong, who recently accepted Carnegie's invitation to become an elder.

The influx of new workers has given the church stimulus

and encouragement for its future ministry. The project has been developed in association with the Vic-Tas Department of Mission, Education and Development as part of a revitalisation program with churches in Melbourne's middle city.

Neville and Pam Wight have accepted the church's invitation to ministry beginning in 1994. The Wights have previously been members at North Balwyn and Ringwood. Both are completing theological studies. This year they are working with the Richmond congregation as associates with Marjan and Rod Beer.

trose, presented certificates to those forming the new congregation. Don Smith brought a greeting from DMED and three attractive banners were presented on behalf of the Boronia church.

Robyn Walsh, who is well known to the Upper Yarra fellowship, brought a personal greeting as well as one on behalf of the Ringwood church. It was a happy and positive day for the new church, which has 33 foundation members as well as 20–30 children and a wide circle of contacts. Many opportunities and challenges are being presented and, in seeking to take advantage of these, the

congregation has already adopted a constitution and a vision statement. Members of the Montrose church were very supportive on the day and a close association will continue.

Correction

In the 21 August issue we had an advertisement for a Christian Wholeness Counselling Centre in Brisbane.

In the advert we included a fax number for contact. This should have been (07) 398 2156. Unfortunately, the area code was printed as (03) instead of (07).

Tomorrow's Hymn Book Carlingford Courses

Our church's contribution

A Churches of Christ Hymn Book Committee was formed in 1987, following a Federal Conference directive to examine the feasibility of revising and updating the current book. Before long, it became apparent that the rationale for such an undertaking was at best, very shaky. Our churches form a minority group within Australian churches and our resources are, consequently, limited. With the abundance of new material flooding today's market and the changes throughout our churches demanding a different approach to the type of criteria needed to provide good hymnody for today's worship, it was generally felt to be beyond the bounds of our stewardship of money, time and effort.

At about the same time, it became known that the Australian Hymn Book was to un-

dergo a major revision with a vision to being both more up-to-date, and more representative of a wide cross-section of churches in Australia. Churches of Christ were invited to participate in the process of revision and the current representative on the National Ecumenical Church Music Committee was accepted as part of the Committee. Subsequently, a second representative was appointed, so that our churches now have a minister and a musician as part of the eighteen member committee, enabling Churches of Christ to have a say in the content and format of the book. At the next meeting, in November, the agenda is to give consideration to specific submissions from Churches of Christ. Strict principles have been laid down by the committee both for words and music, and it is not possi-

Module options expanded for 1994

The Churches of Christ in New South Wales Theological College will be offering an increased range of modules during 1994.

A total of 27 subjects will be taught at either the Carlingford or the Wollongong Ministry Centre.

A booklet setting out particulars is an insert in this copy of *The Australian Christian*.

We would welcome your enquiry or Registration (on the form in the booklet) to The Registrar, PO Box 140, Carlingford 2118. Phone (02) 630 7533.

ble in this brief notice to inform readers about the extensive deliberations which take place, nor the extent of scope within the proposed book. Should anyone wish to make any submissions ready for the November deliberations, please send the details and the source to either Shirley Ludgater, PO Box 226, Balwyn Vic 3103, or Warren Murray, 112 Kenneth Road, Manly Vale NSW 2093.

Within the next twelve months, a preliminary listing of hymns and music selections

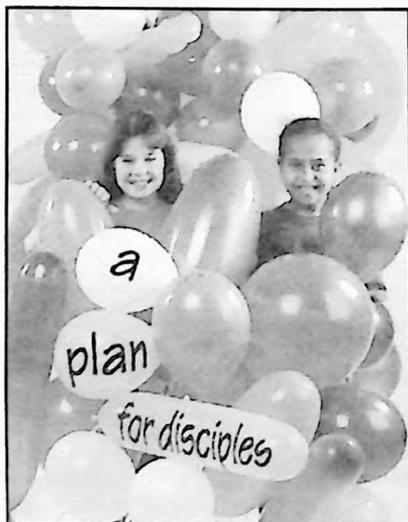
will become available for participating churches to make their comments. The planned period for publication is 1996-7. The dream is that the new book will not only better serve future Anglican and Uniting churches where it is now mostly used, but that it will provide a core source of hymnody, broad enough to well serve churches of most denominations. It may then provide a further commonality which can assist with ecumenical relationships—an exciting venture.

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The 7.30 Report

Mulgrave meeting



• Greg Elsdon bringing The 7.30 Report

Ninety-one ministers and elders from over 30 churches around Melbourne, and four all the way from Balaklava and Owen Community in SA, attended a 7.30 am Working Breakfast at the Churches of Christ Theological College, Mulgrave Vic, on 28 August.

The purpose of the breakfast was to promote the meaningful partnership between the college and the churches it exists to serve; to clarify the purpose of the college; to outline how it seeks to achieve its goals; to address the critical issue of the identification, encouragement and nurture of future leaders in our churches; and to respond to questions from representatives of our churches.

Principal Greg Elsdon explained that the College was committed to the task of preparing God's people for vital Christian ministry and mission in a needy world through:

- rigorous investigation of the faith
- development of ministry skills and disciplines, and
- spiritual and personal development

with all three dimensions interacting with one another in the context of the mission of the local church.

He stressed that whilst ministerial formation is a multifaceted and demanding process, it is challenging, enriching, refreshing and empowering. "But the college alone cannot 'make' ministers," Greg declared. "It requires the ongoing prayerful and practical support of the churches."

In particular, he appealed to ministers and elders to actively seek out from among their congregations committed men and women who have the gifts and graces appropriate for Christian ministry.

Such people should be nurtured by giving them every opportunity to express their gifts in public worship and practical ministry settings. At the appropriate time they should be challenged to reflect upon God's call upon their lives and to seriously consider the benefits of theological educa-

Past and Future

Movements at Canley Heights

In March this year the Canley Heights, NSW, church held a special service to reflect on the fact that they were no longer the Canley Heights Church of Christ.

The old church building has been sold and the church has been closed. A new church (the Wakeley Community Church (A Church of Christ)) has been established in a new suburban area.

The Canley Heights church was established in 1902, with the Stimson family being very involved in its formation. The building they used was even older, having been originally constructed by the Canley Vale Progress Association on land donated by William Stimson. Before the Church of Christ started meeting there, it was used as Council Chambers. Over the years, a number of buildings were added to the complex, with the new chapel

being constructed in 1972.

In 1988, church member Mrs E Edwards (nee Wakeley), after whom the new suburb of Wakeley was named, gave the NSW Conference a portion of her land.

With the increase of traffic in the area, the Canley Heights church had to sell half of their land for highway widening. The site, became rather busy, noisy and cramped for parking, so it was felt that God was leading the church to build in the new suburb.

The new building at 32-36 Box Rd, Wakeley has just started being constructed. The foundations were poured in the first week of September and the congregation hopes to be in the buildings early next year. Meanwhile, the church is meeting in a hall on the site of the old Canley Heights church which was purchased by a Spanish Baptist Church.

tion and ministerial training.

Those who come to college with that type of preparation, affirmation and support have a decided advantage over those who come without the endorsement of their local church leadership.

Greg also stressed the importance of practical experience in a student's ministerial formation. He encouraged ministers and leaders to offer church placements to intending Diploma in Ministry students, recognising that there is mutual benefit to be gained by stu-

dents and churches in such partnerships.

Obvious to all was the college's clear sense of purpose, the strong commitment to a broadly based and balanced program, and the strong evidence of optimism in the future.

Those in attendance will testify to the enjoyment, stimulation and challenge of the morning together.

This was the first of many such events where the college will seek to interact with the churches it serves.



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New Publications

From the Australian Board of Church Development and Education

The annual meeting of the Australian Board of Church Development and Education, held in late July, noted the forthcoming release of five new publications at National Conference. Three are studies for local church groups, following the successful range of 10 existing studies.

Jeff May has prepared material ideally suited to pre-Easter, *Journey to the Cross*; Greg Elsdon a study on the Sermon on the Mount, *A New Way of Living*; and Gordon Stirling has a study on the Letters to the Seven Churches of Revelation, *Maintaining The Glow*. Then there is a series of prayers for daily use by Bob and Marilyn Smith—*Lord, Here I Am Again*. Finally, *Harvest: The Idea for Our Time* by Don Smith, seeks to refocus the historic concepts of Churches of Christ for the next century, looking at priorities for our Christian life. These five new publications join the Board's existing list of 25 resources.

In the area of youth ministry, the Board approved in principle participation in a new youth leader training course to be available on an inter-church basis in 1994. A youth leader national network bulletin is planned. A study on secular music, by Gordon Barr, NSW, will also be available in 1994. A discussion to review national youth work is proposed.

The Year of the Family, 1994, will have special recognition, with the Board preparing resources and suggestions for churches to use throughout the year. The Board endorsed continuing participation in the Wollongong Spring Conference with plans in hand for the 1994 event. The 1992 Conference has had an outstanding response from the 350 participants. The representatives also acknowledged the contribution of Dr Cliff Warmbrunn following his decision to conclude his service with the Board as a member and its Chairman since 1984.

Graeme Sonsie

Part-time at Swan Hill



• Swan Hill's ministry team: Lindsay Mayes, Tim Green and Graeme Sonsie

On 1 August, Lindsay Mayes inducted Graeme Sonsie as a part-time member of the ministry team at Swan Hill, Vic. Graeme, a graduate from Kenmore Christian College, Qld, will serve three days a week, mainly in the areas of pastoral care, development of the church's small group program

and some administrative duties.

For 15 years, he and his wife Betty were missionaries in Papua New Guinea, Betty as a nursing sister and Graeme serving in a pastoral and technical role. On their return, they were involved in ministry with churches at Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and Gilgandra, NSW. They were among the foundation members of both Bathurst and Dubbo. The Sonsies moved to Swan Hill, from Dubbo, three years ago.

the Year of the Family in 1994.
—Caesar D'Mello
(Executive Officer, World Christian Action (Victoria))

1992-93 Christmas Bowl

Tremendous results

The Christmas Bowl has shown an increase despite our difficult economic times. This is especially true in Victoria, a state most affected by the recession.

At the end of July, the December 1992–November 1993 Christmas Bowl posted a total of \$2,306,069, nationally. This is a 7% increase over the same period the previous year.

In Victoria, the total was \$804,377, a 6% increase.

Members of Churches of Christ in Victoria increased their giving by 10% over the previous year. They contributed \$57,844. Nationally, the Churches of Christ figure was \$87,776.

This is truly a good result for

the partner churches and communities we assist. We are grateful for this, and acknowledge the generosity shown by our supporters, including members of Churches of Christ.

The theme of the Christmas Bowl later this year is "Living God's Family". It ties in with

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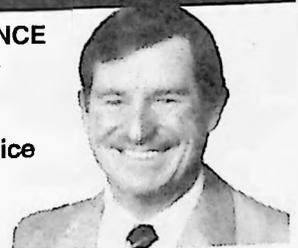
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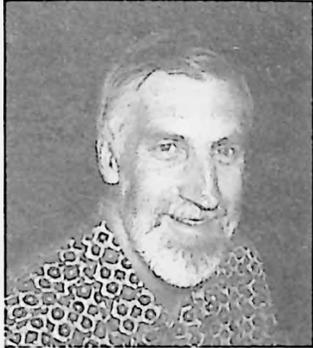


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AIS Chaplain's Report

Making an impact



• Peter Nelson

Peter Nelson the chaplain at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra revealed three very significant situations in his ministry. (Peter is also minister of the Ainslie, ACT, church)

The first is that he was invited onto the AIS Ethics Committee and his ministry at this level has involved him in one of the key decision making bodies at the Institute. Nothing is brought into the AIS unless this Committee voices its approval.

The second has been the enormous contribution Sanctuary Lodge has made to the chaplaincy ministry at the Institute. Sanctuary Lodge is a place of rest and recuperation on the NSW south coast in Moruya where many AIS athletes have visited.

Sanctuary Lodge is one of the many specialist ministries of the SLM (Specialised Life-Orientated Ministries Inc) as is the AIS chaplaincy.

"The provision of Sanctuary Lodge has made a real impact at the AIS. Many a time an athlete or athletes have returned to speak to me privately," Peter noted.

The third point in Peter's AIS chaplaincy report was that he considered it time for the National Board to give consideration to having a woman chaplain on the chaplaincy team. The Board, through the chairman Rev (Professor) Peter Thomson from Deakin University, responded positively to this recommendation.

New Treasurer

OMB appointment

The Overseas Mission Board has appointed Mark Criddle as its new treasurer.

Mark is married to Lyn and they have three children—Belinda (12), Lisa (10) and Kylie (10). Mark grew up, was baptised and married in the Brighton, SA, church. Currently, the family are members at the Happy Valley, SA, church, where they were foundation members in 1979. Mark has served the Happy Valley church as treasurer, Sunday School teacher and is currently an elder. When he was treasurer of the church, he was heavily involved in the church's building program which involved budgeting, fundraising and working closely with the State Conference office.

Mark is an accountant with a South Australian dairy com-

pany. He has experience in financial accounting, cost accounting, office management, administration and in the use of computers.

Apart from his involvement in his family and in the church, Mark's interest include sport, family history research and computers.



• Mark Criddle

Sent Forth

Calvin and Joyce Ma commissioned

Three very memorable services were held on Sunday 5 September at the Swanston Street Church Of Christ, Vic, to mark the setting apart and sending forth of Calvin and Joyce Ma for missionary service with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship in South Korea.

In the morning, a congregation in excess of 500 participated in a moving commissioning service. The theme of this service was "Serving as Senders" and Allan Webb, Senior Pastor, reminded the congregation, using the example of the Philippian church, of the sort of relationship which should exist between a missionary and a sending church. Among other things, a sending church prays, provides, communicates and visits. There is real partnership between the missionary who goes and the church which sends.

In the evening, another packed congregation participated in a memorable thanksgiving and recognition service. Five of the groups with whom Calvin and Joyce have had an intimate association each shared a testimony and a song.

Calvin's association with the church dates right back to 1975, when he first came to Melbourne from Hong Kong to do medicine. Joyce came in 1978 and they were married in 1983. Since 1988, they have been part of the Pastoral Team at Swan-

ston Street, serving first as Student Pastor throughout their three years at BCV and then as Associate Pastor since 1991. Calvin's specific ministry responsibility has been to work with and among overseas students. His particular calling to South Korea is to work with doctors and medical students with a view to challenging them toward missionary service.

Calvin and Joyce are the third of Swanston Street's associate pastors who, over recent years, have been commissioned and sent forth to the mission field. With their two children, Joan and Natalie, they will become part of a missionary family of 39 who are presently being supported by the church.

In Calvin and Joyce Ma, the church believes she is sending two of her choicest servants. Your prayers are encouraged for this very unique and special couple.



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Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to 200 words

Choruses

To the Editor,

In reply to Tertius ("AC" 7 August), some choruses may be terrible but there are many more that are beautiful and I find them very uplifting. We sing a few each week preceding the morning worship service and I think this is very beneficial. With the hymns we only sing the best ones and there are many of these too that are favourites with many people. Something that suits all occasions can be found in our own *Churches of Christ Hymnbook*.

The prayer you mentioned, "Let thy Grace Descend", I do not have a problem with because of what Scripture tells us. Jesus was taken up into the clouds and we have an eyewitness account of those who were present (Luke 24:51-53) plus many other Scripture references in both the OT and the NT, sights and sounds and voices coming from the heavens.

One never thinks of Jesus as being shut up in a church all week. He can be as close to us and as real as we want him to be. Surely he can and does become our companion. He travels with us wherever we may go (Rom. 8:35, Matt. 18:20, 28:20).

—Rita Tagg
(Chelsea, Vic)

Seniors' Ministry

To the Editor,

We have received numerous form letters to visitors as I have

been visiting round about the churches on Sundays. We have appreciated them personally and also because they reveal that our churches are concerned about following-up visitors.

But I write about our most recent letter acknowledging our visit, this time from the Mulgrave, Vic, church. It was not a form letter, but a handwritten, personal, chatty letter from Hazel Shaw.

We liked the letter because it was personal to us. We liked it even more because of its writer. I do not know Hazel's age, but she is probably Mulgrave's oldest member and she has found her ministry in writing to visitors.

Many elderly members can no longer serve in the ways in which once they did, for obvious reasons, but there are many new ministries that are appropriate to their senior years. Hazel Shaw has found hers. We have Kidsmin, Youth Ministry, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry. Maybe the next item on our church agendas could be Seniors' Ministry, discovering creative ministries within the constraints of advancing years.

—Gordon Stirling
(Boronia, Vic)

Literal or Metaphoric

To the Editor,

Many concerns of Biblical exposition are reliably resolved by recognition of metaphor, and by adherence to appropriate rules, such as "what is identical is always numerically one" and "metaphor is always numerically two or more, because metaphor is always a comparison".

Our difficulties are exacerbated by those philosophers who deny both rules, and then add the postulate that metaphor becomes identical with its source. The metaphor from the words of Jesus, "this (is) my blood of the New Covenant" (before He went to the Cross) is wrongly treated as literal, by incorrectly identifying the cup with His blood, instead of by using a comparison.

This does not deny the observation of Richards' *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936) that a word

may simultaneously support separate literal and metaphoric ideas. One word may primarily refer to literal and secondarily to metaphoric ideas, without saying the two are identical.

This is how Paul uses "baptised" in Rom. 6:3, where the primary idea is immersion in water, in time. Then the metaphoric use of "baptised", derived from this context, also relates the "baptised" into Christ's death apart from time.

—W.E. Hoffman
(Paradise Point, Qld)

The Editorial "Sic"

To the Editor,

May I comment on the editorial "sic" in my article, "Paul the Liberating Reformer" ("AC" 4 September).

The quote of 2 Cor. 3 was intentional as this passage on the new covenant was used by early Churches of Christ in debates with Seventh Day Adventists as to why we observe the Lord's day and not the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments. It was also used to ar-

gue against supporters of infant baptism who claimed that baptism was an extension of circumcision, and therefore applied to children of believers.

This passage helped Churches of Christ to see the clear distinction between the Old Testament and the New, and hence the stress on restoring the church of the New Testament.

Churches, on the whole, have not made the distinction between the Old and New Testaments that we have and in the early years our people were suspected of being heretical because of this. Hence the statement in the article that the New Testament (not the Old) is our only rule of faith. What I attempted to show in the three articles, "Behind Churches of Christ", is that reformers like Erasmus and Locke also held that view. It is important to make this point because the distinction has become less obvious in recent years.

—Bruce McIntosh
(Upper Yarra, Vic)

Letters to a Travelling Companion Worship

Dear Daniel,

It was good to read your latest letter. I found the detailed description of your recent annual church business meeting somewhat amusing. Deja vu, I guess! I am sorry to hear that you came to blows with some of the older members of your congregation over your imaginative proposal to foster a sense of community in worship. Although I agree with your sentiments, I do think that serving tea and coffee just prior to the sermon may be a bit radical for most people to cope with.

One of the realities of congregational life is that people with diverse worship tastes and preferences need to work creatively together to discover ways in which as many of their worship needs as possible can be met. This process requires a good deal of tolerance, patience and love.

Perhaps you could start by having a cuppa with those who opposed your suggestion and listen to their reasons why. Then they might be more willing to hear your point of view. Who knows, maybe together you will discover a way to achieve that sense of community in worship which is acceptable you all.

Incidentally, I don't think your friend's idea of "praying your opponents out" is a terribly good one (although, if you do try it, let me know if it works).

Regards until next time,
—Pastor Salt

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Health, Wealth and Happiness

Pam Hine

Before I was a Christian, my favourite toast was, "health, wealth and happiness, and the time to enjoy it". Now, here I am a Christian and on the mission field in PNG. A far cry from my previous life. We had been typical young DINKs (double income, no kids) and enjoyed most of the pleasures and indulgences which life had to offer.

Since being on the mission field, my attitudes have been greatly challenged. My health had gone out the window as I continued to get one sickness after another for about six months, our financial status had changed drastically, I was struggling my way out of depression and life was so busy with mission station responsibilities and constant interruptions, that there never seemed to be enough time to enjoy being in this beautiful country.

During a time of prayer and meditation I began to reflect on what true happiness really is. Many people, even some Christians in our western society eagerly strive to achieve a comfortable lifestyle, just as my toast suggests. Is that what we expect from God? Is that really what God promises?

First, health. I found it very interesting that in the NT there is only one reference to health. 3 John 2. On the other hand, there are 20-30 references to suffering (e.g. Rom. 8:17-18, 1 Peter 4:12). I have recently come



• Gary and Pam Hine

to realise that suffering is all a normal part of Christian growth and maturity. If we were all healthy, we would not need to trust God or lean on Him. We would not learn perseverance or mature in our Christian walk. But if we are prepared to take up the challenge and persevere in times of suffering, our faithful Lord will draw us closer and teach us many truths for our own benefit.

The story of the rich young man (Matt. 19:16-30) is a classic example

of Christ's attitude to wealth. Luke 12:33-34 is another good example. In western culture, wealth is seen as an end in itself, but it is a trap which cuts us off from God and the needy. The Bible teaches us to use our money wisely, for God's purposes, not to see how much we can accumulate for ourselves. If we direct our wealth towards others, we reflect the concern of Christ for their welfare.

Happiness, I did not find was used greatly in the NT, but the word rejoice is used often (e.g. Luke 10:20b, Rom. 5:2b, Phil. 4:4 and Rev. 19:7). The Bible is not saying rejoice in health, wealth or happiness, but simply rejoice in the Lord regardless of your situation or circumstances.

The final part of my toast was to have time to enjoy the other three aspects. Is there ever enough time? Eccl. 3:1-8 tells us that there is a time for everything, but it is all under God's control. Is our time really in God's hands or are we experiencing the frustrations of try-

ing to organise our own time our own selfish way?

Recently, I heard an experienced missionary speaking, "How often have you resented the knocks at the door just as you start a meal, the many small requests that come throughout each day and the needs that have to be met?" she said. What she shared was this: time is God's, not yours, and therefore it is not up to you to be possessive or selfish with it. We often see people as demanding of our time, but it is not our time, it is God's.

What a challenge this was for me, but what a wonderful change in attitude this has brought about. Now I see every person who comes to my door as sent by God for a purpose. I have learnt the peace of allowing God total control of every minute of the day.

So what of my favourite toast (health, wealth and happiness and the time to enjoy it)? Well:

My health is in the Lord's hands.

My wealth is for His use.

My happiness is to rejoice in the Lord regardless and,

Time is not mine, but the Lord's to use as he desires.

I had previously been seeking fulfilment in various things and actions. Food, alcohol, entertainment, people, solitude, work, money, clothes, home decor, family and others. But is there anything on earth now that could ever sufficiently satisfy the deep longing in my soul which I have tried to fill with other things? The answer is no and the explanation is found in Phil. 3:20-21, because my soul was meant for higher things, it can never be satisfied by material possession, feelings of euphoria, indulgences or escapes. Only when that glorious day comes, when I see the Lord face to face and dwell with Him eternally, will my soul be fully satisfied and truly happy as in His presence I praise and glorify Him.

I began to reflect on what true happiness really is

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Books

Sea To Shining Sea

by Michael Phillips (Bethany House Publishers)

This is the fifth in a series of six novels under the general heading *The Journals of Corrie Belle Hollister*.

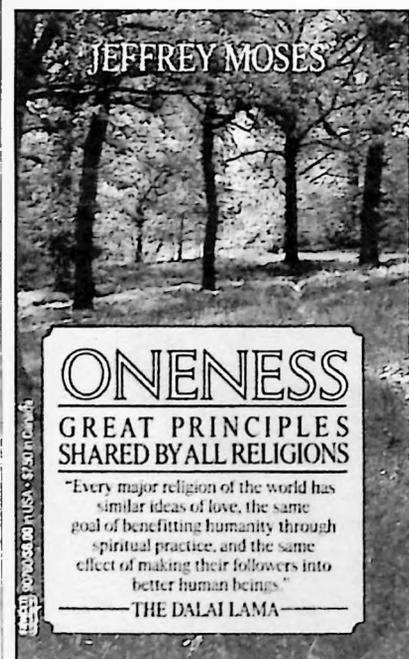
In this book, Corrie, now an established freelance writer (an unusual occupation for a woman in 1860), becomes involved in the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency of the United States and in the tragedy of the Civil War which follows. Along the way, she and her father are ambushed by Indians in a lonely Pony Express station. An epilogue to the book explains that much of the historical detail in the book is accurate.

I found the book generally interesting though, in spots, somewhat contrived. It seemed at times that the characters were being bent to the will of the story, rather than experiencing a perfectly normal flow of events. However, the exciting bits are genuinely exciting.

There is adventure, humour and love. There is a Christian emphasis throughout the book, but it is a very gentle one, with no "moral" being pointed. The family about which the story is woven is Christian, and responds to the unfolding events of the story from this viewpoint, and in this context there is discussion of issues of faith and behaviour.

Previous books in this series are a collaboration between Michael Phillips and Judith Pella. The series is distributed in Australia by Christian Marketing.

—Alan Williams



Oneness: Great Principles Shared by All Religions

edited by Jeffrey Moses (Fawcett Columbine)

What are the important commonalities of the world's great religions? What do Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Sikhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Islam and Confucianism have in common?

Jeffrey Moses attempts to answer these questions in a valuable compilation of wisdom from the scriptures of these various religious traditions.

Affirming the religiousness of all peoples, he has ordered insights from the major

faiths under 29 different subject headings.

The categories are as diverse as, "The Golden Rule" and "There is One God"; to "Do Not Harm Anything" and "Man is Created in God's Image".

The work concludes with representative prayers from each religion, and a questionable chronology citing dates of texts and the lives of contributors.

The reader will be impressed by the similarity of sentiments expressed by the various faiths. Nevertheless, the work appears to have been compiled from a discernibly Christian perspective,

as many of the category headings are direct quotations from the New Testament.

This would be a useful little resource for readers interested in comparative religion, or those seeking to understand the common ground of the faiths expressed in a multi-cultural society.

—Garry Harris

Finding The Path—The Search for Spiritual Reality

by Roger Forster (Inter-Varsity Press, Frameworks Series)

Finding the Path by Roger Forster is, as the title suggests, an invitation to a deeper and more real faith. A reworking of an earlier publication, Forster presents the search for relevant faith by exploring seven themes, such as, "Who needs God", "To Hell with God", "Don't talk about Sin" and "A Beautiful People".

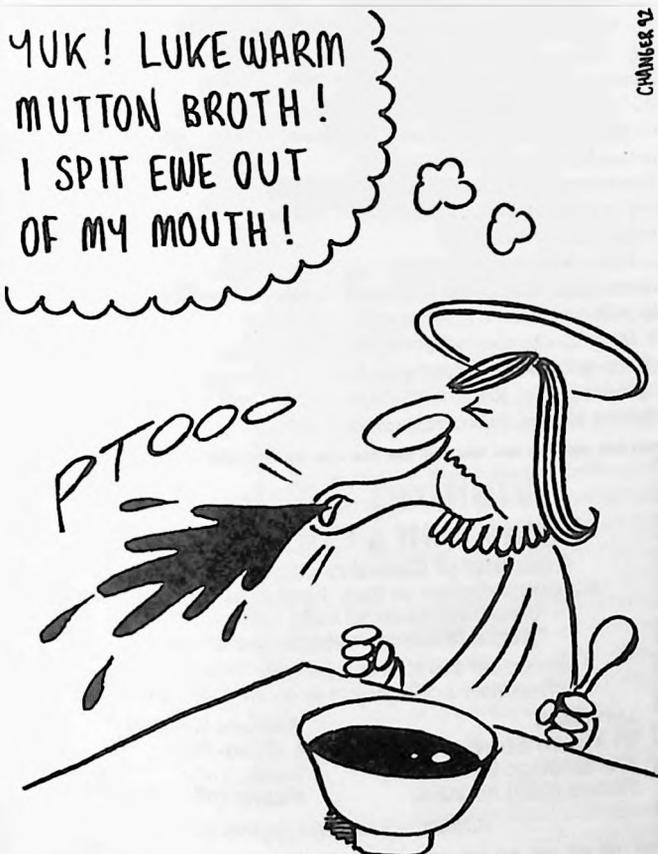
It is a relatively brief, easy to read and well laid out publication. Aimed at the everyday reader, Forster invites us to consider the issues he raises and to make our own responses. Such issues are explored with minimal sermonising and by linking our experiences of life, Scripture and the world. His hope is that we will find, "truer love, a deep sense of meaning and some direction and purpose in life".

This he achieves, particularly in the final chapter where he concludes that the life God gives us is aimed at creating and producing something!

I recommend Forster's book, as an excellent basis for discussion, small group study or as a starting point for someone wanting to dig a little deeper into their faith. I am using as a basis for a series of messages in evening services.

—John Gilmore

The Angelic Verses—Daniel Changer



Rebellion! ...or is it something else?

Don Stewart

I have watched as the church at Margaret Street, Toowoomba, has sustained a split in which about 80 have moved out to form a new congregation called Garden City Church of Christ, which is seeking association with conference.

From Gympie has come the news of the Monkland folk desiring to separate from the Gympie church and to form a separate congregation. Again I understand that they are seeking association with conference.

I have been told of the fracture of the new Mount Warren Park church into two separate factions meeting in different suburbs of Beenleigh.

The Caloundra church, which had been showing promise and had recently engaged a minister, has, with the encouragement of the elders, split off about 50% of the congregation, who will now start a new congregation meeting in Caloundra and calling themselves Suncoast Community Church—a Church of Christ, also seeking association with conference.

I have talked recently with younger ministers who, while they profess their love for Christ and for ministry, are so disillusioned by the leaders of the church in which they have

served that they do not wish to continue in ministry.

In March, I listened to a weeping family tell me how they were ordered by an elder to leave the church and not come back. Today they worship in a Uniting Church.

The other night, I listened for an hour as a church member poured out his soul about what the elders of his church had done to him and that there was no way that he would be going back to "that" church. His is not an isolated case.

As a conference officer and the Executive Director of the Social Service Department it is important that I keep my ear to the ground about what is happening throughout the

churches, because I see my role to be that of a servant of the churches in the provision of care ministry to those in need. What I hear is that there are others of our churches that are in a state of tension about the leaders within their church, so the result may be further splits.

So I ask myself, "What have we got here?" There is a common thread that keeps appearing, or, rather, is strongly spoken of, often with a sense of bitterness, and that is the word "elders"!

Is it rebellion against the elders, or is it something else?

I guess it is "rebellion", but then I have seen a different kind of rebellion going on particularly in our northern Brisbane churches for over a decade or more in which people faced

with strong elders have simply left and gone somewhere else or nowhere else. These churches have slowly slipped, or are slipping, into decline. They will take a long time to finally die out, but without a miracle there is little chance of revival or new life.

I confess that I can not see much hope for these dying churches. But the new kind of rebellion is different. I am an eternal optimist—how can one be otherwise in the light of the

Resurrection. At least there is life in the new rebellion. There is a desire for something that is different. A desire to make a different new start.

I really do not want to go into my understandings of all these rea-

sons for what is occurring. I also do not wish to take sides in the conflicts, nor be the judge of right and wrong. Being on the Conference Executive one is made aware from all sides of what those involved perceive the problem to be. What is fascinating is that they all tend to blame the Conference Executive for what has happened or what they thought that the Executive was going to do. It is hard to stay objective in that climate and it is very hard on those who seek to serve the Lord through that position. The poor General Secretary of Conference has copped it from everyone.

There are those who want Conference Executive to condemn the ones who are rebelling and the ones called the

rebels, to condemn the elders. All seem to think that the Conference Executive have to solve it. They can't and shouldn't! The solutions lie locally in the resolution of relationships.

At the National Conference Council we shared these situations with the other state conferences and their word to us was interesting, because I know that some of them have gone through difficult times too. Their word to us was one of hope. They indicated to us that in their experience church splits have an important positive side, and some of the splits go on to grow as significant churches, often leaving behind a stump that does not and could not grow because of entrenched leaders. They strongly suggested to us to accept the splits into conference as new churches.

Maybe they are like me—just optimists!

I believe we have a problem here. Is it rebellion—or is it something else?

Are these rebels out to simply destroy the church?

If that were so, why do they want to form a new church and associate with the conference?

Could it be that we have some problems with "eldership," with "leadership"?

I have felt for a long time that of all the things that the old restorationists affirmed there was one area that they got wrong. I don't blame them for that because I appreciate so much else that they got right, and they were strongly influenced by their times.

At that time everyone was arguing for what was the right form of church government. The Anglo-Catholics argued for a single form of hierarchical leadership topped by the Bishop. The Presbyterians argued for a single form of collec-

Continued on page 13

So I ask myself, "What have we got here?" There is a common thread ...

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Happenings

Some 60,000 Orthodox Christians reside in the Holy Land—the overwhelming majority of them Greek Orthodox. Like other religious communities, they are recognised by the Government of Israel and, beyond enjoying complete and guaranteed freedom of worship, have their own religious council and courts, recognised by law, with jurisdiction over all religious affairs and matters of personal status.

For the second year in succession, the Australian Christian Book of the Year has been won by Geoffrey C. Bingham; this year with *Laughing Gunner* (Troubadour Press Inc). The 1993 Children's Book Award went to *Toby's Riddle and Other Stories* by Joan Bartlett (Albatross Books) with the 1993 Design Award winner being *Living Reflections* by Ian Morris and Chris Spiker (Lutheran Publishing House) with Graeme Cogdell as graphic designer. The Australian Christian Literature Society organises these awards each year.

A hasty inventory has led library officials at the Russian National Library to conclude that over 35 medieval Jewish manuscripts have been stolen, probably over a period of years. Librarians believe they know who stole the manuscripts, which are 250–700 years old, but the suspect, a former National Library employee, has not been charged and now lives abroad. The stolen documents include Torah scrolls, Talmudic commentaries, marriage contracts and books of Psalms and prayers dating back to the 13th century. At least two of the missing documents have surfaced, one at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and another recently in New York, where \$10 million was being asked for the piece.

The Korean Evangelical fellowship has announced a 12 point code of ethics for ministers in their country. The code states that ministers should not "pos-

sess excess property and their income should not far exceed the average income of the congregation". The KEF statement says ministers should be faithful to their families and free from sexual immorality. They should "lead in preserving the natural environment and should not pollute nature".

Rev Tim Costello, minister of the St Kilda, Vic, Baptist Church, who became a local councillor to do something about housing for the poor, is now St Kilda's mayor.

Trans World radio, after 15 years of broadcasting into India from Sri Lanka, Guam and Eastern Russia, receives an average of 50,000 letters per month in response to its broadcasts. An independent survey showed they had 3 million listeners in the country.

The Director of the New Jersey Council on Compulsive Gambling has said that the attempts to rejuvenate Atlantic City by legalising gambling had failed. "Atlantic City was a slum 15 years ago, and today it's a slum with 12 casinos," he said. He added that corruption generated by the casinos was the cause of much of the city's malaise; with crime, prostitution and public officials taking bribes.

20 Protestant churches, 17 so-called ultra-dogmatic (mainly Protestant) organisations and a series of parallel religions are listed under these three headings in an extremely confidential report drafted by the Greek National Intelligence Agency for Information. The "enemies of the state" were identified in an article published in the Greek daily newspaper *Eleftherotypla* on 5 August. These include the Pentecostal Apostolic Church, Crossroads Christian Centre, the Church of God, the Evangelical Baptist Church, Church of Christ, the Brethren and the Free

Evangelical Church. Those identified as "ultra-dogmatic organisations" include the Greek Missionary Union, Gideons, Pan-Hellenic Reformed Christian Brethren, Roman Catholics, Adventists, Uniates and the Hellas television channel.

Patricia St John, author of *The Tanglewood's Secret*, *Treasures of the Snow*, and many other well-known books for children, died on 16 August, aged 74.

The Russian Parliament has voted for the second time in two months to impose restrictions on Russian churches and foreign missionary groups. Observers said the Parliament's move increases pressures on President Boris Yeltsin to favour the Russian Orthodox Church by signing the measure. Yeltsin deferred signing an amended version of the 1990 Law on Freedom of Conscience and religion passed in July and recommended changes. But the Parliament countered with even more restrictive new amendments that were passed 27 August. The new measures will be sent to Yeltsin, but it may also take effect without his signature.

Two years ago when Ross and Jean Taber's son was dying in Australia's leading infectious diseases hospital, Fairfield Hospital, Melbourne, they needed a place to go for quiet reflection and solace. Fairfield Hospital, however, is one of the few hospitals in Victoria not to have a chapel on its campus. A \$100,000 appeal to build an inter-faith chapel in the grounds is being organised by friends, family and staff. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and should be sent to Fairfield Hospital Inter-faith Chapel Appeal, Fundraising Office, Fairfield Hospital, Yarra Bend Rd, Fairfield 3078.

Dennis Howlett, national coordinator of Ten Days for World Development in Canada, has been invited

to Australia by the churches group of the Rainbow Alliance (Vic). He has been involved in working for economic justice in Canada and the Third World. Recently he has been involved in coalition building for political and social change with secular as well as church organisations. His visit is scheduled for 13–29 November with time being spent in Victoria, Tasmania, Sydney and Brisbane. Details from Alan Hardie (03) 850 4828.

Listeners are responding in their thousands to the Bengali programs of the FEBC (Far East Broadcasting Company) which are heard in the Indian state of West Bengal and neighbouring Bangladesh. In February 5,306 letters were received in response to the programs. This doubles the figure for 1992.

There is to be a welcome to Archbishop Desmond Tutu at Wesley Uniting Church, Lonsdale St, Melbourne at 6 pm on 6 October. Joan Pye, Churches of Christ, is presiding over this public meeting and all are welcome to attend.

A survey of teenagers' involvement with the occult has shocked some church groups in Britain. The survey, conducted by the Christian Research Association in Britain, revealed that 30% of teenagers had dabbled in some way with the occult. The figure for Christian teenagers was 10%. The survey asked questions gauging involvement with such things as ouiji boards, tarot cards and astrology.

In New Zealand, the Invercargill telephone directory's front cover illustration this year is a woodblock, hand coloured illustration featuring *Proverbs 27:19* "It is your own face that you see reflected in the water and it is your own self that you see in your heart". (Good News Bible). The design was the work of artist Anne-Marie Hamilton.

Demos Shakarian, founder and president of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, died on 23 July, aged 80.

According to the Bible Society in Jordan, a newspaper which ran an advertisement offering the story of the birth of Jesus was swamped with responses. The ad was so successful that the Jordanian newspaper sent out a desperate plea for someone to help answer enquirers phoning the newspaper. 8,500 copies of the Scripture portion were distributed.

The Bible Society in Cyprus has received an order from the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church for 50,000 New Testaments to be provided in November. "Considering the size of our country, this would be the equivalent of distributing millions of New Testaments in countries like Germany or Great Britain" said Jacob Yiacomou, the Bible Society's Executive Secretary.

The first-ever Christian drama festival to be held in Estonia has been hailed with delight. The festival, arranged by the Estonian Bible Society and the Parnu Agape Centre, saw about 130 professional and amateur dramatists from 11 countries present a wide range of performances, shows, workshops and concerts.

More people come to faith in Christ gradually than in a sudden conversion, according to two British surveys. And most men were led to Christ by their spouse or partner, minister and/or Christian friend. Finding Faith Today, a survey of over 500 adult Christians in the UK found that 69% of those questioned described their journey to faith as "gradual" and 31% as "sudden". Sudden conversions were exceptions even among evangelical Christians. This gradual experience was said to take anything from 1 day to 42 years, with many seeing it as an ongoing process which is not yet finished.

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Robert Campbell Edwards

Tea Merchant Benefactor

Robert Campbell Edwards was a prominent member of Churches of Christ, first in Victoria, and later in New South Wales. He was a tea merchant of Anglo-Irish ancestry, born at a country property, "Three Trees", near Londonderry, Ireland, 19 April, 1862. He died in 1946. As a successful astute businessman, he was energetic, but remarkably modest, dispensing his charitable acts without looking for personal commendation. He was seen as a "Christian gentleman who did good solely for goodness' sake".

His family set up the Robert Campbell Edwards Charitable Trust in Melbourne in 1922. A similar, but smaller, Trust was set up by Robert Campbell Edwards in Sydney, 22 September, 1933, under the title, "The Campbell Edwards Foundation", and registered under the NSW Companies Act, 1899-1918, as a company limited by guarantee and not having a capital divided into shares.

R.C. Edwards played an active part in Churches of Christ work from the late 1800s onwards. For example, he was Victorian Conference President in 1900, a member of the Victorian Home Mission Committee, and, for several years, was a member of the Board of Management of the newly-founded College of the Bible.

Migration

Living in Ireland and tragically widowed in 1862, Grace Anna Edwards was later persuaded by her brother to migrate to Australia as he himself had done. As a result of potato famines, economic conditions were bad in Ireland and Australia was seen as the prom-

ised land with better living and employment opportunities, especially for her young family. So, in December 1877, aged 35, she, with her sons Robert (15) and Thomas (14), commenced their journey to Australia aboard the *SS Luisitania*. Upon arrival, in 1878 after a 90 days voyage, they lived in a small cottage



• R.C. Edwards at age 44

In this issue we look at the life and achievements of Robert Campbell Edwards, a man of faith and action.

in Richmond, Melbourne, not far from the railway station.

Tea Merchant

The elder son, Robert, quickly displayed a good business sense in employment. One of his first jobs was with a firm of wholesale grocers and importers where he was assigned to the Tea and Coffee Department. This virtually decided his future. His work included the blending of tea and the costing and clearing of goods at the Customs Office; he also learnt the art of tea tasting. It didn't take Robert long to realise that the tea business was a very profitable one, when he could see from invoices that profit was well over 100%. Tea bought for between 5 1/4 d and 5 1/2 d a pound was selling at 1s 3d, 1s 6d and 1s 9d a pound. To Robert, the profit seemed to be enormous; so, in spite of considerable competition, he decided to launch out on his own. In 1881 at the age of 19, assisted by a loan from his mother and with a capital of £300, Robert (hereon known as Campbell) established his own business, importing and distributing tea, coffee, cocoa and spices.

The business prospered rapidly and resulted in numerous moves to larger and better premises in the city of Melbourne. He bought a horse and gig and went into Gippsland where the farmers bought half chests (56 pounds) instead of a pound or two. The Firm opened offices in Sydney and Brisbane. Coffee, cocoa and tea for blending were imported from India, America and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). To promote sales 77 door-to-door salesmen traversed the countryside of Victoria, NSW and Queensland, using horse and buggy, motorcycles and, later, cars. In 1904, Campbell persuaded his brother Thomas to join him, and Edwards and Company Ensign Tea, sold

THERE IS ONLY ONE



Edwards' ENSIGN TEA

• Company slogan

under the slogan, "There is Only One T in Australia", soon becoming a well-known brand.

Also in 1904, Campbell Edwards moved in a big way. The Edwards Ensign Tea merchant erected the first five storey building in Flinders Street, at No. 100. It was an imposing structure. Between twin minaret-like towers, an elaborate iron web supported the new Ensign Trade mark—a medallion around the edge of which was the firm's motto: "Purity, Strength and Flavour Conquer All". In the centre of the medallion was a modified Australian flag. Immediately beneath the top balustrade was a panel of opaque, multicoloured tiles on which were imposed the words Edwards & Co. Electric bulbs placed behind the panel gave Melbourne one of its first illuminated business signs.

In October, 1919, the building was sold to the Sunday School Union, but Edwards & Co. continued in occupation of the ground, fourth and fifth floors. Unfortunately, on Saturday night, 30 April, 1921, a fierce fire completely destroyed the building. The business continued in rented premises and two years later the firm moved to a new site in King Street. At the time of the fire Thomas D. Edwards was Managing Director and Campbell Edwards was the Senior Partner. In 1905, at the age of 43, Robert Campbell Edwards retired from active participation in the firm, although he continued as Chairman up to the time of his death in 1946.

Property Purchaser

With Ensign Teas selling well, Campbell Edwards launched into a vastly different business world—that of property purchaser and developer. This came about when the Victorian land boom of the late 1880s suddenly collapsed. Building societies failed, banks closed, thousand were put out of work and hundreds made homeless. But Edwards was not seriously affected. The bank he used was one of the two that did not close their doors and he had not speculated in land or property. The crash and resultant depression worked to his

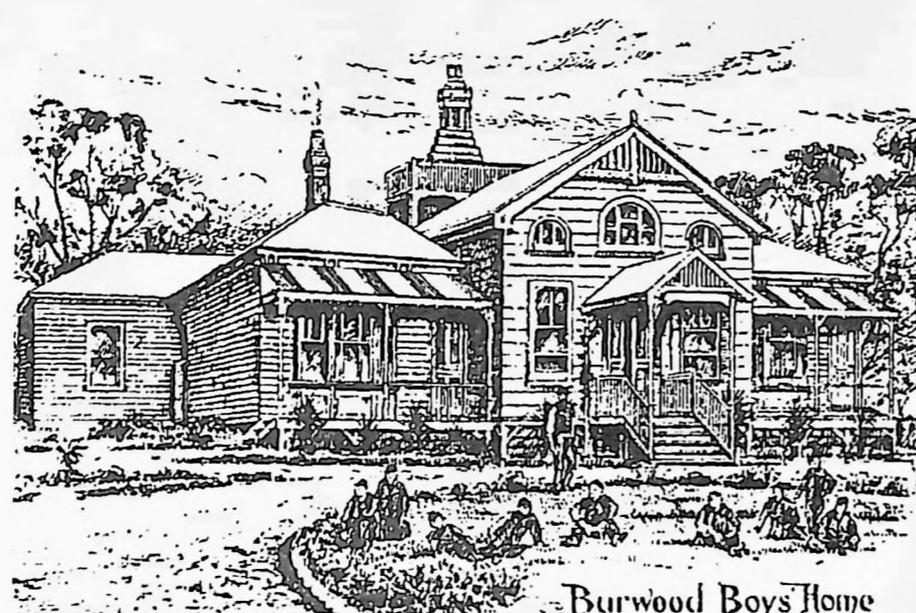
advantage. Much land which had been subdivided was now a burden to the creditors of defunct syndicates and they were glad to dispose of it at any price. In the suburbs, whole streets of new houses stood empty. Edwards did not have to search for bargains, bankers, real estate agents and syndicates came to him with offers.

Over a period of ten years or so, he bought 100 cottages in Richmond, an extensive area in Burwood, which became known as Ensign Park Estate, four farms in Gippsland, 40 acres in Box Hill, a mansion on 14 1/2 acres in Glen Iris (see notes on the College of the Bible) and made many other purchases. It was probably this involvement in a new field of business that decided Edwards to leave the active conduct of the tea and coffee business to his sons.

Family Man

In 1905 with his interests prospering, Campbell Edwards' thoughts turned to the founding of a family. Besides, he was now past middle age. He married one of his church friends, Gwendolyn Llewellyn Pritchard, daughter of a mining engineer, William Pritchard, of Pembroke, Wales. On the day of the wedding, Campbell was twenty years and one day older than his bride. There were five children: Campbell, 3 April, 1906; Llewellyn, 4 July, 1907; Gwyn, 4 March, 1909; Jean, 6 November, 1911; and Robert, 8 May, 1914.

The couple's first home was "Akaroa" in Royal Crescent, Camberwell. In 1910, they moved to a brick residence that Campbell had built on the 40 acres of land he owned in Station Street, Box Hill. The house and 24 acres of land is now Kingswood College, a Uniting Church coeducational school. Then followed what has been described as the family's "suburban wanderings"; when, according to the family members, "We must have lived in 26 homes in 25 years". Apparently, Mrs. Edwards coped very well and made each successive house a happy home.



• Burwood Boys' Home

Religious Convictions

Campbell Edwards was a man of strong and definite convictions and these included his religious beliefs. He gave much time to the study of the Bible and was able to read the New Testament in Greek (at the age of 70 he taught himself Hebrew so that he could read the Bible in the original). With the evidence of poverty and suffering all around him, he tended to concentrate on the message of compassion, hope and redemption he found in the New Testament. Campbell Edwards had a conversion experience which resulted in him being baptised by immersion into the membership of Churches of Christ. His mother followed her son's example and was baptised in the Glenferrie Road Christian Chapel—the Glenferrie (Hawthorn) Church of Christ—where she became a most devoted member.

His mother's conversion encouraged Campbell "to try his hand at preaching". He tackled outdoor preaching near the Yarra River Bank. He established a Sunday school in Balmain Street, Richmond, which opened with an enrolment of 120 pupils. A Band of Hope was started and a Mission commenced. A building was erected and there Edwards preached for seven solid years. This Mission eventually became the Balmain Street South Richmond Church of Christ. Edwards' preaching years were barren years as far as converts were concerned, but this failure as



• Camberwell Church of Christ

an evangelist did not damage his religious zeal and faith, and he remained active in both church and Sunday school work.

Tea Merchant Benefactor

Campbell's lack of evangelistic success did not lessen his devotion to philanthropic work either. It merely changed his course of action. To him had been given the opportunity to make a fortune; he would use that fortune to help others. To Roland Morris he said

more than once, "Show me the man with a message who will work at his job as I do mine, and I will gladly support him". What now follows is a selection of examples of how Campbell Edwards did just that, and how C a m p b e l l Edwards, together with the Campbell Edwards Trust, became the most generous benefactor

in the history of Victorian Churches of Christ. At one stage, he was the largest financial subscriber to Home Missions in Victoria. It will be noted also that the Campbell Edwards Foundation made notable contributions to the work of Churches of Christ in that state and to many other organisations deserving of financial support—

Balmain Street, South Richmond

The work in this well-populated locality was opened up by Campbell Edwards, assisted by others, in 1894, as a Mission Sunday School.



• "Glenburn"—Ideal building for a College of the Bible

The Mission was first associated with Conference as a Church of Christ congregation in 1902, with Campbell Edwards continuing to give financial help and serving as a teacher in the large Sunday School.

Burwood Boys' Home

"No Really Destitute Boy Refused". This home was founded by R. Campbell Edwards in July, 1895, for the purpose of providing care for neglected, orphan and fatherless boys. "No truly destitute boy," he directed, "is to be refused admission or turned away." It was located in the Melbourne eastern suburb of Burwood, on property in Warrigal Road owned by Mr Edwards. As Dunn (1903, p. 174) comments, "The free use of the buildings and ground is given by Robert Campbell Edwards, and a more beautiful home for young waifs and strays who find shelter there could not well be imagined." Lord Brassey, then Victoria's new Governor, declared the Home open during July, 1895.

For some years it was supported almost entirely by Campbell Edwards, with the assistance of his mother and some of her friends. After the first few years, a Committee of Management was formed, of which Campbell Edwards was the President, and the public also began to give financial assistance. When mischievous rumours were spread that Edwards was exploiting the boys for his own benefit, he had the Home incorporated as a Government Home. It later received donations from the Hospital and Charities Commission, while still receiving magnificent support from the Edwards Trust.

Girls were welcomed to the Home in 1976 and, as a result, the name was changed to the Burwood Children's Home. A further change was made in 1986 when it became, and remains, The Child and Family Care Network, Inc. Another and major change took place in 1987, when the Home relocated to 583 Ferntree Gully Road, Glen Waverley, where the premises are entered by way of Campbell Edwards Drive (there had



• The first five-storey building

also been a Campbell Edwards Drive at Burwood).

The College of the Bible

"Glenburn: A Private Mansion to a Theological College". "Glenburn" was built in 1890-91 in the Melbourne southeastern suburb of Glen Iris as a private residence by or for Mr Joseph Britten. It was a fourteen-room two-storey brick dwelling with stables, and valued in 1892 at £2,000. In 1897, the property was acquired by Mr. Campbell Edwards for £2,150. Following a generous offer by Mr. Edwards, the property was bought by the Federal Conference of Churches of Christ late in 1908 for £1,500 as a suitable permanent site for the College of the Bible, established in 1907 (earlier training classes for ministry had been conducted in Sydney and Melbourne. Edwards helped to finance the Class in Sydney and a Melbourne class was known as the "Campbell Edwards Training Class". He was a Victorian representative at the 1906 Federal Conference in Melbourne that decided to found the College of the Bible). At the time of the purchase of "Glenburn" it was tenanted, but became available at the beginning of 1910 as a residence for Principal H.G. Harward, and also provided accommodation and facilities for students.

In 1912, a new two-storey building was erected adjacent to the original mansion to provide classrooms on the ground floor, accommodation for students upstairs and other amenities. In 1973, one of the classrooms was divided to provide a seminar room and a Principal's study; the latter was named the R. Campbell Edwards Memorial Room. A major renovation program was undertaken 1974-1975 at a cost of about \$60,000. This

provided flats for married couples in the original building, which was renamed Campbell Edwards House because of a large gift towards the work by the Campbell Edwards Trust. The Campbell Edwards Lectureship in Pastoral Studies, inaugurated in 1984, has been largely sponsored by the Campbell Edwards Trust from that date onwards.

Prahran in Crisis

Our first Victorian Church of Christ, commenced in 1853, struggled financially from time-to-time. In the early 1900s it suffered a financial crisis. The church then depended mostly on the support of businessmen, including Campbell Edwards. With his support around 1912-14 the church recovered and began to make good progress.

Box Hill Beginnings

The Box Hill Church of Christ had its beginnings at a meeting on 13 December, 1910. In meetings that followed, it was decided to buy the Presbyterian Church building in Court Street for £250, in spite of the collection at the first meeting only realising 8s 10d. Campbell Edwards offered to finance £200 if the church could raise £50. Presumably it did, because the church started and is still active.

Campbell at Camberwell

A meeting on 29 October, 1916, decided to commence a Church of Christ in East Camberwell. The same meeting elected R.C. Edwards secretary. In 1918, he was appointed an elder of the church. The minutes of several church and officers' meetings are confirmed with his signature. He resigned as secretary in September, 1919.

After meeting in a hall for several years, the growing church decided in 1919 to plan for a new building on a better and more prominent site. By 1922, the Church determined to proceed promptly with building a Chapel, and for this purpose Campbell Edwards made the offer of 80-100 thousand bricks, "which put a new complexion on things generally in the way of finance". This offer seemed to be conditional on the building being erected on the corner of Aird Street and Riversdale Road, in preference to another suggested site. A secret ballot of members decided on the former and Edwards' offer was gratefully accepted!

A further ballot chose Edwards to lay the foundation stone, which was duly done on 24 November, 1923, with the inscription, "This stone was laid to the Glory of God by R.C. Edwards, Esq".

The Charitable Trusts

Since the Campbell Edwards Foundation was established in Sydney in 1933, many organisations have benefited from its generous donations. These included the Churches of Christ



• R.C. Edwards at age 78

Theological College in NSW, the Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW for its centenary appeal, hospitals, overseas relief funds, educational institutions for the disabled, and health schemes.

In 1984, moves were begun to eventually wind up the Foundation. This process took a step further in 1987 when, in July, the Foundation made its final donations. These included a large amount to our NSW theological college and smaller amounts to the Bible Society of NSW, the Royal NSW Institute for Deaf and Blind Children and the NSW Society for Crippled Children. In July, 1990, the Corporate Affairs Commission (NSW) formally deleted the Campbell Edwards Foundation from their records.

The Campbell Edwards Trust in Victoria continues to operate. It still supports the Campbell Edwards Lectureship in Pastoral Studies and one of its chief beneficiaries of recent years is the Churches of Christ Theological College at Mulgrave, Victoria. The library at this college is named the Campbell Edwards Library, as seen above the entrance door.

His Work Still Goes On

Robert Campbell Edwards died of cancer in the Stanhope Private Hospital, South Yarra, Victoria, 24 August, 1946, at the age of 84, and is buried in the Box Hill Cemetery. His monument is a massive bluestone pillar that came from the burnt-out ruins of the Flinders Street property. It bears one word, EDWARDS. No date, no indication as to who Edwards was, but he has a greater monument than that. His real memorial is the

large number of Christian and community causes which have benefited from his sustained and generous giving, and the countless individuals who were given hope and opportunity through his Christ-like compassionate and practical, response to their needs. The Campbell Edwards Trust and the Sydney Foundation are also tangible memorials to this visionary tea merchant benefactor.

Campbell Edwards is one of those whose "works do follow them".

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The cooperation of various individuals is acknowledged.

—Ken W. Barton.

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We thank our members for faithfully supporting us over the years and invite them to continue their support. We also encourage others to subscribe to the society so that we may carry on with our work of preservation, research and publication, particularly of the Digest. Yearly subscriptions are \$3, and can be sent to Mrs Alice Allison.

Comment

Continued from page 11
tive oversight in an eldership. The Congregationalists argued for a single form of operation through the congregation. Churches of Christ in Australia believed there was a single structure of elders, deacons and the congregation all of which had to be involved in governing the congregation.

A close examination of the New Testament however does not confirm a universal form of church leadership. One very simple example of a church that was very spiritual, very evangelical and very active and which did not conform to our model was the church at Antioch. Their leaders consisted of prophets and teachers. (Acts 13:1-3) There was also congregational decision making at Antioch. (Acts 11:29) The church at Jerusalem on the other hand had an eldership. (Acts 11:30) The apostle Paul's letters are addressed to the churches without recognition of either elders or deacons with the exception of the letter to the Philippians.

Paul certainly held an important farewell prayer time with the elders of the Ephesian church. (Acts 20:17-38) On their return from the first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in each church. (Acts 14:23)

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul outlines some qualifications for both bishops (elders) and deacons.

In this passage the position of deacon is usually interpreted as the junior office, yet the deacon needs to meet the criteria

for an elder plus some other requirements that happen to also include the deacon's wife. It seems to me that the "deacon" in this passage is in fact the senior position of whom "more careful testing" is required. "Deacon" is a Greek word and its usual translation in the King James Version is "minister" and it seems to me may be more equivalent to what we mean by our word "minister". It is interesting that in the Disciples in the USA "deacons" pick up the hymn books, close the doors and windows and do all those sorts of tasks. The idea of having a board of deacons who manage church affairs is foreign to them. I think that reflects the American frontier in which that was what "deacon" meant.

Many have said that the elders are responsible for the "spiritual oversight" of the church while the deacons are responsible for the non-spiritual matters. That kind of distinction flies in the face of all that Christ has taught us in that there is nothing that is not spiritual. The Good Samaritan is doing spiritual work as he binds up the wounds and takes the man to the nearest inn for shelter. It is a spiritual matter that he pays for the wounded man's keep and assistance. It seems to me Christ deplored the kind of spirituality that manifested itself solely in the temple or the synagogue and did not express itself in the streets and in the homes and in relationships. How then can we make such a distinction in the church be-

tween the "spiritual", which an elder will attend to, and the deacon, the "non-spiritual". The Bible never makes that distinction.

The Lord Jesus Christ had something important to say about the leaders of his disciples. He said, "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and that their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28)

Christ makes it abundantly clear that leaders in the Christian church are not rulers exercising any authority. They are to lead by the quality of their service. They are to be servants of the church. The supreme example is that of the self giving service of Jesus himself.

It seems to me that a church needs a group of spiritual people to be its leaders and if you want to call them elders you have a good Biblical basis for the use of the term. But I do not see that we must call such leaders "elders"—and a number of churches do not use the term "elder" for such people.

You may well ask, are there any problems that the elders got into in the New Testament?

Well, yes, there are. At least we get hints of the kind of problems they had. There are admonitions to elders about how to behave. "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be, not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2, 3) Here is a correction about "serving" and "not lording it over the flock", about "serving willingly" and about "not being greedy".

"Since an overseer [elder] is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick tempered, not given to drunkenness, not

violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine." (Titus 1:7-9) What is interesting about this passage is that the elder is to be positive, encouraging and developing and if discipline is to be applied it is to himself.

These were corrections to the leaders of New Testament times, and it could be that these corrections to the same temptations still apply to church leaders today.

Is it rebellion that we are faced with or has something gone horribly wrong with the leadership of our churches? Have elders become the source of our problems? Have the leaders of the churches lost the goal of winning people for Christ and have they turned to some other goal, frustrating the church membership? Or is it simply that the leaders are no longer sensitive to those in the congregation in need of encouragement, help and a word of love?

While I am in this reflective mood I must express another concern about our ministerial leaders that seems in some quarters to have become entrenched with self-promoted ministers who have all built "super churches" using authoritarian practices. In my experience I have seldom found ministers who are able to give objective reasons for the success of their own programs—they are usually too close and too involved in their theology to be objective. Some outside, more objective reasons for what has happened in some places would be more helpful.

The real test of leadership is the ability of the leaders to take the body along with them to achieve the planned goals.

Who can doubt it, we certainly have some problems!

But is it rebellion?

Or is it in the exercise of leadership?

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What If ... There Was A Reason?

Alan Matheson

The first church was built on this spot 1300 years ago, said the notice outside St Martins within Ludgate (London). For more than 850 years, according to the newsletter of St Stephens in Vienna, this was the site "one of the most important works of ecclesiastical architecture."

And as I sat in the John Knox Chapel Geneva, I read that the first Christian sanctuary was built on this site during the fifth century.

At that point I began to wonder.

Without C of C

How was it that the church managed to get by without us for more than 1700 years.

How did it survive?

No conference. No national convention

No president (or president's reception for that matter)

No CWF

No College

No executive directors, secretaries or field associates (interesting isn't it how we create hierarchies) ever participated.

Did Constantine miss us in Nicaea in 325 AD?

Surely one of the 600 bishops noticed our absence at the fourth ecumenical council in 451 AD?

Was it really possible that the church managed to get by for centuries without us.

Why?

Why, if the church was able to witness, pray, evangelise, preach organise, send missionaries, print hymn books, train clergy, conduct baptism and communion, for nearly 1700 years, why were we created?

Why did James O'Kelly, in 1793 break with the Episcopal Methodist Church and adopt "the name "Christian" to the exclusion of all sectarian names"?

And what of Abner Jones, the Baptist of Vermont, "who rejected the use of all Christian creeds".

Or why in 1804 did Barton Stone take "Bible alone as the rule of faith to the exclusion of all human creeds".

And these were all "the fathers" of churches of Christ.

Perhaps its easier to understand why Thomas Campbell did what he did. Anyone who tried to minister to a congregation of the Old Light, Anti-burgher, Seceder, Presbyterian Church was always going to be in trouble!

Or why in 1809 were a group of Christians, gathered in a log cabin near Mount Pleasant on

the road from Washington, West Pennsylvania? And why at that particular time and place in history did a Thomas Campbell put before this group a platform for Christian union which "may be summed up in five main points:

- The Church is essentially one
- The final authority is the Bible
- Creeds are futile as a means of union
- Remove human innovations and unity will result
- Christians of all denominations are brethren and should be united."

Was all this an accident of history, a product of the frontier experience of "The Wild West", or the will and determination of strong individuals who couldn't get on with their fellow Christians.

Is this why preachers rarely preach about who we are, why congregations never wonder why they are members of our churches and why our leaders have relegated the issues of unity to the bottom of our priorities.

What If?

But what if there was a purpose?

What if God at that particu-

lar time in history raised up our churches for not other purpose but to witness to the prayer of Christ, "that they all may be one ... that the world may believe." What if we didn't just appear.

What if we have lost our way and become as Norm Flett, suggests, "just another of the growing number of denominations" ("AC" 22 May).

Is it just coincidence that the last four months have seen a flurry of articles in this journal on our history and our purpose?

If God had a purpose for our Movement, I wonder what it would mean?

Would our services be any different? (Or for that matter would editors!)

Would our departments, our executive directors, secretaries or field associates fill their days in a different way?

Would the treasurers of our congregations act any differently?

Would we call a halt to our ceaseless preoccupation with yet "bigger and better" buildings?

In Hal Head's ("AC" 19 June) terms of real practical possibilities, I wonder what it would mean.

A Church ABC

Aike many of our churches, Cottesloe, WA, is a church examining its role and potential in its community.

Established in 1915, Cottesloe is located on a peninsula between the cities of Perth and Fremantle. It is an older, established suburb, yet its population is mostly either young couples or families, with the number of older folk living there decreasing. Of the younger folk, it is split 50/50 between couples and families,

however the majority are professionals or upper-middle

church to reach out to, the surfers.



Focus on Cottesloe

management, thus falling into the upper socio-economic brackets. Yet, there is also another potential group for the

Similar to many inner metropolitan churches, Cottesloe peaked in the 50s and 60s, with membership over 150, and a

Sunday school in the hundreds. But, since then, there has been a gradual decline. Currently, Sunday services average around 40, with a reasonable spread of ages (apart from a gap in the youth age group).

Recently, the church has developed a four-pronged attack on the problem of evangelism and church growth, calling it "Project Vital Action". The first area is training, especially in the area of friendship evangelism. Since fellowship is a

Continued on page 15

Bad Luck

Stephen Curkpatrick

A cursory reading of newspapers over several weeks indicates a perennial range of tragic events in which people have the bad luck to be in the "wrong place at the wrong time". Innocent villagers are maimed or killed in guerilla violence directed at a few or unsuspecting city bystanders become hostages in a bizarre scenario of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Thousands of people frequently lose their homes or lives in flood, cyclone, typhoon, mud slide or earthquake. The collapse of a building, a multistorey office inferno, a burst dam, a capsized ferry or an aircraft ploughing into a residential area are all occasions of tragic bad luck, in which dozens, even hundreds, of people are caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Jesus spoke of 18 people who had the bad luck to be standing near a tower of Siloam when it fell over and killed them. He warned against making a theological judgement about those who have the bad luck to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. It happens, and it has nothing to do with people getting their "just desserts". They were no more culpable than anyone else.

Which raises the question, "Does God prevent bad luck?" The evidence would suggest God does not.

We live in a world that is structured to make possible God given human free will and creativity; where real, not hypothetical, choices can occur, with the risk of indiscriminate accidents contingent on those choices. For example, if an aircraft smashes into a mountain at 150 knots through navigational error, it will have the same effect on impact whether its occupants are Christian or not. The mountain won't miraculously turn into marshmallow if the pilot prays in the split second before impact either. The reality is, we have extraordinary creative free will to do such things as design and fly aircraft, with indiscriminate consequences involved in exercising such choice and creativity. Furthermore, people can become the innocent victims of others' violent choices which do not discriminate in their effects. Christians do not suddenly become bomb-proof in a terrorist's bomb blast.

The belief that every incident in life is determined by God may have a facade of personal piety. However, a perception that God predetermines every-

thing in life becomes horrific at the level of large scale disasters, where hundreds are killed and thousands left homeless, Christian and non Christian alike.

The Gospel narrative reminds us that God sends sunshine and rain on the good and "evil"; to a world where the abundance of life and goodness of the earth is indiscriminately, unequivocally given to Muslim, Hindu, atheist and Christian alike. Therefore, flood and drought have no punitive dimensions. They are not directed against anyone. For Christians to posit responsibility with God for every event in life is to implicate God, even if unwittingly, in causing natural disasters or not preventing accidental tragedies when they occur.

The belief that every event in life is determined by God is dysfunctional today. It belies a parochial perception of the world belonging to an era before the communications revolution, when awareness of human tragedy was limited and anomalous in an otherwise neatly ordered universe. It also belies a perception of life and people lodged firmly in a dualistic "sacred versus secular" paradigm, rather than a recog-

nition of God's "grace imbued interaction" with all human life.

The idea that "all things work together for good" as an inexorable perception that every single event in life is predetermined by God, ultimately eliminates genuine human free will and creates an atrocious theology of God. The distinction should be made between "predetermined events over which we have no control or responsibility", and, the rich Biblical theme of creation *a la* Deutero-Isaiah (40-55). This motif, which has been richly nuanced in sacred and secular narrative traditions, can enable us to recapitulate any past event, and reinterpret its meaning and quality—for good—in our perception and experience of life. We can also help the recipients of rotten bad luck to do this in communities of compassion, where such experiences are perceived to be neither "determined" or their "just desserts". Our experience of life tells us that Christians are not exempt from inexplicable misfortune and senseless tragedy that occurs from having the bad luck to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. What we do with such events, however, is the real issue and theological challenge at stake.

Continued from page 14

strong element within the church already, this is being built on. Worship has been changed quite significantly, this has been helped by the musical talents of the ministers, Chris and David Cohen (husband and wife). Prayer is the final area; the church praying that they may reach their community, prayer for healing, etc.

Some further plans they have are for a young professionals breakfast on Sunday mornings, targeted at upper management people in the 30-40 age group. To encourage both partners to attend child-care will be pro-

vided. High profile community figures, who are also Christians, will be guest speakers at the breakfasts.

A dearth of facilities for youth (community centres, sporting facilities) in the area has also been identified as an opportunity. Plans are afoot to use a room at the back of the church complex as a coffee shop/drop in centre on Saturday nights.

A Sunday afternoon service is also planned, one that will have a completely contemporary worship style. This will be advertised in papers and around the community and is totally aimed at being an out-

reach, not just for the church itself.

Like so many in its situation, Cottesloe's greatest problem is the lack of funds to pursue all they would like, thus projects have to be of the sort that are cheap to set up and run. An advantage the church has is that having a number of retired folk means that there are people on hand who have the time to contribute to the church's work. However, as might be expected, sometimes the energy or ability to contribute is a limiting factor.

Finally, an area the church is keen to build on is the craft

group that runs in the church. A large percentage of those attending are non-church folk and to encourage people to attend they are trying to provide a creche with the help of some of the retired member.

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CAMPBELL Bill and Mavis, married 30.9.1933 at Berni Church of Christ by W.N. Bartlett, minister. An open invitation is extended to all to attend the Senior Citizen's Club Rooms, Berni, South Australia Saturday 25th September 2-4 pm to celebrate this event with family and friends.

DEATHS

JERMYN (ADDICOTT) Alma. Passed away peacefully at home in Nambour, Qld (formerly of North Richmond, Vic) 9.9.93. Loved and loving sister of Bob (dec) and Jean. Aunt of Graeme, Glenda and Philip.

IN MEMORIAM

DEWAR Robert (23 September 1992). "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service." Forever in our hearts—Laurel, Bruce, Bronwyn, Laurie, Paula, Tracey and Robert.

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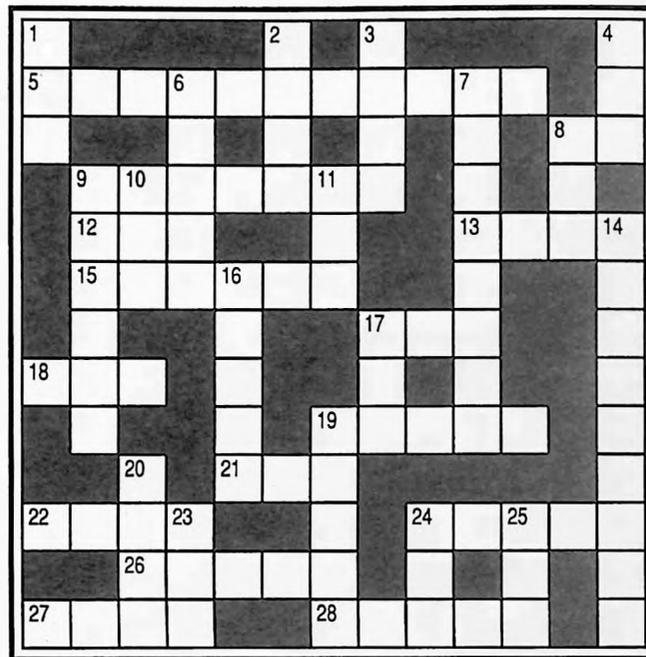
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Crossword



Clues

ACROSS

- 5 Had no parents
- 8 Chemical symbol of metal used in yoke (Jer. 28)

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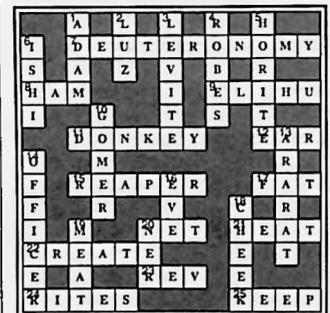
- 9 Egyptian ruler
- 12 Gideon died at a good ____ (Jdg. 8)
- 13 Son of Noah
- 15 Oil running down Aaron's beard may reach it (Psa. 133)
- 17 Made from olives
- 18 Paul's position off islands (Acts 27)
- 19 Built on rock
- 21 Treatment of Leviathan (Job 41)
- 22 The Son of Man will do this to his Kingdom (Matt. 13)
- 24 Brother of Abraham
- 26 Describes a prohibited object or action

- 27 Birds of this type often described in Bible
- 28 Grandson of Abraham (Gen. 25)

DOWN

- 1 One of the exiles who returned (Ezra 2)
- 2 A form of greeting found in 5 Epistles
- 3 They often attacked Paul
- 4 Paul longed to ____ Timothy (2 Tim. 1)
- 6 Hard to get through the eye of a needle
- 7 Paul wrote these
- 8 Prostitutes charge one (Ezek. 16)
- 9 Jacob's beloved
- 10 "Promised through the prophets long ____" (Acts 3)
- 11 High priest's servant had one removed
- 14 Paul received a call from here
- 16 We should let ours shine
- 17 Benjamites from Geba lived here (Neh. 11)
- 19 King ____
- 20 ____ out violence on the earth (Psa. 58)
- 23 Jesus resurrected on third ____
- 24 David ____ in the field (2 Sam. 20)
- 25 Peter ____ to the tomb (Luke 24)

August Solution



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Growing Spiritually

Intimacy With God

Buzz Hayhurst

Over the past 12 months, I have had a constant nagging from God about praying. I understand him nagging me (if you allow that God nags), because prayer was something that I did not understand and in fact thought was rather stupid.

As I was pondering this prayer stuff one day, I was going through the usual: God already knows my every thought; the Word says that we are predestined by God and that he has called us according to his purpose; God has ordained all the days of our lives; so what's the point, why bother talking to God about stuff if he's only going to do what he wants to anyway.

Then into my mind came those we might call, "great men of God"; Wigglesworth, Wesley, Moody, Spurgeon, Luther and so the list goes on. As I thought about these men and how come they were so "great", I remembered hearing the common thread between these guys was that they all spent hours each day on their knees before God praying.

It seemed obvious to me at this point that I had better re-evaluate my thoughts on prayer as I do not want to be just another preacher.

I want to be the very best I can be for the God who gave his life for me.

So I set about looking at Scripture on prayer, as Scripture is

where I go when I need to form my opinions on a subject. My discovery was that prayer has no magical meanings and that there is no set pattern of "how to".

Although the Lord Jesus did leave us an example, he also told us not to be repetitious.

The opinion that I came to (after praying and asking God to show me) is that prayer is the means by which I formulate an intimate relationship with the God who wants me to call him Daddy.

After all, if I want to have an intimate relationship with my wife, the very first thing I need to do is communicate with her. I tell her how I see her and who I think she is to me, I tell her

about myself, my needs and my wants, I ask her to tell me about herself and as time goes on, and we keep sharing who we are with each other, we become intimate in our relationship (I know how she thinks and she knows how I think).

So God wants us to pray, not because he needs to feel like the big boss (he already is), but because he wants to be intimate with us. he has plans and directions for our lives that are exciting and good for us, but we will never know what they are if we don't learn how to talk to and hear from God, our Daddy, all the time.

Prayer is God and me being mates where I learn to think like him and act like him.

Leadership 2000

Too Many Outlets

Paul Cameron

In June and July I visited the US as part of the Christian Projects' Leadership 2000 group. I appreciate Christian Projects' willingness to support the vision of a group of key ministers to broaden the experiences of a growing number of Australian church leaders.

Because I'm committed to the revitalisation of local church,

my major goal in the US was to discover transferable ways to do that back here. Once we look beyond size and culture, there are many things we can learn. This is just one area we need to think about.

The word is there are too many Melbourne based clubs in the Australian Football League. Some will inevitably

go. In Victoria we're told there are too many schools. Principals, staff and parents are meeting to discuss possible closures. Some will inevitably go. Have you noticed there's less service stations these days? Banks are rationalising the number of branches. They are closing Post Offices too. There are just too many outlets.

It's the same with the church. There are too many outlets. There are too many resources tied up in under-utilised and culturally irrelevant church buildings, built in wrong places. The days of the village, corner store church are gone. The day of the seven day a week regional shopping mall church has come. This is true for Churches of Christ. It's time for rationalisation.

But we have a problem. Our spirituality sometimes is more

edifice-based than Spirit-led, Jesus-honouring and God-directed. Our religious experience can be more strongly linked to a particular building, piece of furniture or style of worship, than a personal interaction with our heavenly Father. Our sense of worth can be more connected to the personal power base we have built up in a declining faith community, than to the God who created it all, including us. Too often, effective communication of the Good News and costly, practical and compassionate ministry in our communities becomes secondary to keeping the doors open, doing things we've always done, and blaming someone else for the decline of our once great church.

It's time for radical change. It's time for rationalisation. Continued on page 18

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Leadership 2000

Continued from page 17

There are too many outlets. Too many overheads. Too much maintenance and not enough mission.

I'm sure churches in the US have many of the same problems (or opportunities) we do, plus a few more! However, the churches I saw, and the people I heard, only confirmed thoughts I've had for a while. Everywhere I went there was an intentionality about every step towards faith, discipleship, ministry and mission. Nothing happened by accident. Prayer was a high priority. This was supported by visionary, biblical leadership and a willingness to make hard decisions. Risks were taken. Seemingly huge steps of faith were being made.

Where there was spiritual and numerical growth, there was a willingness to change, adapt and create. There was no shame in closing down a ministry area, stopping or

retargetting a service, or selling one property to buy another. Flops weren't seen as failures. They were seen for what they really are: an opportunity to begin again, to start over, to rediscover God's direction for the future, instead of living in the past. It's better to have tried and failed, than to not have tried at all!

It's time for local churches and conference departments to make courageous decisions and to take bold risks. We don't need talk-fests or regional boards. We need to have a vision and take it seriously. To cease operating as church culture churches, waiting for people to come to us. To be more intentional, more focussed. We must be what we really are, mission outposts in an alien culture. We must be what God wants us to be, a place to call home, a place for recovery, refreshment and regeneration, for finding hope. We must watch our language.

We must be understood. We must love as Christ loved, meeting people on their turf, and inviting them to join us in times of vital worship, celebration and encouragement.

This will be best done by larger churches with a secure resource base of people, plant, parking and finance; a healthy community profile and a willingness to continue to move with the flow of God's Spirit. Solo ministers of small churches will be liberated as they work in a ministry team. They will work in their gift areas. They will cease being a jack-of-all-trades. While recognising the value of, and necessity for, smaller specialised ministries, generally we need less local churches and more regional churches. There are too many outlets. There is too much waste and duplication. These larger churches will be an umbrella for many specialist mission-groups that will be community-based, small group orientated,

points of entry into God's Kingdom, and possibly that church too.

For this to happen we must learn about the gift of dying. Desiring a resurrection of Christian beliefs and values in our nation, we must be willing for some precious things to die. Closing a church or two here and there will hurt. Changing a building or the style of worship will too. But when a resurrection results it will be a time for praise and thanksgiving.

Recognising we have too many outlets, and doing something about it, isn't a sign of failure. It's a window of opportunity. It tells the truth about us. It says we're for others, not just ourselves.

Not recognising it, or recognising it and doing nothing about it, is failure. Sticking our head in the sand is the same. These responses tell the truth about us too. They say we're for ourselves, and everyone else can go to hell.

Comment

The Virgin Birth of Jesus

Ronald Graham

What follows is a partial response to letters by Harold Hayward and Gladys Butler (6 February) and articles by Ken Stothard (20 February) and Lily Munk (6 March), criticising my 19 December Virgin Birth article.

Gladys wondered why I wrote the article. Months ago the "AC" editor invited readers to submit articles on a number of important Christian doctrines which had come under fire in the paper. I accepted his invitation, selecting two from those he listed: the Virgin Birth of Jesus and the Resurrection of the Body. I did not try to be scholarly, or erudite but simply honest and thoughtful.

Harold said that I equivocated, by which I presume that he meant that my statement

was susceptible of double interpretation. Ken found in it a sceptical note.

Turning seventeen, I made my confession of faith in Jesus Christ in the Church of Christ in Taree. The heart of that confession was the conviction that Jesus spelled the answer to the question of the meaning of life.

The teacher whom I most respected in High School was persuaded that the Church would destroy a promising mind and over a period of time he tore my faith to pieces, scattering the fragments to the winds. For some three years I wrestled with the issues he raised and then one day told my story to my minister, Laurie Trezise, sharing with him the four most important pieces I had managed to gather up.

They were these:

- Jesus of Nazareth is the most significant human being I know. (I had a notion that the glory of God is humanity, fully alive, fully human.)

- The Church is the only community that exists to remember him (but it was a lively remembrance that I had in mind).

Continued on page 19

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Comment

Continued from page 18

- If the Church could produce as good a man as my father, I should give it a chance to do the same for me.
- My father may be wrong about what "out there" answers to our quest for Truth, but I think he is right that there is something or someone that does answer to that quest. (I still resonate to Einstein's exclamation that the most incomprehensible fact is that the universe is comprehensible.)

Ken was afraid that my article would disturb the faith of some. I understand that and possibly for that reason have never preached on the Virgin Birth. But on the other hand, I am mindful of the fact that his Teacher and mine was a great disturber of his contemporaries' minds and I have long been grateful for being early put to the test. For me, as for Samuel Rutherford, "Faith is the better of the sharp winter storm in its face."

There have been a number of consequences of that teacher's destruction of my unexamined faith. I name but three.

First, the Creator God is the Redeemer God. I concur, Lily, that faith in God is more than rational, but it is not irrational. I agree with Paul that the worship of God that is "holy and acceptable" is "reasonable" (Rom. 12:2, NRSV mg). I have never consciously set reason above faith, but neither have I joined faith in combat with reason, the one against the other.

Second, had I become a Pres-

byterian I would probably have affirmed the Westminster Confession (which would not have pleased Ken). Or had I become a Methodist, I would have affirmed no creed, save perhaps the Apostles'. (The problem with that ancient Creed is that it says nothing about ethics. The fruit of the Spirit is not doctrine, much less enthusiasm, but morality.) But instead I became a "Christian," and my confessional statement was brief, theological, and ethical: "Jesus Christ is my Lord."

Laurie Trezise, T.H. Scambler and Lyall Williams taught me the merits of that minimal confession on which was to be established the maximal commitment of life. As far as essential beliefs are concerned, I have always been somewhat of a minimalist and was attracted to the title of a book that I happened upon in my Melbourne University studies in Tudor/Stuart England: *De Paucitate Credendorum* ("Concerning the Fewness of the Things That [Simply] Must Be Believed").

Third, as far as authority is concerned, without intending to, I became a Wesleyan, taking my stand on Scripture, Reason, Tradition, and Experience. (That is precisely what Paul does in Galatians. However, Scripture for him is necessarily only what we now call the Old Testament, and at that early stage Tradition was what he himself was determining. "Foolish" in Galatians 3:1 would be better translated as "unintelligent" or "illogical"; and Experience was, for him, as for John Wesley, experience of the grace of God.)

Fourth, about the year 170,

Tatian produced an edition of the four Gospels in a harmonised, continuous narrative. It circulated widely among the Syriac-speaking Churches, where it became the standard text or the Gospels down to the fifth century. Tatian was declared a heretic by the Roman Church, the Church opting for not one Gospel but four.

We are often Tatianites, but there are other times when at least some of us want to listen to the Gospel according to Matthew, or pay attention to the Gospel according to John.

Matthew begins by thrice claiming that Jesus was the Messiah. This is followed by his Virgin Birth story. Then he goes on to spell these out: (1) that John the Baptist preached a gospel of repentance and that Jesus was baptised "to fulfil all righteousness"; (2) that Jesus was sorely tempted and that his chief defence was selected insights from Scripture; and (3) that his first task in ministry was teaching and his second, curing people of their sicknesses (chapters 1, 3-4).

I find it instructive that Jesus found strength in the Word or God, not in his being born of a virgin. The first I can do, but the second has not been an option for me. And why my pointing to this should strike Ken as "odd" I do not know.

And when John the Baptist asks whether Jesus is the Messiah or not, the Master responds: "Evaluate the ministry of healing and the teaching" (11:2-5). I am willing to take account of this emphasis.

Three things have impressed me about John's Jesus. The first is his utter dependence upon

God. (That is a singular emphasis upon his humanity.) This Gospel is the account of a vital relation towards, and experience of, God: of trust, obedience, guidance, and power. The second, is the accenting of Jesus as one who is sent by God and who in turn sends, that those who are sent may send. That Jesus was sent by God into history I find very meaningful for my life and ministry. The third is the portrayal of Jesus as a lover of women and men. (I write "women" first because in some ways John does.) The divinity of God is his loving and the divinity of Jesus must be the same.

Finally, three specific responses. No, Ken, if I were to deny the Virgin Birth (which I have not done), it would not follow that I would thereby deny the Resurrection. For some, that would be true, but by no means for all.

Harold claims that the Virgin Birth witnesses to the fact that Jesus represents the predetermined will of God and that the same is true for those who accept Jesus as the source of life. The predetermination and the acceptance need to be joined together: in our understanding of Jesus as well as ourselves. "By grace through faith", is how Paul puts it; not "By grace alone".

No, Lily, I do not believe that God is Almighty, if by that, you mean that God can do as God pleases. Not if God is love!

Harold also dismisses the question I raised about genes and chromosomes as irrelevant as discussing how the molecules got changed when Jesus changed the water into wine. (I take it that for him the account is factual, but I am not sure what store he puts in the fact that Jesus provided the wedding guests with 120-180 gallons of wine.) I do not think that changing molecules is the point of the story. But rather, the Cana story is one episode in seven (2:1-11:54) in which John portrays Jesus as a holy man who calls into being a new community, whose life and worship supersede traditional Judaism.

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Worshipping from the Hurting Edges of our Lives

Garry Harris

Pain is an inescapable part of life. It is an inescapable part of growth. The growing edges of our lives are the hurting edges of our lives.

One challenge confronting the minister is to find a means of ameliorating this pain. It is not sufficient just to say: "God is the great Comforter." We need to facilitate the parishioner's experience of divine comfort. One means whereby persons can be exposed to this healing grace is through the worship service.

We would be remiss to underestimate the pastoral capacity of the worship service—Howard Clinebell, a noted Christian psychologist, asserts that therapeutic healing can occur *en masse*.^{*} The cathartic dimension of worship provides the opportunity to exorcise those personal demons that dog and darken our days.

The pastoral possibilities of the worship service have been neglected within Protestantism for at least two discernible reasons.

The European Reformation, with its emphasis upon the rational, literally divorced itself from any ritualistic means of grace. The signs and acts that, for centuries, had been a powerful part of liturgy were replaced with a verbally-oriented mode of worship appealing to intellect. With the benefit of hindsight, we may now suggest that the reformers made an over-correction. The pendulum did swing too far away from sign and action. Only in recent years has Protestantism recognised the profoundly therapeutic element in worship and sought to reclaim its liturgical heritage.

Another reason why the pastoral dimension of worship has not been embraced is that pastoral care came to be seen as that process occurring between

minister and parishioner in a one-to-one encounter.

Doubtless, many ministers are "skilled helpers".[†] I would suggest, however, that the "minister as para-psychologist" model is an incomplete expression of what could be transpiring in the church's ministry of pastoral care. If, by embracing psychological counselling techniques, we divest ourselves of what William Willimon calls: "our God-given resources of Bible; liturgy; prayer; theology and community",[‡] then ministers have done both themselves and their parishioners a serious disservice.

Paul Pruyser suggests that some people, either consciously or unconsciously, seek out pastors because they want to examine themselves and their problems from a theological perspective.[§] The worship event provides an excellent environment for such introspection, self-examination and theological reflection.

Within the context of worship there are innumerable opportunities for pastoral healing. The sacrament of Communion is pictorial Gospel proclamation. It is the paramount expression of forgiveness and reconciliation. Implicit in this action is the challenge to embrace forgiveness and to be forgiving, to know reconciliation with God and others, and to recognise the constructive power of self-giving sacrificial love.

The reading of Scripture is an inexhaustible source of comfort. Jesus' words of assurance,

of pardon; the innumerable declarations of God's changeless love and compassion; and the countless affirmations of the Lord's sustaining presence, provide solace and encouragement. It is precisely these words that many embattled parishioners need to hear as they seek respite in worship.

The thoughtfully constructed pastoral prayer can gently approach the painful edges of our lives from which

we cry. Our self-recrimination for failures and faithlessness; our self-doubt and fears, may all be addressed with a view to redemption and healing. The sensitive pastor will caringly confront these issues and lead the congregation to prayer-

fully remember their acceptance in Christ Jesus. Upon recognising their imputed wholeness, some may inch their way closer toward realising existential wholeness.

Prayer for spiritual healing is never amiss in the pastoral prayer. Silent meditation also provides the opportunity for worshippers to seek God's help in specific situations. Frequently this will fortify individuals and help provide the necessary resolve to continue their journey.

Baptism is Gospel proclamation. It enacts death, burial and resurrection. It proclaims new life and new beginning. Frequently this is precisely the word of hope that worshippers need to hear. Baptism also connotes cleansing. Many religious traditions make use of lustral washing to convey this image

to participants. There are special services in the life of the church which afford unique pastoral opportunities. The wedding, with its joy, optimism, and hope for the future, is also tinged with muted sadness at the loss of a child from the family home. It also provides opportunity for couples in the congregation to silently affirm their own wedding vows. I have frequently observed married couples in the congregation joining hands at that tender and holy moment when the bridal couple exchange their wedding vows. These couples have rightly understood the pastoral dimensions of the wedding service.

Similarly the dedication of infants provides opportunity for parents to affirm, with renewed conviction, their commitment to nurture their own children in the faith.

The funeral affords us the opportunity of expressing our loss and grief in the context of faith. It provides the bereaved a vital rite of passage through a potentially shattering crisis. In such traumatic times, the known and the familiar exert a powerfully stabilising influence.

Continued on page 21

It is not sufficient just to say: God is the great Comforter

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Children and the Media

Viney Longthorp

Last August several groups, whose main concern is with the mass-media, combined their resources in a national program: **Book Week—On Film and Television**. The program contained some innovative and creative segments which highlighted the importance of the mass-media as affecting the lives of children. The aim of the Book Week was to set up a project to encourage and support teachers, parents and children in building on the positive links between literature and film and to harness the positive potential of television. Congratulations are in order for their efforts and the concern they have for the well-being of our children.

For the record, the planning group consisted of CBCA (Children's Book Council of Australia), CBCA (Victorian Branch), ACTF (Australian Children's Television Foundation), ACTAC (Australian Children's Television Action Committee) and the SFCV (State Film Centre Victoria).

This positive focus on television is welcome and helpful because the whole matter of television viewing, especially by children, has many inherent problems. In the most recent inquiry into young people and violence, the president of the Victims of Crime Assistance League, Tricia Rhodes, blamed the increasing violence that children are exposed to, on television and in films, for the trend towards more violent juvenile crime. ACTAC claims that the average child is exposed to more than 87,000 acts of violence on television during their school years.

However, one positive feature of television lies in its relationship with literature. Having a book dramatised on television is a proven way to increase the sales of that book, also increasing the borrowing of books from libraries. Paul Jennings' *Round the Twist* (Puffin) became a best seller with almost 100,000 copies sold to date as a result of the very popular "Round the Twist" series made by the ACTF. Also, the

outstanding sales of the book of *Adventures with E.C.*, stories, from the "Lift Off" series, is another example demonstrating the powerful possibilities television has as a catalyst for stimulating and broadening children's interest in a variety of literature. The desire of children to follow up a story in book form after viewing the film suggests that they are quite aware of the distinction between the pleasure of television viewing and that of reading. They afford different types of enjoyment and one is not the substitute for the other. Rather, they are complementary. Wise parents can build on this relationship. Both literature and film enable us to visit different perspectives, experience new ideas and stories, whilst being educated and entertained.

Books and television, then, should be viewed as being complementary. But there are two aspects to this council of perfection of which we should be aware. There are fields in which both television and books are not a substitute for each other; the unique powers of each should be used and respected. There are areas of education where the only effective tools are books. Marshall McLuhan's argument that the print media—the so-called Gutenberg Revolution—shaped the logical and mental powers of European civilisation and gave it its unique cultural "set" needs to be respected. Even so, the traditional standing of our "book culture" should not make us snobbish with regards to other forms of media.

Then there could also be a "down side" to the relationship between books and television. Whilst the incidence of illiteracy is a prime concern of our educators, so too is another worrying phenomena which is just as wide-spread—a literacy; that is, those who can read but won't. Many blame television for this. There is much research

going on in this field at present; simplistic conclusions need to be avoided. These observations must make many of us wary of television because of its power and irresistible attraction, based on humanity's visual propensities.

At best then, books and television do have a worthwhile relationship, but because of the special nature of television, especially in its enormous potential to affect the lives of children, the **Australian Children's Television Action Committee** offer these suggestions to parents as to the wise use of television in the home:

- Be an active rather than a passive viewer; develop a critical eye
- Read the TV guide and select suitable programs
- Turn the TV off when the program has finished
- Establish some reasonable viewing rules with respect to: viewing times in total, homework, viewing before school and at mealtimes
- Use the VCR to record suitable programs outside the child's regular viewing time
- Watch programs with your child whenever possible
- Take opportunity to talk about TV programs and ads; question the use of violence
- Encourage your children to develop other interests and activities so that television does not come to dominate their interests

Needless to say these suggestions can be added to or altered to suit a wide diversity of circumstances and life-styles. Even so, those who take Christian values seriously will not heed much persuasion concerning the need for discrimination, especially in the light of a reading of Rom. 12 and Phil. 4:8.

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Continued from page 20

ence. The familiar church environment, familiar Scriptures, and familiar faces, can be of inestimable support.

The funeral frequently affords mourners the rare privilege of making another "little instalment" in their own unresolved grief. The grieving process is so complex it must necessarily be dealt with numerous times and at various levels. It is important for us to recognise both the appropriateness, and the positive impact for emotional well-being, that this catharsis provides. Mourners are also brought into unavoidable confrontation with their own mortality, and the certainty that they too shall someday die. In light of this outrageous assault upon the ego, the Christian message of eternal life through

faith in Christ is comfort indeed.

Most worship services abound with pastoral opportunities. There are few major life-crises which cannot find expression in some worshiping context. ¶ It is imperative that ministers, in particular, rediscover the powerful pastoral dynamic inherent in worship and strive to produce services that will facilitate healing, comfort, and nurture.

* Howard J. Clinebell, *The Mental Health Ministry of the Local Church* p.77.

† Gerard Egan's term. *The Skilled Helper* (1975).

‡ William H. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care* p.42.

§ Paul W. Pruyser, *The Minister as Diagnostician* p.43

¶ Divorce is the notable exception.

Personal

Baptisms

•Thomas Wragg, Naracoorte, SA
 •Scott Kernaghan, East Keilor, Vic
 •David Kemp, Lucinda Kemp, Echuca, Vic •Jacki Jamison, Mavis Mitchell, Boronia, Vic •Thelma Blainey, Northcote, Vic •Ida-Adelle Phillips, Maidstone, Vic •Lucy Sargent, Thea Woznitza, Jeanette Phillips, Stephen & Debbie Smith, Madeline Borg, Scott Patterson, Peter McKenzie, Kevin Geale, Neil Carter, Beryl Hatton, Matthew Hatton, Adam Day, Danny Arrowsmith, Manning Valley, NSW

Marriages

•Jenny Lane to Kim Aylesbury, Naracoorte, SA •Jan Spencer to Doug Firth, Boronia, Vic •Natalie Mayers to Anthony Drury, Becky Wales to David Hollis, Manning Valley, NSW

Deaths

•Percy Foster, Naracoorte, SA
 •Helen Hayes, Betty Hayes, William Crowe, Peter Peck, Carnarvon, WA •Ethel Rogers, Dalby, Qld •Dick Tutton, Boronia, Vic •Kitty Woolgrove, Perth, WA •Jean Pert, Beryl Langford, Ray Medley, Surrey Hills, Vic •Cec Lambert, Nell James, Manning Valley, NSW

Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Woolgrove, Kitty

In 1946, John and Kitty Woolgrove brought their six children from the UK to make a ne home in WA, first at Kalgoorlie, then Bunbury and finally Perth. During this time two more daughters were born to them. They joined the Perth church in 1961. Widowed in 1980, Kitty re-

NSW

WAKELEY (Grant Ramsey) Foundation for Wakeley chapel complex down. Steel structure next item ... Special worship meeting for membership, affirmation of continuing support ... Yugoslav brethren helping financially & physically ... All legal official work registered as Wakeley Church of Christ, 32-36 Box Rd ... Home groups popular ... Some decisions confirmed ... Girls' Life Brigade's 40th anniversary celebrated 30 May. Great reunion ... Seminars "Evangelism as a Lifestyle" led by Ross Wakeley well received.

MAITLAND (R.N. Hawkins) Billy Graham films on "Hope" shown ... "Light Force" youth choir, USA, presented morning worship with song ... Rhema FM doing three months trial broadcast. Minister doing slots, Lance Hawkins a presenter ... Ross Wakeley spoke & presented great seminar "Understanding Me—Understanding You" ... Peter & Larena

mained in membership until her death on 21 July, shortly before her 80th birthday. Kitty had a joyful love for her Lord and spent much time in prayer, reading her Bible and in a ministry of song. Generous with hospitality and a great encourager, she is sadly missed from our fellowship. Loving sympathy to her 8 children, 26 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

—TDB

Changes

Department of Community Care, Vic-Tas—Driver: Glenn Mill, phone 460 2006 for pick-ups.

CAVESIDE: Secretary—Rodney Stockman, RSD 615, Chudleigh, Tas 7304. Phone (003) 63 6151.

Church News

Thwaite new parents with Jared Benjamin.

MANNING VALLEY (Barry Rice, Ross Norling, Guy Cooper) Sunday night Koori young people's group, who meet in separate location, shared in service with singer Steve Bennett ... New computer equipment donated ... Challenging men's camp held with Graeme Sercombe & ladies' camp with Susan Larkin ... Growing ministry in high schools ... Men's accountability groups commenced ... Good response to special Father's Day services ... Drama being used effectively.

SA

NARACOORTE (Steve Kitto) Around 60 had an uplifting time at annual men's meeting with guest speaker Jeff May. Jeff also spoke at services on Sunday ... Over 40 enjoyed an informal games night recently ... Sunday evening service at earlier time of 6 pm for winter months, followed by soup & toast ... We were delighted to see Thomas Wragg baptised recently.

DULWICH/ROSE PARK (Roger Brown, Rob Williams) Purchase of drum for recently formed young people's band financed by gifts from well-wishers amounting to \$250. Drums blessed before morning service 29 August. Bob & Andrew Ham led move for formation of band which plays in non-traditional services in hall ... Garry Harris (Vic) visiting speaker 5 September.

MUNDULLA (J. Main) 47 attended Sunday School organised luncheon for Bible Society. Insights into India, PNG & as Aboriginal in Australia today emphasised ethnic & indigenous theme. \$110 resulted ... "Sleep-out" by senior youth raised \$580 for Adelaide City Mission winter appeal ... CWF enter-

tained hospital C Wing residents ... 15 attended John Main's Worship Planning workshop ... AGM reports revealed active, quiet witness all areas of church's responsibilities.

Qld

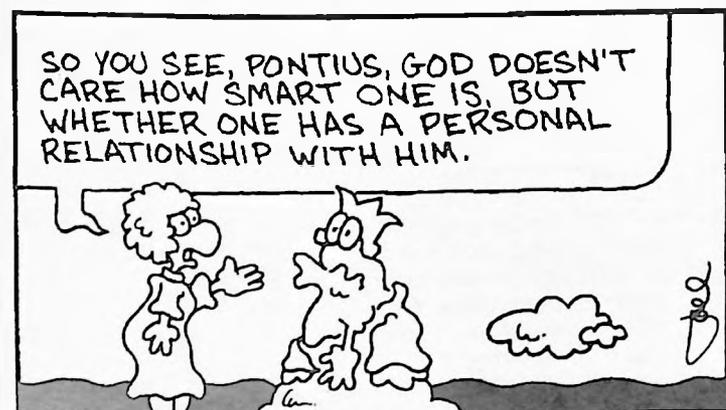
DALBY (A.C. Ochse, S.L. Colyer) Arana Hills youth visited to help on drought-stricken properties. Our youth returned visit ... Visit by John Timms, Indian Village Evangelism ... Ladies visited Blue Nurses Day Care Centre, gave devotions and assisted with games ... Three attending meeting in Brisbane on Boston Movement ... 69 Ladies enjoyed rally day, program by Harlaxton ... Annual meeting held.

Tas

LAUNCESTON (Craig Spaulding, Darryl Tobler) Peter Barns speaker at 7 pm 29 August ... Natalie Hays home after 2 years with Operation Mobilisation in Europe ... Ministers attended Retreat at Phillip Island last week ... Ladies catered for engagement party for Jodie Foster and Andrew Rothwell for Building Fund ... Special Fathers Day service 5 September well attended ... Church entered 33rd year of helping with Meals on Wheels.

CAVESIDE (John & Colleen Harrison) AGM appointed Rodney Stockman as new church secretary ... Church combined with Anglicans for annual Blessing of the Plough service on 29 August ... Framed long service certificate presented to Sally Byard in appreciation of 10 years faithful service as church musician (organist). Sally is 23 years old ... Antique cupboard restored by Nicky Byard to accommodate library books.

Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kaufmann

Church News

Vic

EAST KEILOR (Jim Tilson) Successful women's dinner. Speaker Mary Ambrose ... Men's dinner speaker Peter Wing Tang ... Western region ministers held men's breakfast with Doug Kercher (pro golfer) ... Church excited by baptism of Scott Kernaghan & 13 welcomed into membership. Conference President, Max Gowty, guest speaker this day ... Youth camp at Lake Eppalock. Studies on relationships & opposite sex ... Hodos has wide range of activities including Family Violence & Sexual Assault in the Church seminar.

CARNEGIE Pam & Neville Wight have accepted a part-time ministry at Carnegie, commencing February 1994 ... Day-time Bible study commenced ... Guest speakers during July & August much appreciated ... Ruth & Ralph Hall welcomed back after three months overseas ... Asian students taking an active part in running the church ... Mang Chung Cheong elected to the eldership.

ECHUCA (Arthur Symes) August an exciting month ... Early in month, David Kemp baptised & his eldest daughter made commitment, she was baptised at end of month (David's wife, Carol, was baptised earlier this year) ... Kevin Draper, Bible Society, visited and a film on Learners shown.

BORONIA (Keith Milne, Andrew Henley) Ministers involved in National Convention, members helping, attending opening celebrations & meetings ... Contemporary services (7 pm) attracting young people ... Hour of music, prayer & reading with minister on weekday mornings ... "Jesus then and now" seminar with Greg Elsdon (5 weeks) ... City of Knox Citizens Award to Don Maguire ... Recent speakers: Dr Elizabeth Nolan (CCES) & Neville Lilley (Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship)

NORTHCOTE (F.B. Alcorn) Annual meeting in August ... Thelma Blainey baptised & received into membership 29 August ... Focus for September "Commitment to our Vision & our Mission" ... A number in hospital during September ... Sherrill Harry (manager FCH) speaker at CWF ... Minister delegate of VTH to annual conference of Aust. Drug Council, then on leave till 3 October.

SURREY HILLS (David Brooker, Julie Adam, Frank Langford) A joyful church anniversary. Guest speaker Jack McCormick ... Dedication of refurbished chapel a bitter-sweet occasion following deaths of Beryl Langford, Jean Part & Ray Medley ... Adventure Time new

leaders Justine Clarke & Katie Williams assist Tim Adam ... Caroline & Bruce Verity farewelled & thanked for their youth leadership & music ... CWF-200 hospital gifts & support for Kensington Network ... Glynis Smalley now editor of "Friendly Word".

WA

DIANELLA (Tony Armstrong) Church appreciating innovative Armstrong ministry ... PM numbers increasing ... \$1300 raised for World Vision through 40 Hour Famine ... Big turnout for service of

music & drama run by youth ... Full day of prayer August. Prayer retreat planned September ... 29 August members took train to Dwellingup Forest where communion service held in open ... Mission with gospel singer Steve Grace planned 10 October.

CARNARVON (K. O'Brien) Church concert held at Olive Laird Hostel to entertain wildflower tour group visiting FAB fields ... Parent controlled Christian school to commence next year using church hall & facilities ... Weekly prayer meeting in operation ... Ladies enjoyed visit of CWCI safariteam. Speaker Marion Kitchen

& song leader Glennis Kent ... Prayer, praise & planning meeting held at Holtham's plantation.

PERTH (George Powell) Minister in Melbourne for National Conference ... Recent guest speakers from Bible Society, Gideons and Life in Focus ... Praise God Russians now teaching Christianity in schools instead of communism ... Community House Church at the manse Saturdays 5.30-6.30 with basket tea to follow ... Dorothy Holstein's missionary messages much appreciated ... Much prayer offered for healing for Gordon Kay and Jen Anderson.

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Churchgoers Want Change

National Church Life Survey results

The latest results of a national survey of 310,000 Protestant churchgoers shows that almost 2/3 want change in their church and an even greater majority desire larger congregations. The upshot of the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) indicates that the church is adapting and has an unprecedented openness to change.

Some 32% of respondents are already implementing new directions for their congregation, while a further 30% are contemplating change. The shift may relate to forms of worship, church structures, leadership styles or types of decision-making.

According to research team member, Ruth Powell, the results challenge common perceptions that the church is immovable and incapable of change. "The church is adapting; it is possibly more open to change than it ever has been."

Some 3/4 of churchgoers would like their churches to be larger. The longing for church growth is not confined to any one group; irrespective of age, denominational backgrounds or size of congregation.

The Survey did find, however, a strong link between church growth and implementing change. 40% of attenders who say their church is pursuing new directions are in congregations that are growing, compared to 26% of declining congregations.

The denominations most likely to implement new directions are the Pentecostal and some large Protestant denominations. Mainstream denominations like the Anglican and Uniting Churches have the largest proportions of attenders who want to rethink the future. Those who do not want change are likely to be older people seeking stability or satisfied enthusiasts.

The satisfied enthusiasts are highly committed people who want to maintain church the way it is, because through it they have experienced much growth in their faith.

Tertiary educated people, or attenders from high status occupations, are more likely to believe that their congregations are open to change than people from other socioeconomic backgrounds.

- The NCLS also found that;
- over 80% of people who attend congregations with fewer than 100 people would like their congregations to be larger and;
 - 94% of baby boomers (40-49 years) would like their congregations to be larger.

Another member of the Survey team, Merilyn Correy, said: "Many congregations are exploring change, working out what is right for them in their particular area. We are seeing lots of exciting new models of ministry. For example, there are ethnic and interest based congregations. Groups are meeting in schools and homes. Church life is much more diverse than the stereotypes perceived by the public and media."

The NCLS was conducted in August 1991 covering 6700 Protestant congregations.

Those completing the Survey form were attenders over the age of 15. Almost 80% of congregations invited to participate completed and returned Survey forms.

The NCLS is a joint project of the Anglican Home Mission Society (Diocese of Sydney) and the Uniting Church Board of Mission (NSW).

The Last Word

A Christian will find it cheaper to pardon than to resent. Forgiveness saves the expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits.

—Hannah Moore

Teacher: "What's the formula for water?"
Student: "H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O."
Teacher: "That's not the formula I gave you."
Student: "Yes it is. You said H to O."

★★★★★

What's more clever than speaking in several languages?
Keeping your mouth shut in one.

★★★★★

What is the most appropriate of all songs for the choir to sing just after the morning sermon?

"Awake, Ye Sinners."

★★★★★

A minister was asked to inform a man with a heart condition that he had just inherited \$1 million. Everyone was afraid the shock would cause a heart attack and the man would die. The minister went to the man's house and said, "Joe, what would you do if you inherited a million dollars?" Joe responded, "Well, pastor, I think I would give half of it to the church."

And the minister fell over dead.

★★★★★

We had a membership drive in our church. Last week we drove off thirty-five.

★★★★★

Why did the man stare at the orange juice container for three hours?
It said "Concentrate".

★★★★★

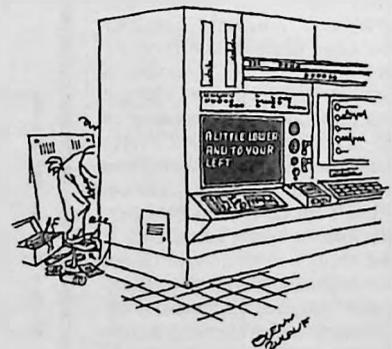
Why can't a bicycle stand up for very long?
It's two-tyred.

★★★★★

Have you heard of the "Dial-a-Prayer" service for atheists? When you call, nobody answers!

★★★★★

Anyone who goes to a psychiatrist ought to have their head examined!



Source: *The Best Cartoons from The Saturday Evening Post* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1993)



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