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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

Tradition and Innovation



—page 3



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Photograph courtesy *On The Coast*

New Features

This first issue of *The Australian Christian* for 1994 introduces two new features:

"Minister's Musings" are reflections based on a week in the life of one of our ministers, and "Biblical Comment" is a discussion of a forthcoming Sunday calendar reading.

Changes to Regulars

Changes have also been made to two of our regular features.

"Happenings" has disappeared as an independent page. Instead, the happenings have been separated into world and Australian events, people stories and forthcoming events worth noting in your calendars. These now appear as single columns throughout the pages of the "AC". "Growing Spiritually" has been renamed "Christian Reflection", encompassing a broader range of content.

THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

Vol. 97 No. 1
5 February 1994

Managing Editor: Chris Ambrose
Assistant: Nigel Pegram

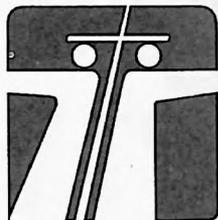
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Guest Editorial

Family Ministry and Mission

Alan Niven

A checklist to ensure that your church's contribution to the International Year of the Family is significant.

1. Demonstrate Integrity

No church worth its salt would baptise candidates without pre and post-baptismal instruction and support. Is it responsible to allow your minister to marry couples without providing, as a church, premarital education or marriage enrichment experiences? You don't have to do it yourself; there are plenty of resources around.

Do you have services of dedication and blessing for new babies? What about the promises by the congregation to support the new family? Are they backed up by parenting education programs?

2. Model Competent, Honest, "Family" Life

Let's encourage our members to get off their "copability pedestals", they're pretty wobbly at the best of times! There are competent families in your church (perhaps your own) which seem to have it all together and are therefore somehow unapproachable. In fact we all struggle and it is up to the families in leadership to honestly model this struggle in ways appropriate to their family style and personality. Take some risks. Your people may grow from your pain.

3. Blessed to be a Blessing

Because of the essentially middle-class nature of our membership we have a great deal of "cultural collateral" in our churches. Our children are exposed to books and literature; many of them take music lessons; holidays and travel are common (unlike many children in Australia); they are in sports clubs, youth groups etc, and just ask their exhausted parents about the taxi-service trap. I'm convinced we have many competent families with sound values and healthy lifestyles liberally sprinkled with hugs, encouraging conversations, affirming relationships and highly developed skills. Open your doors and let it rub off on others in natural and non patronising ways.

4. Develop a Maintenance/Enrichment Orientation

Remember what Jesus said about giving us abundant life. Why not develop a policy

of "making good things better" or at least check that everything is going well with relationships within your church. After all we paint the spouting and service the car. A 20,000 mile service on a marriage is a good idea or a grease and oil change for a beleaguered single parent or step-family is much easier to sell if you give the message: This is a church which believes that enrichment is a natural part of life. Not many things thrive on neglect! Relationships don't. Look at the minutes of your last 12 months board meetings to see if any of these issues appeared on the agenda.

5. Focus Through Worship and Liturgies

We have weddings, funerals, baptisms and dedications. What about other significant events in the life-cycle which may only merit the odd prayer or line in the Newsletter? Obviously we need to observe confidentiality and be sensitive to different needs. Think about: renewal of marriage vows; services of healing following reconciliation in marital difficulties; special prayers as people retire or move from their home of 60 years into a village; prayers and support as the first child goes to school or as the last child goes to school thus bringing great grief and loss; a simple memorial focus a year after a death of a loved one. Check through your pastoral and prayer lists. Can the worship service be a new place for continued healing?

An ongoing commitment to seek to express in worship our belief that God is concerned about all facets and expressions of what it means to be family must be a part of our agenda

6. Network with the Community

Why reinvent the wheel or try to do everything? Local Community Health Centres, churches, community and service groups along with Councils and Shires all provide excellent programs. Evaluate them, but look for who is working well in the area of family support and education. Talk to them, listen to their ideas, offer to help and in so doing develop healthy networks. You will very quickly find these groups referring people to you.

7. Develop a Pro-Am Approach

Some programs in the life-skills areas or marriage and parenting fields may be run

Norwood Pageant

An obvious Christian presence

by "experts" or professionals. However, parents, couples and individuals skilled in communication and group dynamics have been used by ministers for many years in running premarital and other educational programs such as divorce recovery or working with adolescents. I always look for potential leaders in any parenting program.

Family resources and skills are there to be used in ministry to others.

8. Choose Preaching and Teaching Themes

Check back over the last two years of preaching themes and look for topics related to family life and relationships, or visiting speakers who focussed on the church's mission to families in crisis. Topics can range from care of those who are frail with age to healthy perspectives on sexuality. There is plenty of material in Scripture on both topics.

It is also relevant to preach with the goal of educating church members on their attitude to families different in structure to the nuclear family. In some churches step-families are still seen as somehow "deviant" and the single-parent will still suffer discrimination. Even to be still single by choice or to decide not to have children can be greeted with cool disfavour. A good start would be to address this through clear teaching from the Gospels.

9. Keep Up with the Trends

Read the papers and cut out articles on research into the family in Australia. Subscribe to *Family Matters*, the Journal of the Australian Institute for Family Studies and switch over from the "family soaps" to some of the excellent documentaries on the family.

I have been to meetings in the last year where churches have planned to do some great things in family ministry but their definition of family was mum, dad and two or three children. The separated mother with a child who lived with her grandparents doesn't fit. Nei-

ther do the three children who spend one week with dad and one week with mum and her new husband who has a much older daughter with a child of her own at home. This is reality. Do we stick our heads in the sand, make our moral judgments, get frightened off by the complexity and in the end decide they're somehow not within our charter?

With over 100 floats and 15,000-20,000 spectators, the Norwood Christmas pageant is South Australia's largest suburban pageant.

The outgoing Premier, Lynn Arnold, rode a bike, live camels and donkeys wandered down one of South Australia's busiest and most cosmopolitan shopping areas.

Enterprises as diverse as Annesley College's solar car team and the local breweries displayed their wares through their entries. Twenty-seven people from the Maylands, SA, church marched with a float. They were aged between five and eighty, including one who was eight months pregnant and one who the following week would be spending Christmas in his Ko-

rean home, ranging from business people to the unemployed. Some had painted faces and many were covered with tinsel.

10. Be Unashamedly Proactive and Enthusiastic

Of course we must be careful in our understanding of what family actually is, but the essentials of responsibility in relationships, communication, care and nurture of marriages and children, pastoral care of those who have been through divorce or abuse and a commitment to community education are not hard to get excited about.

There must be a group of people in every church prepared to gather information, promote programs and challenge the leadership to address these issues.

1994 may just be the year to commence such a group.

The float was a giant double-sided Christmas card, proclaiming that "Jesus is the reason for the season" and saying "Merry Christmas" in two dozen different languages.



• South Australia's largest suburban pageant

Two thousand specially-designed Christmas cards, which included Christmas service details for both the local Church of Christ and Uniting Church, were given to spectators, along with 600 balloons.

The church's annual pageant entry helps lead many spectators to observe that the Norwood pageant, unlike its internationally famous John Martins counterpart, has an obvious Christian presence.

—Richard Lawton

Ministry Training Centre Begins

WA training centre underway

Following a lengthy period of preparation, the West Australian churches will see the inaugural class of the Churches of Christ Ministry Training Centre get underway in February.

Assome students are already part-way through courses begun with the Baptist Theological College, there will be four students being supervised in student ministries, and a fifth student from Carlingford will be supervised under our program.

Two awards are being offered.

An Assoc Dip Min for students who have completed a three year Diploma of Christian Ministry at either Perth Bible College or WA Bible College, and a Grad Dip Min for students who are complet-

ing a BTheol or a BD at the Baptist Theological College.

The newly appointed Registrar, John Clapp, says "The most important dimension of training that we are seeking to give is in the area of personal and spiritual formation for ministry."

"Practical skills for ministry will also be important, but personal aptitude for ministry and spiritual stamina need careful nurture and development."

The inaugural Commencement Service will be conducted on 28 February at 7.30 pm in the Manning church which is being established as the administrative centre for the Ministry Training Centre. John Bond will bring the address for the occasion and all are invited to attend.

Christmas at Aldgate Valley

Proclamation and celebration



• Aldgate Valley's Christmas window which was designed by the late Ray Caudle

The little church in Aldgate Valley, SA, sees the Christmas season as a major opportunity for innovative proclamation and drawing the surrounding community into celebration. Through the local Interchurch Association, Australia Post notifies each household in the district council area of the churches' Christmas programs.

The four Sundays of Advent give opportunity for the congregation to prepare for the coming Christmas celebrations.

This year we adapted a Lutheran "O Come" liturgy, using the seven symbols to gradually build up a stunning platform display. One of these services featured a dedication of goods collected by worshippers for Community Care. At the same time, funds were being raised for COCOA through the sale of Christmas cards featuring Aldgate Valley's Christmas window. Advent culminated with a barbecue and outdoor carol service.

Christmas week saw the introduction of a new service—a memorial service for those families who would be very much aware of an empty seat at their Christmas celebrations. The church expressed its solidarity with those whose loss makes it difficult for them to enter festivities. It provided a place for remembering, with healing pain and joy, the contributions to life of those who had gone before. It was important to experience the sense of loss within the context of the Christmas message—"God with us" in all our experiences. A candle representing the "cloud of witnesses" was added to the manger scene.

The crowded Christmas Eve midnight watch service was preceded by a truckload of carollers that toured the district, including nursing homes and individual residences. Later in the evening, the truck stopped outside the Aldgate Pump Hotel, ran an electric lead for the keyboard inside, and carolled its delighted patrons. Encores here, as well as each other stopping place, made this an enjoyable night for the 30 carollers.

An overflow service on Christmas Day brought celebrations to a head. The minister told the story of the polystyrene angel (a prominent feature of the platform display) and how it realised that the job of herald angels, plastic or real, was not over while human pain and misery still existed. Theirs

Bethlehem 4560

A journey back in time

What would you do with two hundred bales of hay, two hundred meters of raw hessian, four fig trees, five palm trees, thirty (felled) pine trees, a camp oven, a grain grinder, a butcher's block, a spinning wheel, a loom, fifty pairs of leather thongs, three hundred meters of dress material, various clay pots, rugs, wicker baskets, gourds, dates, figs, olives, five sheep, six chickens, three camels and one very vocal donkey?

The Nambour Church of Christ on the Sunshine Coast decided to use all of these ingredients, plus a cast and crew of hundreds, to put a new twist into the annual nativity scene. The church built its own Bethlehem within the church grounds, complete with carpenter's shop, stables, spinners, weavers, potters, Roman soldiers, shepherds, beggars and even a few lepers. (4560 is the postal code for Nambour) The intention was to literally bring home the reality of Messiah's birth to the community. Authenticity was the order of the day. The usual nativity scenes performed by children dressed in dressing gowns and tea towels, though cute, fall short of providing people with an experience of first-century Bethlehem.

The project began with the setting up of an operations centre at the church, manned by Wayne Thomson, who coordinated activities. Over two thousand children from local schools visited Bethlehem 4560 in a period of one week, as part of their religious education program. They were able to see for themselves how things looked when the Wise Men arrived for

was still the task to announce that, because of Jesus' birth, "God is with us."

Afterwards, the congregation sampled Christmas cake, prepared by the children as part of the sermon on the last Sunday of Advent.

—Dennis Ryle

the first Christmas. Local bus companies donated their services to carry children to and from Bethlehem 4560.

On the evening of 27 November, over one thousand people from the community attended a re-enactment of the Messiah's birth. A narrator read the gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus as the live action unfolded. The drama was interspersed with choir and community carol singing. The grand finale came with the singing of "Joy to the World" as fireworks burst into a spectacular display of light and colour overhead. However, that was not the end of Bethlehem 4560. Throughout the holiday period, the celebration of the birth of Christ continued with service to the needy in the community. Bethlehem baskets (food hampers) were delivered to people in need of a little help and a lot of encouragement. Even as I write, the distribution continues, as we receive referrals from agencies such as Life Line, Community Care and the Social Services.

At the onset of this project, it was determined that all would be done in the strength of the Lord, to the glory of the Lord. Everything was undergirded with prayer, and the church has once more experienced the strength and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

—Orrell Battersby

T.E. Rofe Settlement

Applications for grants to assist with fees and books from the T E Rofe Settlement are invited from ministers who are graduates of the Churches of Christ Theological College, Vic, and who are studying at an Australian tertiary institution. Application forms are available from CCTC (PO Box 629, Mulgrave North 3170, phone (03) 790 1000) and will close on 4 March 1994.

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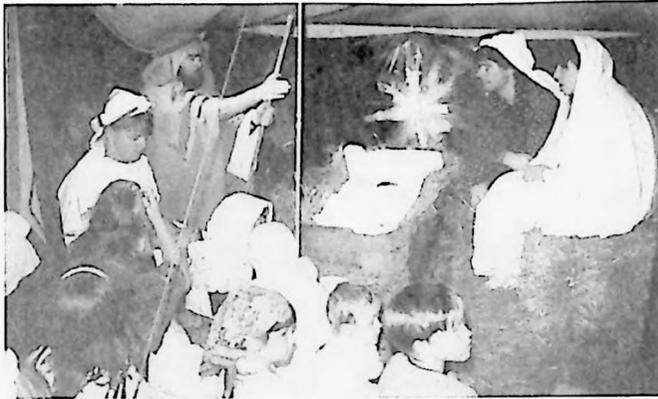
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"Service since 1907"

Night at the Inn

Nowra nativity



• **Worshipping the baby**

Recently a special "Night at the Inn" was enjoyed by over one hundred people in Nowra, NSW. During the evening, Mary and Joseph arrived and were ac-

commodated in the stable, as there was no room in the inn. Soon, news came of the birth and all were invited to go out to the stable and worship the newborn baby—Jesus.

WCDM Graduation

Training Aboriginal church workers

For three Aboriginal students, 5 December was their long-awaited graduation day. It was the culmination of three years of study in Wagga Wagga, NSW. Darren Whighton, Reg Lawrence and Karnegie MacDonald were awarded their diplomas. Darren was dux of his year, Reg won the award for cultural communication and Karnegie won an award for dedication to studies. A

fourth student, Mary Atkinson, will graduate at the end of this year.

What is WCDM? Wiradjuri Christian Development Ministries is an initiative of Pastor Cecil Grant of the Koorie church in Albury. Its aim is to train church service workers competent in theological studies, community and cultural aspects of contemporary Aboriginal life, as well as youth



• (L to R) Darren Lawrence, Karnegie MacDonald, Mary Atkinson and Reg Lawrence

Special Events at Ainslie



• **The Leng's 60th**

Throughout 1993, Ainslie, ACT, celebrated several special events. Of particular note was the Festival of Praise, designed to coincide with Floriade in September. Neil Adcock, Canberra Baptist Church, spoke to 50 at breakfast on the Saturday. Well-known Canberra pianist Lindsay Bingham assisted



• **"Honour this Child"**

with the morning worship, and students from Canberra School of Music entertained after a luncheon where the church celebrated the 60th wedding anniversary of Bill and Joyce Leng.

Another occasions of interest was a service entitled "Honour This Child". For this service, members of the church prepared **Chrismons** (Christ's monograms), special symbolic decorations which were hung at appropriate points during the service.

Born King of Kings was the title of the Christmas musical presented by members of the Ainslie congregation and children of the Sunday School, with the help of a few singers from Lyons and Belconnen

—Beth Butler

work, art, dance and language program. Formal studies are conducted on the WCDM property outside Wagga Wagga. Student field work is assessed on their involvement in and contribution to the day to day life of their home churches. Cec is assisted in the teaching program by Pastor Ivan Williams and his wife Maria.

A further two students expect to commence courses this year.

—AWM



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Traumatised Community Bushfire Emergency

Caring for the long haul

Consistent with the symptoms of shock and grief, there are many who point to the relatively light losses of life and property, in an attempt to minimise the experience that we have just lived through.

Appalled by their own helplessness, people gave generously to the various bushfire appeals. The Churches of Christ appeal has raised approx \$5000 to date, which has already been spent on immediate needs of people who have lost all their possessions.

As time passes, it has become clear that even if we could give each person who lost everything \$1 million, we would not even begin to help with their most pressing problem—the trauma of it all and the loss of “normality”. It has also become clear that people whose homes were jumped by the fire are suffering every bit as much as those who lost their homes. There are many people, particularly children, who panic at the sound of strong wind or who are unable to concentrate on the job in hand as they look at the blackened landscape that was once their leafy neighbourhood.

Research of the people who suffered the Ash Wednesday fires tells us that we can expect

to see a high level of social problems including family breakdown and health problems among this group of people.

Churches of Christ Community Care in NSW has already run two seminars for care givers and pastors on debriefing and post trauma syndrome (a story on these seminars will be in the next issue). We are looking at the possibility of adding a community worker to the staff of a strategically placed church, ideally for a period of 12 months. We think the overwhelming human need is in this area. Any future financial contributions may be channelled in this direction as well as continuing to meet material needs as they become apparent.

—Graham Long
Graham reported that no NSW churches suffered damage although flames reached some boundaries. It appears that only one church was destroyed over-all—Como West Presbyterian Church and manse. On the Sunday, the church held an open air service which was well-attended and was featured on most television news broadcasts. It appears that even church camping centres escaped major damage in these fires. -Editor!

An immediate response

Two of my brothers lived through the horror of Ash Wednesday in South Australia. The stories I heard about fireballs and the speed of fires and the bravery of the firefighters were amazing. Last Saturday, while I was holidaying in Gosford, I literally felt the temperature of the house increase as fire came to within a few hundred metres of our street. The atmosphere had been hazy with smoke and ash had been flowing through the windows for days.

Now my red car had turned mostly grey from ash, the smoke was thick and burning leaves occasionally blew by. The stress of looking at the contents of a house and wondering what should be put in the car in the next few moments is difficult to describe. The threat in NSW is far from over and it will be some time yet before we know the full extent of need that will meet us as a result of the fires. In some cases, ministers are involved in fighting fires and we can't begin to assess need. Already, however, we have some tragic stories from church folk and appeals for help. There are plenty of stories of frighteningly close calls.

There is, in this situation, a call to every Australian citizen, and especially the body of Christ, for a response of compassion and help. Churches of Christ Community Care and Social Service departments in every state of Australia are appealing to church members to make money donations for fire victims. Cheques should be made payable to either:

- Churches of Christ National Disaster Fund 77 Capel St West Melbourne 3003, or
- Churches of Christ Bushfire Relief Fund PO Box 140 Carlingford 2118.

—Graham Long
(Community Care, NSW)
[This response to the bushfires was faxed to us by Graham during the week of the fires. Just prior to going to publication Graham supplied us with the story of what the NSW Community Care Department has been doing since the fires. We also include a personal account from Barbara Spencer in this issue. In the next issue we will have a fuller story of the seminars that Community Care is running for care givers. —Ed]

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Bigger than Bunnies

Spreading the real Easter story

Many Christians are disenchanted by the misrepresentation of Easter by confectionery manufacturers who promote only the Easter Bunny.

Curt Bjerking is a graphic artist from Ringwood, Vic, with over 25 years experience in designing confectionery packaging. By designing Easter packs which tell the true meaning of Easter, Curt has proclaimed the biblical message that “Christ is Risen”

For those who love making their own chocolates or shortbreads, empty packs can also be purchased.

Churches and other relief organisations are invited to celebrate and share the real meaning of Easter, while at the same time raising funds for their groups, with Easter Gift packs with this biblical message.

Letters and leaflets are being distributed now to all denominations. If you would like to promote the Christian message of Easter or raise funds for your church or group, please direct your enquiries to Curt and Barb Bjerking, Manna House, PO Box 846, or 56 Smedley Rd, Ringwood 3134. Phone (03) 876 4722.

Australia

Church Attendance

According to the National Social Science Survey (a sample of over 2300 people aged over 18) the percentage of people attending church services every week (or more often) has risen from 18% to 18.4% between 1983 and 1994. However, there has been a rise in the percentage who say that they never attend a church service: from 29.3% in 1983 to 33.5% in 1993. Over the decade, there has been a substantial increase in the percentage of Australians describing themselves as having no religion from 10% in 1983 to 26% in 1993. Over the same period, there has been a decline in confidence in belief (which may explain the church attendance figures). In 1983, 71% said they believed in a personal God whilst in 1993 this was 61%.

Olympic Ministry

In December, the Heads of Churches and significant parachurch organisations met to establish a combined churches Sydney 2000 Olympic city-wide ministry. Key recommendations came from the Roman Catholic Church that the ministry model needs to be Australian and not American, from the Uniting Church that the ministry requires a strong social justice component and from Fusion that Aboriginal reconciliation should be addressed.

Caring for Carers

Caring for Family Caregivers is a support group that addresses the emotional, social and psychological needs of carers of the dependent aged. They welcome carers of relatives with all manner of disability and illnesses. Caring for Family Caregivers was developed by Dr Noel and Dr Cynthia Schultz after years of working with families under pressure. To date, 220 leaders have been trained from throughout Australia (the majority being from Victoria and New South Wales), to lead CFC groups. Information on leader training and carer groups can be obtained from Highfields Centre, PO Box 55, Ivanhoe 3079. Phone (03) 497 1277, fax (03) 497 3275.

A Great Debt

Thanking the unselfish

Today is Saturday (15 Jan), an overcast, grey day with constant drizzle, the temperature is about 18°. I find it hard to believe it was only a week ago that I sat glued to my radio and TV to keep track of the raging bushfires that were consuming my city from all sides.

My husband Ian is an Ambulance Paramedic and Station Officer of Parramatta Station, Sydney. Last Thursday and Friday (6-7 Jan) he worked two night shifts at Hornsby Fire Command Centre, coordinating ambulance response into the North Shore fire areas and liaising with other emergency services. Saturday morning, on completion of his 14-hour shift, all night shift staff were asked to remain on station for fire alert, however by 9.30 the decision was made to send these officers home. I was very excited to have Ian home as he was now on two weeks long service leave and lots of family outings and relaxation had been planned.

Ian was rather tired after a hectic couple of nights, so he

decided to catch a few hours' sleep. By this time, the news bulletins were very regular and the whole situation was worsening due to a change in wind strength and direction. I was personally very concerned for family members on the southern side of Sydney and rang them to ensure they were well prepared to evacuate should the need arise.

At about 11.30 am a news flash came for all off-duty Ambulance Officers to report in. Ian had been asleep for less than an hour and I hesitated to wake him; however the need was obviously great and the request unheard of in Ian's 18 years' experience. He called in and was asked to immediately report to our closest Ambulance Station from where he was sent to the Blue Mountains fire-front. I was unaware of where he was, but I was hearing of Nursing Homes being evacuated and felt sure he would be assisting there, so was little concerned for his safety. Our home was about 40 km from the fire-front and yet our children were

collecting burnt leaves from our yard. The skies were an eerie colour of red/yellow, the sun a ball of red and the air was full of smoke and ash.

I didn't expect to see Ian home that night, but he came in at 10 pm. He told me that in fact he had been sent to the immediate fire-front at Booker Road, Winnmalee, and that he had been caught in a fire-storm. Six bushfire trucks surrounded his ambulance and all officers took cover in their vehicles as the fire passed over the top. He tells me the heat cannot be described and his thought at the time was that the windows must surely explode with the heat. Within minutes, the immediate danger to himself had passed and he was then able to get to work assisting firemen and any local residents with smoke inhalation and eye irritation due to smoke and ash. It was later revealed that seven homes in that street had been lost during the fire-storm. I was glad I hadn't known where he'd been or I'd have been much more concerned. He managed to have a restless night's sleep and next morning was called back up to the same area. He attended a young firefighter who had sustained serious upper airway burns and assisted many others. He remained on duty until 2 am Monday. On the third day he was recalled into Hornsby Fire Control for several hours.

What a hectic few days. As Ian reflects on his involvement he sees it as all part of his job as an Ambulance Officer. He didn't at any time feel concern for his own safety, but only concern for those who needed his help. I look back and now realise that Ian was in an extremely dangerous situation, along with all those whose one thought was to help those whose lives and property were at risk. We owe these men and women a great deal of thanks for their unselfish attitude to others.

—Barbara Spencer
(Pendle Hill, NSW)

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Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to 200 words

Finishing a Sermon

To the Editor,

I was somewhat intrigued by Pastor Salt's strategies for winding up the preacher. ("AC" 4 December)

There is another not listed, which has proved effective. When my grandfather, George, had preached long enough in the opinion of Mary Jane (my grandmother) she began to clear her throat loud enough for him to hear. I believe that, being a loving and affectionate husband, he usually got the message.

I personally have found the quiet word of a discerning wife; particularly when she says "You could really have finished at that point" and you know very well that you could and should have, to be a good guide to an effective sermon.

However, I appreciated the good Pastor's advice in the latter part of the article. It brought to mind what Dietrich Bonhoeffer had to say about the sermon or Word of the Church. In the record of his lectures on Christology he says, "Christ is not only present in the Word of the Church, but also as Word of the Church, that means the spoken Word of preaching. The whole Christ is present in preaching, humiliated and exalted. This place belongs to the simplest sermon. The sermon is both the riches and the poverty of the Church. It is the form of the present Christ to which we are bound and to which we must hold."

It is also recorded that when he was president of the seminary which he founded and operated until closed by Himmler in 1937, he never did a critique of a student's sermon in class, but only on a one to one basis in a quiet place.

What a privilege it is to both speak and to listen.

—Ken Dawson
(Brooklyn Park, SA)

Dogma and Doctrine.

To the Editor,

I must take issue with my friend Max Collyer ("AC" 4

December) over his criticism of Nigel Mann's article in 20 November issue.

Read again Nigel's first four paragraphs. There is a difference between the teachings of Jesus and the doctrines of people. Of these we must beware. (Col. 2:22) Many of our cherished doctrines are really dogmas which have arisen out of the desire to defend a particular view or belief. There is a subtle difference between the two—doctrine being the teaching which can be theoretical, whilst dogma is established belief. There is also a vast difference between the "teachings of Christianity" and the teachings of Jesus. Neither doctrine, dogma or "Christian teachings" are necessarily in accordance with what the Bible actually says. Often they are what we have been taught that it says.

My wife and I have, since moving to Queensland, been forced to withdraw from a fellowship (not Church of Christ) because they introduced a constitutional belief in a doctrine to which we could not give our assent. I was also excluded from membership of a certain men's fellowship for the same reason. I thank God that over the 29 years that we were in fellowship at Boronia, no one suggested that our differences of opinion should force us out of membership.

The concept of fellowship depending on one's acceptance of a catechism or code of beliefs limits God to working in the way we think he ought to but you cannot tie God down. He has inspired his word to work in us for our salvation but to insist on particular interpretations of the word is going too far. By all means let us hold to sound doctrine but let it be Jesus' teachings not the dogmas that others tell us that we should believe because they have been taught to believe them. Remember our "creed"—"Where the Bible speaks—we speak". We should not be bound by the edict of Bishop or Emperor, saint or theologian, but by what the Spirit of God reveals to us.

—Geoff Keeler
(Palmwoods, Qld)

Fundamentalists Defined

To the Editor,

Regarding the letter of Jim Longbottom ("AC" 20 December). Is it a try-on to see if he could make it into print, or does he sincerely believe that our editor censors letters?

Regarding his derogatory definition of fundamentalists, perhaps I can enlighten.

A fundamentalist is one who holds that the whole Bible is the inerrant word of God, given to humanity, and who believes every word from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. He or she totally rejects all man-made dogma, customs and traditions, and sincerely tries, repeat tries, to live a godly, Spirit-led life according to Scripture. They are not "Bible Bashers", and would certainly not try to force their views on others. Christ did not do this. He simply said, "I stand

at the door and knock".

However they are not, and should never be, a silent minority. Christ was very vocal about the society of his time, including the clergy. The fundamentalist will also speak out against injustice and the way society is heading today.

A vast number of those who claim Christianity, are not prepared to accept the Bible in its entirety, including the clergy. It isn't "scientific" (!) and it can hurt! The definition of a Christian is one who tries to be like Christ. Christ believed implicitly in the Scripture, our Old Testament. If any won't believe what Christ believed, they are using the name falsely. Knowing many "charos" and "fundys", I would say they are closer to the Kingdom than many "Sunday Christians" and "liberals".

—J.H. Luxton
(Biggenden, Qld)

Letters to a Travelling Companion

Architecture or God

Dear Daniel,

I had no idea that you were going on an overseas holiday. Thanks for you postcard from Saint Paul's in London. I am not surprised to hear that it was awe-inspiring to worship there. I am sure that the architecture of such places lends a whole new dimension to worship.

I wonder, however, if we can place too much emphasis on the design and content of our places of worship. What I mean is that sometimes the sanctuary can become a distraction to worship, simply because we can end up worshipping the architecture and furniture rather than worshipping God.

I have been in churches where sitting on the communion table has been considered a heinous sin, but where gossip, jealousy, bigotry and the like, have been allowed to continue unchecked and unchallenged. I even heard of one church where a number of the congregation were in uproar when, for the sake of convenient distribution of the emblems, the communion table was cut in half (neatly and professionally) and the halves placed to either side of the podium. Surely it is the act of participation in the Lord's Supper that must be central to our worship, not the piece of furniture used to hold the emblems.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that we should not take care over the design and furnishing of our places of worship. Good church architecture certainly can enhance worship. All I am saying is that, when it comes to one's ability to be inspired through worship, it is not so much the architecture of the building that is important, but the architecture of the heart.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Pastor Salt

Letters to the Editor

Gay

To the Editor,

There is much in Gordon Stirling's article on "Gay" ("AC" 4 December) which I applaud, but I would like to comment on the Scriptures cited.

Deut. 23:18, which refers to a "male prostitute," is somewhat different from Lev. 18:22 and 20:13, but in any case: 1. many turn to these passages as "words of the Lord" but disregard (which Gordon does not) that 20:13 includes the injunction to put homosexuals to death—we pick and choose our authoritative Scripture, and 2. this teaching has to do with the distinctive character of the Hebrew faith. We cannot indiscriminately make these marks of the Jewish community the marks of the Christian community.

Translators have difficulty knowing just how to translate 1 Cor. 6:9-10 (the NRSV has "male prostitutes, sodomites") and 1 Tim. 1:10 (the NRSV has "sodomites"), and I do not think that Gal. 5:19-21 can be said to have homosexuals specifically in mind. But at any rate, a very strong case has been made that what Paul had in view was the Graeco-Roman practice of sexual relationships between adult males and boys—children and teenagers—not what we commonly mean by homosexual.

I would underline what Gordon said, "experts do not seem to agree about whether some people are born homosexuals or whether they become so because of strong psychological conditioning beyond their control".

—Ronald Graham
(Johnston, Iowa, USA)

Over-Investment in Property

To the Editor,

It appears that Malcolm Gray ("AC" 4 December) has missed the point of my letter of 20 November.

Whilst the number of baptisms is, of course, very important as an indicator of church growth, surely the number of disciples actually attending churches is a far better yardstick of their health.

With 38% of our Australian congregations with a membership of 50 or less, I am on firm ground when I claim that there is a vast over-investment in church real estate.

I repeat, just imagine what wonderful things we could do with the funds from the sale of surplus properties, when this sad world is in so much need. One good example is the scandal of over 40,000 children dying every day! —Fen Hewitt
(Wembley Downs, WA)

Leadership

To the Editor,

Thank you to Bruce McIntosh ("AC" 20 December) for commenting on my article on Leadership. While I used the phrase "appointment of deacons" I didn't discuss their selection or confirmation. I agree with the record that they were "chosen from among themselves". As Bruce rightly indicates, the Apostles "set them apart".

However, while I have made no statement about how the Apostles and Elders arrived at the decree recorded in Acts 15, the Bible doesn't give me to understand that the whole church made the decision! Verse 6 says that the Apostles and Elders met to consider this question. It appears that the whole church was only involved in choosing who would actually carry the news to Antioch. (v22) The letter was sent over the signature of the Apostles and Elders only. (v23)

It seems as if Bruce assumes that strong leadership means authoritarianism. Not so. Strong leaders make decisions in the light of their people's needs and the people's ability to cope with the solutions. But leaders do have to make the decisions, not without consultation, not without compassion, but with wisdom and a good grasp of the total picture.

—Bruce Armstrong
(Margaret St,
Toowoomba, Qld)

Aged Care

To the Editor,

Helen Harber's letter ("AC" 20 December) raises some concerns for me. First some expla-

nation is necessary. In 1986 the Commonwealth Government began a process of reform in the area of aged care which has brought about many benefits concerning the residential and community care of the aged throughout Australia. Standards of care now exist which are about outcomes for residents and this has made some important beneficial improvements for residents receiving care.

When the aged care reform process began, the medical profession were not included, I think because both the medical profession and the government chose for them not to be involved. The medical profession certainly did little to seek involvement. The result is that they have no place in the process of admission to aged care facilities, whether Nursing Homes or Hostels.

Because admission is controlled, a person may only be admitted if they have been assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team as requiring that level of care. Your private medical practitioner may refer you to that team for assessment or you can refer yourself. In care, you will be able to choose your own medical practitioner.

What concerns me in Helen's letter is that she is apparently being told what facility she may go to. That is quite contrary to the way in which the aged care assessment process is set up. Each person who has been assessed as requiring care at a particular level—Nursing Home or Hostel—is free to choose if they wish to receive care and where they wished to be cared for. Care facilities do have the freedom to choose whether they will accept an assessed person or not.

Aged Care Assessment Teams try to be helpful by suggesting which Nursing Homes or Hostels have places available, but have no power or right to decide where a person should go. If you are being told where you must go you should contact the complaints section of the Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services and

complain that your right of choice is being overridden. (Phone or write to GPO Box 9848 in your capital city) In the meantime, take your assessment to the Hostel or Nursing Home of your choice and seek admission. You may have to wait for a period of time because there are no vacant beds.

—Dr Donald E Stewart
(Executive Director, Queensland Churches of Christ Social Service Department)

Holiness Of Beauty

To the Editor,

At the risk of appearing in the Letters column too often, I feel that I must write to express my appreciation of Viney Longthorp's regular column "Media Matters."

In particular, I want to say thank you to him for crystallising something that has been churning in my mind for a long time. In his article on the Vincent van Gogh Show he says that the van Gogh exhibition is a living reminder of the holiness of beauty.

Keats almost had it when he said "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", but he stopped short at that. There are some of our readers that would be familiar with a statement that sets out the attributes of God and one of those is the beauty which shines through the whole of creation in symmetry and order.

I have often reflected how that the appreciation of beauty is something which the whole human race has in common, regardless of whatever religion or creed they embrace, or refuse to embrace. The power and grace of our Divine Creator touches all of his children in this gift. When we are captured and caught up in the holiness of beauty, then we are not far from the Lord in whom we live and move and have our being.

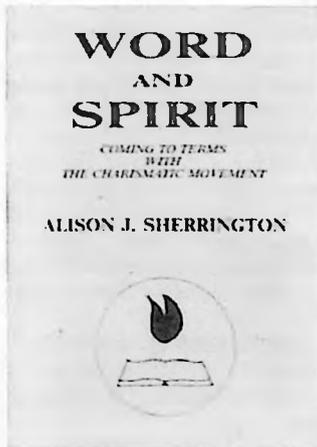
—Ken Dawson
(Brooklyn Park, SA)

Vincent van Gogh

To the Editor,

Thank you for the article on the Vincent van Gogh Exhibition. It galvanised us into action. This week my husband

Papers



Word And Spirit: Coming to Terms with the Charismatic Movement

by Alison J Sherrington (self published) \$3.50.

This is the second edition of a paper on the charismatic issue written by Alison Sherrington. As she notes, there are basically three camps with regard to charismatic issue: those who are charismatic or Pentecostal, those who are totally opposed to everything the charismatic movement represents and the majority who do not feel strongly one way or the

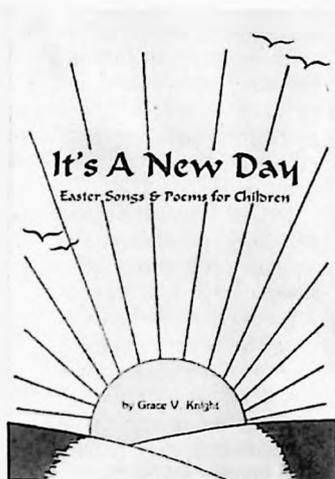
other or who are confused and usually ignorant on the whole issue. This booklet looks at what she sees as the basic issues: the direct experience of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. Alison comes to the position that there is "strong Biblical evidence to support the conclusion that, either at or after conversion to Christ, people today may directly experience the Spirit and receive His supernatural gifts."

She is also concerned that people keep a balance and argues strongly for this.

Available from Lighthouse Book Agencies, PO Box 197, Acacia Ridge 4110 (Phone (07) 273 7899) for \$3.50 plus postage.

—CRA

Books



It's a New Day: Easter Songs and Poems for Children

by Grace V. Knight (Grace MusicK Productions) \$16.95.

This collection of songs and poems is a sequel to *Simply for Kids*. *It's A New Day* provides a versatile resource which could be used by Sunday Schools or Children's Church for performance or simply to enhance a young child's understanding of God's amazing love through the message of Easter.

Its format could be followed from cover to cover and presented in the form of a musical, or it could be broken down,

and its parts used to suit a chosen theme or lesson.

To define age suitability is difficult. Within the songs, the music and lyrics are simple in their style, and probably best suit children up to 8 or 9 years. However, the poetry is more traditional and wordy, and would best be used by children 8-12 years.

My only disappointment in *It's A New Day* is the style of music chosen for today's generation of children. But if you can make it more contemporary it will be a fine resource.

Available from Grace MusicK, PO Box 26 Glenbrook 2773 (Phone (047) 39 3705 for \$16.50 which includes a piano accompaniment of songs on basic tape.

—Joy Groves

A Yearbook for Australian Churches 1994

by Peter Bentley, Tricia Blombery and Philip J. Hughes (Christian Research Association) \$14.95.

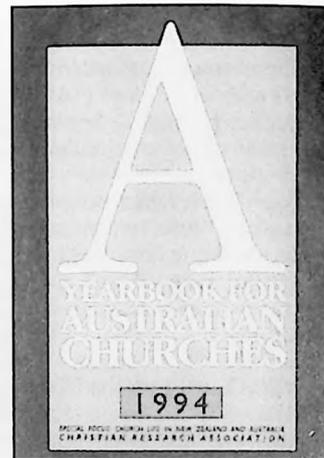
This is the fourth year that this extremely useful handbook has been published by the Christian Research Association. Much of the material is only available from a variety of sources and to have it gathered together in one book provides an excellent resource. Also there are special foci each year which, when taken together, will give an overall picture of the church and its relationship to Australian and (this year) New Zealand culture.

The Yearbook starts with an almost exhaustive directory of Australian Christian churches and other religious bodies. This is supplemented by directories of non-denominational and ecumenical organisations, plus a few listings of other helpful directories. Then there are two sections which are essays on various topics; the first series under the heading of "The Church in Australia" and the second on "Australia and New Zealand: A Comparison". These essays are ideal background information to help students understand what is happening in church life in Australia and its relationship with society. This year a directory of New Zealand churches and organisations is also included (Our sister church, Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand, does not seem to be included and the entry under Churches of Christ highlights the difficulty we are having with clear identification of Churches of Christ from other groups/churches with similar names).

One of the last two sections which I found to be of great benefit was a listing of publishers of religious books in Australia along with a selected bibliography of books published in the last two years in Australia, listed topically. The final section is a lectionary and ecumenical calendar for 1994.

Available from the Christian Research Association, Locked Bag 23, Kew 3101 for \$18 (including postage).

—CRA



"When the weather lifts and the waters recede, why don't you give some thought to opening a pet shop?"

Letters

and I, with our son and daughter-in-law, made a quick trip to Melbourne. It was a privilege to see and enjoy these famous paintings. We thank Viney Longthorp for his timely reminder and sympathetic introduction to the artist and his work. His other articles in the "AC" have also been appreciated.

—Margaret Aird
(Victor Harbor)

Christian Women and Men

To the Editor,

My book was launched by Access Press at the Maltings Art Centre, Northbridge, Perth, on 12 December. Graham Carslake, senior minister of the Warwick, WA, church was the speaker. I thank him, and all who attended, especially ministers and their families.

I also thank Gordon Stirling and *The Australian Christian* for the feature article (20 December).

To get the book out quickly I am making an offer of a commission of 15% on packs of not less than 20. This is to any church or member who will undertake to distribute in their own church and district.

The book will (later on) sell in city stores at \$30 plus postage and packing. Churches or members will receive \$4.50 per copy commission for church funds or whatever of their own choosing. Price \$32.50 including package and posting anywhere in Australia.

—Gladys Butler
(42 Butcher St, Bruce Rock
6418. Phone (090) 61 1376)

Notice of Services

To the Editor,

As a visitor to NSW during the Christmas holidays, it seemed to me a pity that no reference to Churches of Christ appeared in the list of the city's Christmas church services in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 24 December. Anglican, Uniting Church and Catholic services were well represented; and others included Baptist (family service, English, Mandarin and Cantonese), Greek Orthodox, three Lutheran, Presbyterian

News

Playground Pleasure

Church and community

Dave Reynolds of the Aldinga, SA, church recently wrote to us with some information of ways they have been active in the community since the inauguration of the church planting mission in February 1992. One was involvement in the creation of a local playground, which the local paper featured (we include that report following the introduction).

Dave has also been active in a successful campaign for a local sewerage system and helping with other services that are more easily recognised as "church" activities.

One of their most successful was a "Plum Pudding and Cards Festival". A one-hour program was held and people came in family groups after tea

(again including Mandarin and Cantonese), one Pentecostal and one Salvation Army (carols in Martin Place with band, choir and soloists).

The notices did not appear to be paid adverts, so I assume they were an act of grace by the newspaper. The Catholic services included one at Woolloomooloo, so apparently services outside the city boundaries were not entirely excluded.

Open confession being good for the soul, I must confess that after returning to SA I checked on the situation in the Adelaide morning paper of Christmas Eve. Again, not a solitary Churches of Christ notice. (I didn't compound my disappointment by looking in the Brisbane, Melbourne or Perth papers.)

Do Churches of Christ not believe in Christmas?

Visitors from overseas who are of our persuasion must receive a poor impression when they want to celebrate Christmas Day with us, especially Americans, who have been told Australians make a big thing of Christmas.

—Jack Ludbrook
(Dulwich/Rose Park, SA)

to sing well-known Christmas carols, hear musical items and the Christmas story from Luke's gospel. They then attacked some pudding, a "ton" of custard, cream and ice cream. Unchurched folk outnumbered those from the church on the night.

The church has baptised three mature age men during 1993.

The following is the report in the local newspaper:

"Children's laughter in the playground is music to Dave Reynolds' ears.

The Aldinga, SA, resident was instrumental in bringing members of the Aldinga Park subdivision together to have input into the design and layout of the reserve.

Just 12 months ago the playground was a barren area covered with mounds of dirt from nearby building sites.

Under Dave's leadership the community rallied and asked council and the developers if they could have input to the reserve's layout.

After getting the okay, Dave Reynolds surveyed some 50 households in the new neighbourhood, asking what sort of facilities people would like to have in the park.

"I figured if people had an input, they would use it and look after the facilities more," he said.

His thoughts proved correct, with residents planting more than 50 trees on the park's perimeter and council recently installing colourful playground equipment.

"There's still more to come too. We hope to get a slide and eventually want to put in a picnic area as well."

Dave Reynolds said he was grateful to the council for enabling the park to become a community project which has been widely used by Aldinga Park residents."

(Article and photograph used on cover, courtesy *On The Coast*)

Calendar

Morialta Reunion

A reunion of ex-residents, ex-staff and ex-supporters of the Morialta Children's Home in Adelaide is being held on the property at Norton Summit on 13 March, commencing at 10.30 am. The reunion is to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the opening and the 21st anniversary of the closing of the Home. Particulars of all children who were in the Home are frozen until 2030, so the Trust is not able to contact them direct and is thus seeking any help to contact people. Particulars about the day can be obtained from Jim Murphy (Executive Officer of Morialta Trust), 263 Melbourne St, North Adelaide 5006, phone (08) 239 1432 or Jennifer Block, 38 Bright St, Gawler East 5118, phone (085) 22 3943.

Choral Concert

The Modbury Choral Group is presenting a concert of contemporary Christian choral music "From Genesis to Revelation" on 13 March in the evening at Wesley Church, Kent Town, SA. The Modbury Choral Group is based at the Modbury, SA, church and was formed in 1986 to sing the compositions of Carole-Anne Fooks and Geoffrey Higgs. This is the group's first major public concert although they have performed many times at church services, special occasions and community events. The concert will feature soloists Barbara Turner and organist John Hall. Full booking details are available in the Adelaide Festival Fringe program.

Inner Eastern Care Groups

The annual church service of the Inner Eastern Care Groups is being held at St Benedict's Church, Warrigal Rd, Burwood, Vic, on 21 February at 8 pm.

The Passion as Liturgy

The Council of Christians and Jews (Vic) are presenting a lecture "The Passion as Liturgy" by Dr Anthony Kenny on 22 February at 8 pm at Genazzano College, Cotham Rd, Kew. The lecture will focus on the meaning of the death of Jesus for an infant Christian church. A kosher supper will be served and a \$5 donation is asked to cover costs. Further details on (03) 817 3848.

Our Living Treasure

Kath Edmunds

The Launceston, Tas, church over the years has had some wonderful musicians (and is still nurturing them). There was Margaret Stevens, pianist and organist for 60 years, and recently tribute was paid in *The Australian Christian* to Elva Orr and her many years at organ and piano, and now we honour beloved CWFer Kathleen Edmunds.

Kath was born 89 years ago at Waratah, Tas, and lived at Deloraine where she was baptised at the Baptist Church, which she attended. She played the organ there while still a student. Following a move to Launceston and after the Hinrichsen Tent Mission in Kingsway, the Margaret Street and then the Invermay churches developed and Kath and her family became foundation members of Invermay. She was assistant and then organist until the Invermay and Margaret Street churches amalgamated in 1976.

In her early years, she taught in Sunday School, attended Christian Endeavour and



• Kath Edmunds

played for the Junior Sunbeam Club for several years in the late 1950s.

Married to the late C. Roy Edmunds in 1933, she supported him in his various church activities, local, State and Federal, for many years. Roy died in 1988.

Kath is a "living treasure" of the Launceston CWF which she attended until the end of last year. In spite of her infirmities, her fingers still knit innumerable baby singlets for our Aborigines Missions and its always "I'm fine, thanks" when asked how she is.

Helen Morrow "Retires"

Helen Morrow has retired from the eldership at Magill, SA, after a record term of 25 years as a member of the board and 17 years as an elder.

Helen holds the double distinction of being the first woman to serve on a church board and the first woman to be appointed an elder, in South Australia.

At the board meeting in December, it was pointed out that Helen's contribution had covered most areas of the church's activity from elder and board member to secretary, Sunday School teacher and Superintendent, arranger of flower rosters to church organist.

Helen was one of the first women in South Australia (and probably Australia) to serve as President at the Lord's Table as well as leading in corporate prayer.

The Magill church expresses its appreciation for the years of committed service which Helen has given to the church and to her Master.

People

Bill Mills III

We have received word that Bill Mills, a retired minister (Peel St, Ballarat, Yarrowonga and Frankston, Vic, churches), is currently in the Albury Base Hospital. He has been diagnosed with an inoperable cancer, but at the time of going press we have no word on his current condition. In recent years, Bill has written all the scripts that are used in New Hope's telephone ministry and we have printed several of these recently in the "AC".

OARS Director

Leigh Garrett has been appointed Director of Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services of SA Inc (OARS). He took up the position in January on the retirement of Ray Kidney AM who has held the position for 25 years. Leigh has a strong Christian conviction and is a member of the Coromandel Valley Baptist Church. Leigh was employed in the Department of Correctional Services from 1989-1993 as Chief Management Analyst and was one of the Departments representatives on the OARS Review set up by the Government.

Norman Vincent Peale

Rev Dr Norman Vincent Peale, a Methodist minister who inspired millions through his sermons and his best-selling book *The Power of Positive Thinking*, died on 25 December, aged 95. Dr Peale became one of the most popular religious figures in the world, writing 46 books and speaking to scores each year. *The Power of Positive Thinking*, published in 1952, is considered one of the first self-help books. It spent more than 90 weeks at the top of best-sellers lists and has sold nearly 20 million copies in 41 languages.

WEC Builder

Norman Gubb, author of many books, died on 15 December at the age of 98. C T Studd was the founder of WEC, but Norman Gubb was its builder. Sent from Zaire by the ageing Studd to be home representatives, Norman and Pauline (Studd's daughter) built the mission from 30 members to 800 in 20 fields in 1965 when he handed over leadership (Today WEC has grown to 1600 members).

Celebratory Bells

A significant NZ couple

With gladness I celebrate the 100th birthday of Jack Bell of Auckland New Zealand, this month. Emily Bell, Jack's wife, celebrated her birthday nearly two years ago when she was 100.

At that time, they both celebrated 75 years of marriage!

The name Bell has long association with our New Zealand Churches, and Jack was a long time member of the Ponsonby Road Church, Auckland, and served as an elder for many years. Jack stays with one of his daughters, whilst Mrs Bell is cared for in a home. Both have their faculties, although now less sprightly in body. Jack was also a long-time Chairman of

the then Home Mission Committee of our NZ Churches. It was my privilege to stay with

them for a part of the time that I was in that country.

—Bruce Burn

Churches of Christ Theological College COMMENCEMENT SERVICE

and
INDUCTION
of

Stephen Curkpatrick

(Lecturer in Theology and New Testament)

and

Merryl Blair

(Lecturer in Old Testament Studies)

at 3.00 pm Sunday 6 February, 1994
GLEN WAVERLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

46 Montclair Avenue 3150

Speaker: Mr Ron Elbourne

Ministry at Lyons

Unusual chaplaincy



• Betty and Maurice Keatch

Kevin Caulton concludes his ministry with the Lyons, ACT, church on 20 February. Kevin will take up a community chaplain ministry with ITIM to the Woden Town Centre on 21 February. This is a new ministry being entered into by ITIM

to the shoppers and workers in the retail and office sectors. Kevin will be responsible for establishing the ministry in the Town Centre.

This ministry is being supported by the churches in the Woden area and by some of the businesses within the centre.

The ACT Conference is pleased to announce that Maurice and Betty Keatch will commence a part-time interim ministry with the Lyons church in March for 1994.

Maurice has had ministries in Vic, SA and a recent interim ministry in Darwin. He brings with him a wealth of experience and skills in ministry.

—Thelma Leach
(Conference Secretary)

Applecross Induction

A new relationship

On 16 January, the Applecross, WA, church formally inducted Sean Bainbridge as their minister in an inspirational service which attracted an overflow crowd.

In a service which utilised the gifts of a number of church members, Kelmscott's minister, Des Nelson, acting on behalf of the WA Conference, welcomed Sean, his wife Johanna, and son Nathan, into the church.

As part of the service, Sean was presented with a number of items from representatives of the congregation. These items symbolised the church's support for his ministry, as well as their acknowledgment that they too are involved in ministry.

In his response, Sean spoke of the risk and challenge evident in the formation of a new relationship between a minister and a congregation. "It is risky because no-one knows how it will work out. And it is a challenge because it takes time, effort, commitment and

patience to make it work out. Yet it is precisely the risk and challenge that makes it exciting and worthwhile."

He also emphasised the need for cooperation and teamwork in the church's ministry.

In the afternoon, the church had a barbecue to provide an opportunity for the new minister and his family to meet with members in an informal and relaxed setting. Over 70 attended.

Sean and Johanna are recent graduates from the Churches of Christ Theological College in Melbourne, and Applecross is their first full-time ministry.

Thank You

David Gurney moves on

Pastor David Gurney's ministry at the Bathurst Church of Christ has closed after eleven years of faithful and sacrificial service.

David, Judith (and their children Justin, Phillip and Rebecca) came to pastor the fledgling church in at the beginning of 1983. At that time the church had a foundation of ten (seventeen counting children).

Real Enthusiasm and Great Love

New Minister at West Moreton Circuit

On 5 November 1993, Ross and Susan Barnes and their children Karen, Travis and Craig arrived at the Rosevale, Qld, manse, in preparation to commence full-time ministry with the Rosevale and Mt Walker (West Moreton) Circuit. After leaving the cool of Corryong, Victoria, they have not ceased to receive a warm welcome here.

On 12 November, the churches combined for the official welcome and induction into ministry. Commencing with a casserole fellowship tea, the congregation later moved to the chapel where Kevin Baills, the circuit president, compered the service. David Mansell, who played a significant role in securing Ross' services, gave the charge to faithfulness, both to Ross and the church. State Conference President Norm Flett offered

the prayer of dedication, during which the elders of participated in the laying on of hands. 110 shared in this moving occasion.

During the short time since Ross has taken up ministry, he has displayed a real enthusiasm for the shepherding of the flock and great love, understanding and respect for the Word of God.

During the ten months without a full-time minister, many visiting speakers came and preached.

From 4 July until Ross settled into the work, Noel Smith an elder at Mt Walker, shared in an interim ministry with the two churches—preaching, conducting midweek prayer and Bible study meetings and doing RE at Rosevale Primary School, and considerable visitation.

—Noel Smith.

Under David's capable leadership and obedience to God, the church has grown both spiritually and numerically. When David arrived the church met in the staffroom of West Bathurst Public School. After a short while they moved from the small staffroom to the school's assembly hall. Numbers grew and the Lord impressed upon the church to buy land and build a complex.

Being a practical person with building skills, David saw the church building completed.

Our first service in the new church building was on Christmas Day, 1988, the church being officially opened on 12 March, 1989. The church has continued to grow and now has an average worship attendance of 100. God has released many blessings through David and Judith's ministry.

David is taking up a ministry position with the Albury church of Christ in the new year. Thank you David and Judith, every blessing. —The Elders, for Bathurst Church of Christ.

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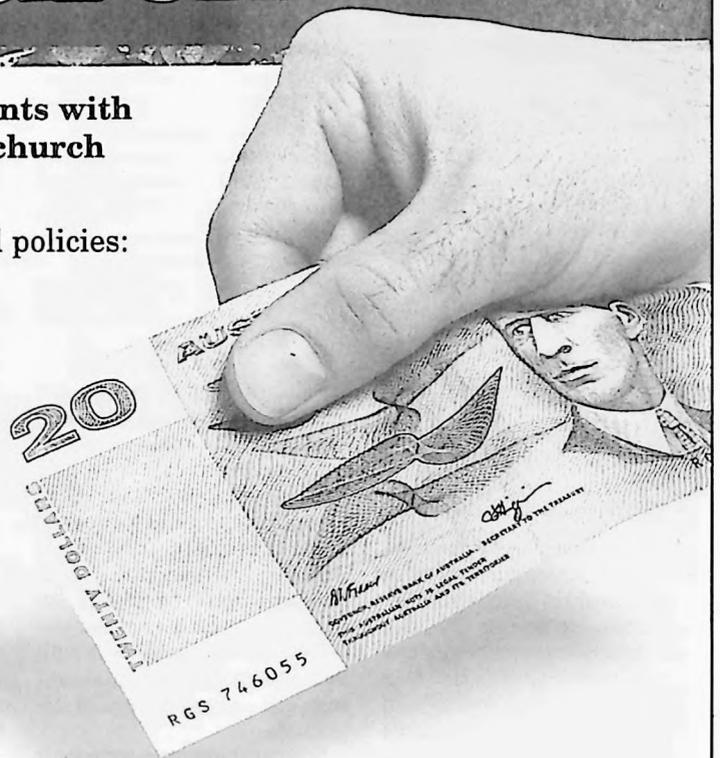
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Criminals Targeting Churches

A recent claim lodged with the Church of Christ's Victorian insurer, Ansvar, highlighted the need for churches to carefully assess their security procedures.

In this claim, the Christmas offering, approximately \$3,500, was stolen from a locked safe on the premises. However, the key to the safe was kept in an unlocked filing cabinet in the same room.

Fortunately, Ansvar did not apply the policy exclusion relating to theft from a safe through the use of a key or combination located within proximity of the safe.

Ansvar's National Underwriting Manager, John Peberdy, emphasised the need for churches to review their cash handling procedures.

Security Suggestions

The following suggestions were offered:

1. Remove the offering from the worship area before the congregation begins to move at the conclusion of the service.
2. Always count the offering in a locked room. Children or other visitors should not be allowed into this room during counting.
3. The safest way to store cash is in a bank night safe. Vary your route and time of banking.
4. If you wish to use your own safe at the church, keys or details of the combination should not be left at the church. Where there is no safe at the church, money is safer in the home of a church official than at an unattended church. (It is safer still at a bank)
5. The depositing of money at the bank should always be completed at the first opportunity.
6. Do not leave cash on the church premises when unattended, other than in a locked safe.

The incidence of theft and burglary within churches is also on the increase. Churches can take precautions to reduce their exposure to this type of loss.

Simple Steps

Mr Peberdy suggested the following simple steps:

1. Appoint a person to be responsible for checking that all external doors and windows are locked after each activity, particularly worship services. An unattended church should be locked.
2. Maintain a Key Security List. At far too many churches, the keys to the church come with membership. Reclaim keys from those no longer in leadership roles.
3. Keep audio equipment, including microphones and portable musical instruments, in a locked room when not in use and restrict access. A security room should have a suitable deadlock.
4. Consult a security firm for advice on alarm systems and door and window locks.
5. Maintain a list of all valuable equipment and record brand name, model number and serial number. Mark these items with a security pen.

Offer of Help

Reiterating an offer made to the Churches of Christ in 1991, Ansvar is able to send a representative to assist churches with the assessment of their security needs.

Mr Peberdy stated that Ansvar views the insurance scheme with Churches of Christ as a partnership. By working together we can reduce losses and keep insurance premiums under control.

**This information is provided to the Vic-Tas Properties Corporation
as a service to Churches of Christ by Ansvar Australia Insurance Ltd
20 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000. Phone (03) 650 9711**

Classifieds

BIRTHS

FARMER (MITCHELL) Chip and Jan are delighted to announce the arrival of Monique April on Wednesday 12 January. 5lbs 12ozs. A welcome sister for Adele and Terese.

ENGAGEMENTS

WRAY—SIMMONS Ken and Joan of Fullarton, together with Peter and Beris of Swan Hill, have much pleasure in announcing the engagement of Madeline and Dean. God's blessing to you both.

WEDDINGS

ASHTON—HISLOP Jenni and Brady would like to announce the celebration of their marriage, to take place on 12 February at the Dalkeith Road, WA, Church of Christ.

RUBY WEDDING

CROWDEN, Ben and May. Congratulations on your 40th wedding anniversary on 16 January. Thankyou for your love, example and witness over that time and we look forward to many more years together. Lots of love, Graeme and Jill, Ryan, Hayley and Jordan; Alan and Meredith, Georgina, Lucas and Esther. New address: 380 Tooradin Station Road, RSD Five Ways 3977.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

COLLYER (WHITE) Peter and Phyl were married on 26 February 1944 at Gardiner Church of Christ by the late Thomas Hagger. Friends are invited to share this event with the family at Boronia Church of Christ hall on Saturday 26 February 2-5 pm. No gifts please. Present address: 7/31 Central Ave, Boronia 3155.

DEATHS

CLOUGH, Florence (Sewell). Passed away at Horsham in her 95th year. Loved Aunt of Dorothy and Henry Anderson, Allison (Dec) and Merve Nicholls and Val, Jo and Ken Beckett. "In heavenly love abiding."
HEALEY (CLARKE), Evelyn Jean

on 29 December, 1993 in Queensland. Sister of Amy Sommerville, aunt of Joan Pye and Margaret Hone. We thank the Chelsea, Vic, church for leading Evelyn to a knowledge of and love for her Lord, giving new meaning to her life and new hope in death.

QUAYLE, Lesley. On 7 January. Age 74. Loving wife and caring partner of Victor. Loving and loved mother of Rosemary and Jeff Weston, Jenny and Laurie Wilkes and Len and Chris Quayle. Loving Nanna of seven grandchildren—Michelle and Matthew; Robert and Jacqueline; Jessica, Steven and Michael. A loving and caring Christian life. Now at rest and peace in the love and care of God.

SQUIRELL, Dot. Passed away peacefully on 3 January, aged 77 years, at Taylor Lodge Nursing Home, Keilor Downs, after a three-year illness. So much a part of East Keilor Church of Christ and greatly missed by all her friends.

WARMBRUNN, Norman Roy. On 5 December 1993, peacefully at Healesville, Vic.

WATSON On 17.12.93 at Boronia, Vic, Kenneth Arthur. Loved husband of Lorraine, nephew of Elva and Howard Barnden, Alan and Eleanor Watson. In God's care.

IN MEMORIAM

GOLDSWORTHY Loving memories of our parents, Reginald (12.1.41) and Amelia (2.1.54). Till we meet again.

APPRENTICESHIP WANTED

18 year old looking for apprenticeship with builder/carpenter. Qualifications—trade schooling completed, first year of Advanced Certificate of Carpentry/Building, Explosive Power Tools licence, 16 week pre-apprenticeship course and other appropriate theory subjects. If interested contact Stuart Button on (03) 728 1756.

WANTED

UNWANTED COPIES OF MOODY MONTHLY are required for missions in India. Please contact John MacKenzie on (03) 783 2762.

FAMILY REUNION

BROUGH family and descendants. Sunday 20 February, 1994, from 12.30 pm. BYO lunch. Venue: Wattle Park, Riversdale Road, Burwood (If wet, Surrey Hills Church of Christ Hall). Contact (03) 808 2815 or (03) 700 1277.

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People in overseas mission

Churches of Christ continue to be closely involved in mission overseas through partnership in India, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe and Fiji. From time to time you will read about that involvement in the pages of *The Australian Christian*. There is now a video available giving information about the work (see ad page 23). For



• Alison Hunt

This year, a number of people will do some voluntary work overseas in Churches of Christ areas. Over Christmas, Phil Bryce (NSW) was visiting Daund Church of Christ (India) to do some practical, pastoral work there.

During term one Alison Hunt (Marion, SA) will be teaching English at Ranwadi High School, Vanuatu for a month.



• John Bolton

Sandy and Dale Penman and family (Southport, Qld) will spend some time at Ranwadi mid-year, providing practical assistance as needed. Phil and Julie Bignill (Carlingford College, NSW) will do an internship at Ranwadi from July to



• Dale, Sandy and Adam Penman



• Remy Sese

Vanuatu during March and April.

John Bolton (minister, Colliie, WA) church, will be assisting with training of church leaders in Papua New Guinea for nine weeks in April and May.

Meanwhile, in January and early February, Pastor Remy Sese from Vanuatu is visiting Melbourne for a Conference and involvement in an Operation Mobilisation program. Remy works for the Churches of Christ Conference in Vanuatu as Regional Coordinator for the churches on West Ambae.



• Shem Tema

A group from Sarabetu church in Vanuatu will be visiting Melbourne in March.

The Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board is hoping to make several appointments shortly to fill vacant positions in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Applications are being sought for a trained minister with cross-cultural experience and general ministry experience to assist Peter and Vivienne Clegg in the work in Fiji.

In Papua New Guinea, the vacant positions are for a Director of Technical Services and a church adviser. Applications are being processed for both positions. New work-



• Joses Sali (Principal at Momonup Bible School, PNG)

November. Len Martin (Halls Gap, Vic) is going to assist with teaching at Londona Training School in

Christmas—Banmatmat Style

Praising, singing, worshipping and having fun

Last night I sat on a hard wooden seat with no back for a service that lasted two and a half hours or so. "Oh no," you're thinking, "Poor thing! That's too long!"

Not so! Maybe it would have been too long for some services, but not this one. This was Banmatmat (Vanuatu) Bible College's final service of the year, and a special Christmas one as well. We spent the night praising, singing, worshipping—and having fun!

There were no big crowds, just a handful of students, staff and families. There were no trained choirs, but a student trio sang "Silent Night" in beautiful three-part harmony, swapping parts with every verse! There was no band, but a bamboo, two spoons and a coconut spine broom gave new meaning to the word percussion in one item! Our actors paid no money for their props, but the special effects were really spectacular. The wise men followed a star, lit by two torches inside, which moved from the back to

the front of the chapel by a fishing-line pulley. No costly presents were given out, but John Stephen's family gave everyone posies of flowers they had cut and tied that afternoon. We waved them as we sang praises to God. There was no electricity, and every now and then someone would get up and pump up the Coleman lamps, while we juggled our hymn books to get the best light, but the carols were sung with joy and fervour to the accompaniment of the guitars. There were plenty of shy and nervous people, but everyone contributed in some way to the service.

I got up to preach at the end of the service, with flowers decorating my hair (another gift from the Stephens family) and a heart full of gratitude to God for giving me the chance to be part of this community on this special night.

—Jan Christensen
(Banmatmat Bible College, Vanuatu)



• Jan Christensen

ers to PNG from Vanuatu are Shem and Elizabeth Tema. They expect to travel to PNG with Joses and Mina Sali when the Salis return to their work at Momonup in April. Shem is a new appointment to work with youth.

It looks like being a busy and active year in our partnership with overseas churches.

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Making Friends in a Foreign Land

Starting from scratch

We were standing out the front, talking with our neighbours (two ladies) about the wedding reception that we were all going to that night. We had never been to a Thai wedding and were asking them different questions about it. One question Joe asked shocked them. It took us a few seconds (which seemed like hours) to realise that instead of asking them (the two ladies) how they were going to get dressed, Joe had asked how they were going to get married! (In Thai these words are similar, especially for a new language learner).

We began our Thai language course in March 1992. We began by learning how to say the words using their correct tone and in the proper order to form sentences that were understandable. From there we moved on to writing the Thai script and practising how to read it and from there onto studying the Bible in Thai!

In our Thai language study time, our two children (Kezia and Tyson) have been the most valuable assets. People love children. Thai people adore them. This gave us the opportunity to practise what we knew over and over. We also met many of the Thai friends we

have today through talking to people who came and asked about our children.

Thai people love eating and love doing it together. Our neighbours would often bring us different dishes to taste. Many of these were spicy. When we tried them and told them we liked their food, they were really amazed. It also helped our relationships with them. Because we liked their food, they felt comfortable to invite us to eat with them—which they did! We even asked our Thai friends to teach us how to make their food and now we eat Thai cuisine 90% of the time.

When we could speak enough to communicate with people, we started going to Thai church. It took many months to understand what was going on, with lots of study, until now we can understand, enjoy and also share about our Lord Jesus in the Thai language. Joe is currently teaching a family about God chronologically through the Bible. He hopes to teach them about Jesus' death on the cross for them, before we move from Chiang Mai into the tribe.

As we look back over our time in Thai language study, we don't see the hard work, the

Fellowship of Faith

Praying for Muslims

Would you join with us as "God's fellow-workers" in praying for Muslims (1 Cor. 3:9)?

The Fellowship of Faith for Muslims produces two Prayer News Bulletins. One three times a year, from Canada, and the other monthly, from the UK. Both bulletins encourage prayer for those ministering to Muslims around the world and focus on one area of the world for prayer each day of the month. This is vital spiritual warfare aimed at the heart of the enemy's stronghold.

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Bulletin and \$15 pa for the UK Prayer Bulletin. However, we will send the bulletins free to any of the Lord's praying people who find this charge a burden.

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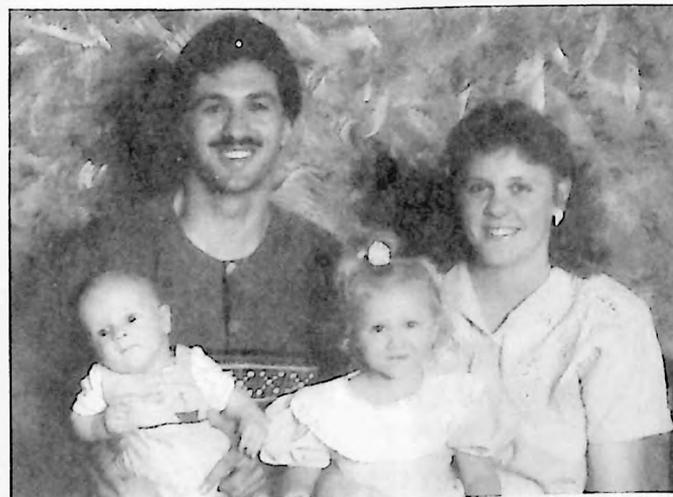
Important Note: This information of Muslim evangelism is collected solely to encourage the Lord's people to pray. Please use care in its disposal. It is not for publication, display or open distribution.

tears, the separation from family and friends and the Thai teachers continually correcting our broken Thai. We see our Thai friends who we have come to love. We see our home which we made in Chiang amongst neighbours who helped us, put up with us and laughed with and at us.

Although we may not be fluent in Thai, we feel comfortable with our new language. Now we will begin again (March 1994), just like babies. We will

learn to talk again, learn the rules of behaviour, learn to see things through the eyes of the tribal people we have come to serve. Pray for us as we get settled and learn their language with the desire of one day soon teaching them about our Risen Saviour.

—Joanne Nistico
Joe and Joanne, from Penrith, NSW, church are serving with New Tribes Mission with the Prai tribe in Northern Thailand.



• Joe and Joanne with children Kezia and Tyson

SA CCTC Off-Campus Program

Churches of Christ Studies

Where have they come from?

What do they believe?

Where are they going?

13 Wednesday evenings, 7.30-9.30

at Blackwood Church of Christ

Commencing 23 February

Course Leader: David Brooker, new State Minister.

Small Groups in the Church

Six Tuesday evenings, 7.30-9.30

at the Conference Centre

263 Melbourne Street, North Adelaide

Commences 15 March

Course Leader: Ken Anderson, of Serendipity Resources and formerly 5DN

Details from Richard Lawton, 16 Appelbee Crescent, Norwood 5067. Phone (08) 363 2536.

Vanuatu Visitors

Comings and goings

Victorian churches have had the opportunity to meet several leaders from Vanuatu recently. Ellison Reve, technical teacher from Londua School, was in Bendigo for three months in 1993 updating his trade skills and then for three months at Hawthorn Institute for education studies. He was one of a dozen Pacific Islanders sponsored by the Ross Trust for studies in Australia.

Remy Sese and Dickson Bani, both active in leadership in Churches of Christ in Vanuatu, have attended a conference on cross-cultural ministry at the Bible College of Victoria, which was sponsored by Operation Mobilisation. Remy also attended an International Community Education Conference in Melbourne, spent a week at the family camp at Banksia and is attending the pre-sessional

study programs at CCTC Mulgrave.

In March, Pastor Wilson Bebe and a choir from the Vila Church of Christ will be in Melbourne as the guests of the Swanston Street church for their annual missionary convention. They have agreed to take part in an Overseas Missions Rally at Lygon Street Chapel on 20 March at 3 pm. This will also be an occasion to meet the Nolans and the Harmers who have returned to Victoria after serving with the OMB in PNG.

The itinerary of the Vanuatu choir is: 20 March Swanston St church for morning and evening services and 3 pm Overseas Missions Rally at Lygon Street chapel; 21 March morning at Tabor College, Ringwood and 7 pm ministers' dinner at Boronia church; 22



• Keith Ludgater talking to a teacher from the Solomon Islands and Ellison Reve from Vanuatu

March morning at CCTC, Mulgrave and 7.30 pm Mt Clear church Ballarat; 23 March 7.30 pm at Belmont church, Geelong; 24-27 March at Swanston Street Missionary Convention; and 27 March at 2.30 pm at Montrose church. Details from Barry Jenkins (03) 571 7102 or Alan Baker (03) 803 9378.

Joy Irvine from our Warr-

nambool, Vic, church returned from Vanuatu in December after a year teaching at Ranwadi High School. Several of the Warrnambool members visited her while she was there.

Len Martin from Stawell, Vic, church is heading out to Londua School as a short-term teacher in March.

—Barry Jenkins

Bible-A-Month

Celebrating thirty years

For thirty years, members of a unique book club have been providing Scriptures for people in need all over the world. Since 1964, the Bible Society's Bible-A-Month (BAM) Club has given members the opportunity of pledging at least one Bible every month to a person in twelve different countries each year.

In 1993, members had the opportunity to help Bible work in Romania, Zambia, Guatemala, Bolivia and eight other countries as well. Along the way, Club members were able to learn more about Bible work in those countries and are encouraged to pray for the work of the Bible Society there. The Bible Society provides Scrip-

tures in more than 200 countries in almost 2,000 languages.

BAM Club Secretary, Rev Keith Bricknell, said the 30th Anniversary of the Club is being marked by a special new membership drive.

"It's difficult to estimate how many thousands of Bibles BAM Club members have provided

over the years, but it's in the hundreds of thousands. The need for Scriptures is greater than ever, especially in the former Iron Curtain countries," he said.

Mr Bricknell said people interested in joining the Bible-A-Month Club should contact the Bible House in their capital city.



• These Borana women in Kenya can now enjoy the Scriptures in their own language

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C.S. Lewis in Love

Viney Longthorp

The night Lois and I saw the movie *Shadowlands*, most of the audience remained for the credits, to see all who were responsible for the making of such a fine film. It was a fitting tribute. Mind you, there were many who needed to wait awhile in order to dry their eyes!

Shadowlands is a love story which ends with considerable pathos. That omni-talented maker of films, Richard Attenborough has done a great job in transferring William Nicholson's play to the large screen.

It depicts a brief episode in the life of C.S. Lewis, no less. Clive Staples Lewis ("Call me Jack"), an Oxford don, long settled in bachelor ways and an academic routine, is visited by an American poet and novelist, Joy Gresham, who has long admired his writings. The friendship deepened and they were married in 1956. C.S. Lewis was in his late 50s at the time and bride in her early 40s. But it was a short-lived marriage. Joy already had the beginnings of an incurable cancer and she died four years later. Lewis himself survived her by very few years.

In many ways, they were an oddly matched couple. Lewis was taciturn, giving little outward evidence of his feelings. He had that detached air which so often accompanies the disinterested mind, which many of his friends found off-putting,

mistaking this for personal indifference. He possessed immense self-control in debate and had a maddening capacity never to be bested in discussions.

On the other hand, Joy Gresham was volatile and highly articulate to the point of being brash. A verbal exchange with one of Lewis' academic colleagues showed her mettle. He had stated in all seriousness that "Women have souls but men have intellects." Joy's response was: "Are you trying to be offensive or are you plain stupid?" Such a riposte did not endear her to the cloistered community of Magdalen College.

Differences certainly, but they were each what the other needed.

According to A.N. Wilson, the biographer, Lewis "hated and feared emotions". Hence much of the fascination of the story lies in the way he learnt to come to terms with the emotional dimensions of life. It has been suggested that his falling in love enabled him to write so convincingly about love between people, and the love of God in his book, *The Four Loves*. The period in which he so lovingly nursed his wife through her sufferings demonstrated the integrity of his Christian beliefs and life. One critic has well said that, "*Shadowlands* works because the audience identifies with this personal issue, believes in the characters,

loves them and is part of their emotional journey." It is indeed, a love story in the classic mould.

The film also stands out among many recent cinema offerings in that "it is sans sex, sans violence, sans swearing, and sans phoney displays of emotion". Thus you had better see it as soon as you can because of the vagaries of public patronage, for as Oscar Wilde might very well have said: "People can stand only so much reality."

But for many, this film has a further bonus. Many literate Christians will respond positively to the very name C.S. Lewis itself. Most of us enjoy personal details of people whose work and art we admire. For an entire generation of readers, Lewis' writings on Christian subjects were nothing less than a revelation in themselves at the time of their publication. Such insightful masterpieces as *Mere Christianity*, *God in the Dock*, *Miracles* and *The Problem of Pain* brought hope and help to many. His presentations of Christian faith were at once tough-minded, took account of personal experiences and transparently honest. *The Screwtape Letters*, by which he is probably best known, caused a stir in the conservative Oxford circles of the day (1942). Wilson goes so far as to state that this book cost Lewis a professorship at Oxford because many were of-

fended that he took theology out of the cloisters to the people and that his book was so "dam'd popular".

And this is also the self-same Lewis who wrote those delights of children's literature, the seven volumes of the Narnia Chronicles. They have become classics in their genre. But there is even more! Lewis was an authority on English medieval literature. He wrote many books on this subject; most of them are still required texts in the teaching of English literature and language at tertiary level.

Here, then, is a film which adds greatly to our appreciation of the personality and life of a remarkable writer and a remarkable man. *Shadowlands* offers but a brief episode of this man's life, but what we see is probably the best of him.

And having seen the movie, try reading some of the books!

Shadowlands

C.S. Lewis
Anthony Hopkins

Joy Gresham
Debra Winger

At selected cinemas

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Pontius' Puddle



Christmas Editorials

Crows, Lights and Christmas

Alan Matheson

What can you make of a Christmas: in Adelaide, its a time of comfort following the loss of a football match, in Japan the most popular Christmas present is a plastic fish (no feeding and worry free holidays!) and American children will receive \$10 billion worth of toys, therefore setting yet another "record for an industry that hasn't suffered a slump in thirty years."

But it wasn't only the *Adelaide Advertiser's* Christmas editorialist, who in a most imaginative way was able to link Christmas with the loss of a football match and a car race.

In Perth, the *West Australian*, started out with a 'divine light', was bedazzled with the 'Sparkle of Christmas', which 'reflects' and ignites a yearning deep in human psyche, and ended up with 'a golden glow' which 'offers not only good cheer, but a chance to reach beyond the worries of the moment into realism which can transcend and transform them'!

The national *Australian*, produced perhaps the most confused and bewildering editorial.

Starting from the premise that Christmas was "a definitive statement about the value of an individual" it then proposed that "as the dominant language of Australia is English, so Christianity is its major faith," and finally concluded with the suggestion, that multiculturalism "need fear nothing from Christmas"

The editorial writer somehow or other overlooked the fact that the Orthodox Church, hardly an English speaking Church, is the third largest church in Melbourne. Or has not met any of the Australian Vietnamese speaking Catholics, the Australian Korean speaking congregations of the Uniting Church, or the Spanish speaking congregations of the

Anglican Church, let alone the Australian Chinese speaking congregations of our Conference.

Rather than fear, I would have thought multiculturalism and the diversity it brings, has added immeasurably to the celebration of Christmas.

I wonder how a writer sets about writing a Christmas editorial.

How in a space of a few hundred words can one say anything with any meaning?

Is it the same writer each year? Are they all men?

After a few years of analysing the editorials of the nation's newspapers, there is little doubt that the most fortunate of AC readers are those who live in Sydney. There the writer of the *Sydney Morning Herald* never fails to produce a substantive, thought-provoking and creative editorial.

A starting point for most of the 1993 writers was a reflection on the events which shaped the year.

Internationally, 1993 saw the emergence of the new trading blocs—GATT, APEC and NAFTA; they are the nuts and bolts of global mechanisms which will determine the life chances of all who sit in the pews in 1994.

War, with its devastation and starvation, produced either death or 10,000 refugees a day, during 1993. As a nation, we experienced what one commentator called the 'new Brutalism' with "continuing high unemployment, downsizing, redundancies, retraining programs heavy competition for jobs, restructuring, labour market deregulation and a ruthless new managerial style."

The year also saw the nation struggling with the implication of the Mabo judgement.

For the Church, 1993 was not a good year.

It produced WACO; revelations of allegations of wide-

spread child abuse within the Catholic Church; and media headlines such as, 'God told me to use Glad Wrap: exorcist.'

There were two dominant themes in the year's editorials, which in turn should provoke some further pulpit reflection. Most, editorial writers, took events outside Australia as their starting point.

The Adelaide Advertiser writer, included comments on the "great stride forward as the world saw on the White House the Israeli Prime Minister ... and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation chief ..."; "the grounds for hope by men and women of good will" in South Africa; "the prospect of negotiations" in Northern Ireland; and the anguish of Bosnia, "all the deeper because there seems to be no end in sight".

The Melbourne *Herald Sun*, picked up the "terrible fear" shadowing the Korean peninsula, the "repressive military Junta" in Burma, and "the ascendancy of extremists in the Russian Parliament."

All were frustrated with events in old Yugoslavia. It was Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* who probably best summed up the situation: "there is no end to bloodshed. The world has become immune to the nightly images of children maimed and mourners murdered as they bury their dead".

The response by the writers to these global events was interesting. Almost all of them drew comfort that we were not like "them".

"Here on our vast island continent" said Melbourne's *Herald Sun* "we have good reason to thank our guiding star." For Brisbane's *Courier Mail* "It is a time to count our blessings ... to feel good about ourselves."

And in Sydney, "It is a day for us to celebrate our good fortune, to be thankful that we are Australians." (*Daily Telegraph*)

But it was the *Sydney Morning Herald* that was the most profound and creative.

Headed, "The Essence of Christmas", it unashamedly affirmed the significance of the Christmas event.

Christmas, the writer asserts, "reveals the essence of Christianity", "it defines the core of faith", and it "presents the picture of a God who is not detached".

At the heart of Christianity, says the writer, "is what the Bible calls the Kingdom of God. The principles of the Kingdom of God stand over the standards of today's society, judging them. It condemns many features of modern capitalism with its wide disparities between wealth and poverty ... it calls for the acceptance and the expansion of the Mabo decision ... it condemns the world's trust in armaments, violence and war."

And the writer concludes, "It is the range, depth and the completeness of the Christian philosophy and interpretation of life which explains its enduring appeal to the people of the world."

Editorials, usually produced by senior staff, provide intriguing insight into how a nation thinks about itself. Ministers who seek to interest and challenge their congregations do well not to ignore them.

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Minister's Musings

Sunday

We combined for evening worship with the Uniting Church, Anglicans, Catholics and a couple of Lutherans, at the Anglican church. There was a bit of Anglican pomp, but nothing else in the service that we could not be comfortable with in Churches of Christ. Next week, I share a wedding service with a Catholic priest. We've come a long way from the bad old days, but God must still grieve over such a divided church. Do we share the grief? Or doesn't it matter to us?

Monday

As I walked the streets, crystallising a sermon, our local council workers were replacing the bitumen footpaths with paving stones. I understand that paving stones are much more expensive than bitumen is, but that in the long term they last longer, can be easily replaced in single units if necessary, and therefore are cheaper. They look nicer, too, as long as you are not wanting to use shopping or luggage trolleys, or wheelchairs! It was a parable. The new energy-saving lights cost more, but in the long run they are cheaper. The best way to good neighbourly relationships is to invest time now, before troubles come. The strongest long-term disciples may be the ones we spend a lot of time with before and after their commitment to Jesus.

Tuesday

A man I visited today is in chronic pain. It's not life-threatening, but several bouts of surgery have not improved it. In a brief period both his parents died, he was divorced after his wife was unfaithful, he lost his job, his son in his 20s contracted cancer and another son got into drugs. He worries about the grandchildren in each case. He has only recently come to faith. How much hardship can one person stand? How much hardship before he turns his back on God? How do I minister to such

a person? It reminds me of my own need for the guidance and strength of God.

Wednesday

Some of our longstanding and loyal members are quick to criticise those whom they do not like, and they don't seem to mind if the person knows it: chatterbox, noisy children, different lifestyle and dress, something done a long time ago. They are quick to sit in judgment on a service, a sermon, a song or a meal that is not to their liking. Some people have left because they don't like the forked tongues. What's happened to the love of Jesus? Is all my preaching to no effect? How does God put up with us? Sure, I have to watch my own tongue! What then: confrontation? Or is it simply a continuation of what happened to Jesus?

Thursday

"Why has this happened to me?", she asked. It's an age-old question. Somehow we think that the pain might be eased if there was a reason. Or perhaps we cry out as part of the expression of our pain. Job was fairly philosophical and accepting of it all until it got too bad: then he, too, cried out. Some say, "If it's going to happen to anyone at all, why shouldn't it happen to me?" I didn't have the answer for her: if I had I would write a best-seller and make my fortune. She and others will go on crying out, and so may I in due course. But ... I do know that when I cry out God will be there. Even if I don't realise or appreciate it at the time, I can bank on God's being with me.



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Friday

"Thank God it's Friday!"—a cry I hear over and over again. It's been a hard and seemingly long working week and they are looking forward to a couple of days off. It's part of a rhythm. In the creation story, God worked and then rested. The narratives about Jesus constantly talk about his getting up early to go out and pray; that doesn't sound like rest, but it is a time of refreshment—a change by which Jesus prepared himself for his day. That's what the Sabbath was about, God knew that we would need rest and worship.

Saturday

Perhaps we need to reclaim the Sabbath idea, but in a dif-

ferent, more modern form. The move to Sunday trading has probably gone far enough, but like King Canute with the tide, we may not be able to stop it. So how can we encourage people to take a Sabbath each week? We need to talk up the importance of rhythm and balance in life. Workaholicism may be a sin. If people can no longer worship regularly because of work, do we need to provide worship at other times? After all, once they decided to celebrate the Resurrection, the early Christians probably did their worshipping at night, after work. By the way, when does the minister take a weekend?

These musings by one of our ministers will be a regular feature in the "AC" for at least the next year. We trust that our readers will find them stimulating -Editor.]

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A Risky Business

Greg Elsdon

Following the brief yet dramatic portrayal of Jesus' Baptism (Mark 1:9–11), Mark, once again with surprising brevity, tells us of Jesus' temptation by Satan (Mark 1:12–13; cf Matt. 4:1–11 and Luke 4:1–13). Having been affirmed by the voice from heaven—"You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased"—Jesus is now propelled by the Spirit of God with a great sense of urgency into the wilderness, the traditional arena of trial of temptation. This experience, of which Mark tells us precious little, is no unfortunate accident in the early years of Jesus. It was divinely initiated and integral to God's chosen path for the one declared to be God's Son (Mark 1:1, 11, 24; etc). Having been endowed with God's own Spirit, Jesus is thrust into combat with the powers of evil. Without such commitment to the struggle against evil, Jesus' declaration of the in-breaking of the Kingdom would have been essentially bankrupt and powerless. Throughout the rest of Mark's Gospel, Jesus is found opposed to and overcoming the forces of evil.

Mark's enigmatic reference to Jesus being 'with the wild beasts' (Mark 1:13) is fascinating. Is it simply a reference to the precarious situation of the one who has been affirmed by

the voice from heaven? Or is it Mark's allusion to Jesus' identity as the one who announces the arrival of the long-awaited Kingdom where "the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid" (Isa 11:6)?

The exalted declarations of the baptism narrative have now been affirmed by Jesus' steadfastness during forty days of testing and temptation. Jesus' commitment and resolve have withstood a severe test. The pronouncement from heaven has been authenticated by the faithfulness and steadfastness of Jesus in the face of demonic temptation. He would not turn his head from the divinely appointed path.

Only now is it appropriate for Mark to tell us of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He comes from Nazareth in Galilee, a religious and political backwater, declaring God's 'good news'. This 'good news', as we discover by reading the rest of Mark's story, is that the powers of evil do not hold ultimate sway over the affairs of human life. Men and women need not live with the oppressive conviction that evil rules supreme. Why? Because the time of promise has arrived, the Kingdom or Realm of God is at hand. That for which generations of faithful Israelites have watched and prayed was

about to burst upon the scene of human history. God is coming and this is 'good news'!

Hand-in-glove with the announcement of the 'good news' of the imminence of God's coming is the call to 'turn around', to re orientate one's life on the basis of Jesus' message. The call for repentance must be heard and responded to not once only, but over and over again. Repentance is not so much an activity, as a way of life—a way of life directed towards God. Jesus announced that God is with us and for us, not against us. We, like the first hearers of Jesus, are called to live our lives accordingly.

Before telling us more about this declaration of 'good news', Mark records the story of the calling of four fishermen to follow him (Mark 1:16–20). This is not a case of enthusiastic admirers choosing to associate themselves with their teacher. No, as Mark tells the story, Jesus appears out of the blue and himself initiates a conversation which culminates in a call to 'follow' him. Simon and Andrew are told that, if they did take up his challenge, Jesus would teach them to fish for people. In other words, they would be co-workers with Jesus in his ministry of announcing the Kingdom of God.

The response of the four fishermen is as abrupt and surprising as the call itself. Mark simply tells us that they left what they were doing and followed this stranger from Nazareth. To answer the call of Jesus was a costly business for these fishermen. They turned their backs on their source of financial security, their family responsibilities and, most likely, their respect within the community. Following Jesus is a costly business.

From the very beginning of Mark's story of Jesus, we read of people, in this case four fishermen, finding themselves mysteriously and inexplicably

caught up with the destiny of this un-credentialed man from Nazareth in Galilee. The call to follow Jesus echoes through this ancient story and confronts us ever anew with the challenge to 'follow' Jesus, to allow our lives to get tangled-up with his. To follow him in such a way that his ultimate concern—the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God—becomes our central preoccupation. The call to follow Jesus today is as strong and uncompromising as it was for Simon and Andrew, James and John. It is a call which comes from Jesus himself and demands the renunciation of all that would inhibit or compromise Jesus' ministry of announcing the Kingdom of God.

The enigmatic reference to the arrest of John the Baptist (Mark 1:14), stands as a stark reminder that the one who calls others to follow is set on a path which often leads to conflict, rejection and suffering. The Baptist eventually lost his life because of his commitment to the in-breaking Kingdom (Mark 6:14–29). It was not long before Jesus himself became the subject of the death plots of society's religious and political power-brokers (Mark 3:6; 11:18; 12:12). Jesus was not surprised by this. He knew from early on that alignment with God's Kingdom and opposition to the powers of evil would bring him into life-threatening confrontation with the custodians of control (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Following this Jesus is always going to be a risky business.

This is the first of a new column for the "AC", commenting on Biblical texts. For the first half of the year, Greg Elsdon, Principal of Churches of Christ Theological College, Vic, will be commenting on the Gospel reading occurring on the calendar two weeks after the publication date of the "AC".

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Current Influences on Churches of Christ

Bruce McIntosh

Churches of Christ commenced, not as a denomination with a new interpretation of Christianity, but as a movement with a plea for the unity of the church by means of the restoration of New Testament practices and beliefs. Slogans, such as: "No creed but Christ", "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak" and "In things essential unity, non-essentials liberty and in all things love", adopted by early Churches of Christ, were part of the idealism of the movement.

Churches of Christ have been subject to several significant influences this century, which have altered our original practices, lessen our confidence in the relevance of our position, and even threaten our continued existence. It is important that we recognise and analyse the effect of these influences.

The Ecumenical Movement

Because of our earnest concern with the disunity of the Body of Christ, Churches of Christ have actively engaged in the ecumenical movement from its inception. Our contribution has been well beyond our comparative strength, and the quality of the leadership we have offered has been equal to the best. The ecumenical movement has given us a better understanding of the historic church, and

Calendar Errata

Two of the readings printed on the 1994 Churches of Christ calendar for 20 March are incorrect. The second reading should be 1 Chronicles 29:10-20 and the fourth reading Ephesians 2:11-22. The daily readings for 18 and 20 March should be corrected similarly.

in particular the value of its objective theocentric liturgical worship. Yet this close association with the larger traditional denominations has caused us some embarrassment about our perceived lowly status, and led to the adoption of concepts, such as the distinction between clergy and laity which our forebears had rejected. We lost our force as a movement and began to behave like any other denomination.

The Fundamentalist Movement

The fundamentalist movement began at the end of last century to combat the influence of liberal (modernist) theology. Because of its vigorous defence of a literal interpretation of Scripture, many saw fundamentalism as supporting our cause. In fact it introduced a sense of legalism, together with a blurring of the distinction between the Old and New Testaments, that replaced the liberality of thought and freedom of expression that enriched and diversified the thinking in our churches.

The Charismatic Movement

The charismatic movement's real influence has been in the past 20 years. Early Churches of Christ explained speaking in tongues and healing as experiences belonging to the time of the apostles which died out with them. With their emphasis on rationality, our forebears preferred to emphasise the fruits of the indwelling Spirit as a gift to all believers on their baptism into Christ. While the influence of the charismatic movement has served to break up the rigidity of traditional Churches of Christ worship patterns, it has shifted the focus away from our original plea for the organic unity of the

church as the Body of Christ, to unity in the Spirit of like-minded Christians.

Church Growth Movement

The church growth movement is the latest influence on our Churches. It has produced "growing churches". It is highly pragmatic and, based on market research techniques, it aims to meet contemporary needs. It judges the historical idealism of Churches of Christ as irrelevant. The "denominational" name, Churches of Christ is replaced by the undenominational title: "Community Church". The church growth movement introduced the "strong leader/senior minister" concept, together with unilateral decision-making by "management boards", in the place of our traditional participative, democratic congregational decision-making processes. The church growth movement has the potential to alter the nature and structure of our churches more than any of the above.

The Biblical Theology Movement

The one contemporary movement that does support our historical position is probably the least known by church members. Biblical Theology has moved away from classical theological concepts and seeks to interpret the New Testament in the light of first century so-

cial, religious and political values. This has led some of the Biblical theologians to state the legitimacy of such practices as believers baptism by immersion, weekly communion, and the priesthood of all believers. All major planks in our restoration platform. An understanding of this movement can do a great deal to restore our confidence in our original position.

Churches of Christ do have to adapt to changing times. Not all that our forebears did was done well, nor is it relevant today, but the core values of our movement such as unity, liberty, commonality, and participative decision-making have many contemporary parallels, and will draw to us those who look for a church that shares their values. We need to restore the values of the restoration movement. We have much to offer the contemporary church. Rather than being too defensive in supporting our traditional position, or in advocating change, we need to sit down with those who differ from us and hammer out a set of criteria for evaluating change in the light of the values of our traditional position. Our current leaders need to take up this challenge if we are to survive as Churches of Christ into the next century.

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Some Churches Do Have Them

R.N. Hawkins

There was pain in the church. The agony was not from the rack, or a brutal beating by the mob, but a more destructive source. It was the pain of abusive power, the agony of an ego that had ricocheted from devotion to Jesus into self-exaltation. True, they would have talked 'churchy', defended their actions as that which was best for the fellowship, and claimed the authority of 'revelations' and suchlike. But no words could hide the fact that the local congregation was shuddering in its suffering.

Such is the scenario implicit in the letter John wrote to his friend Gaius—3 John. It is a letter that should be read by leaders in our era of egocentricity and claims to the divine right of rulership. It is a letter that reminds us that there are forces within the human heart that will exploit the Gospel for personal aggrandisement. A recent book written by Ronald M. Enroth, *Churches That Abuse*, shows how prevalent this 'pain' is in the church. The apostle John shared with Gaius, and through him with us, how he had written to the church but a guy called Diotrephes held it back from the church. This Diotrephes seemed to have wanted people to see him as the source of all wisdom and the great dispenser of God's grace and knowledge. To do this, he had to remove all who were a threat, ridicule those who were held in high regard and replace them with subservient 'yes men'.

Diotrephes has been a 'pain' in the church for twenty centuries and unfortunately will be until judgement day. What would motivate such a person to use and abuse the church in such a way? It could be anyone of a dozen reasons; from seeing the church as an easy prey for gaining influence, to satisfying insecurity, or a personality uncontrolled by the Holy Spirit.

In essence, Diotrephes was being true to his name and not being true to the Name that is above every name. In a little book, *Scripture Proper Names and their Interpretations*, John Ritchie claims Diotrephes means 'nourished by Jupiter'. According to Roman mythology Jupiter was the king of the gods and ruler of the universe. His symbols were the sceptre and the thunderbolt. As might be guessed, he was immoral and craved power. What an appropriate name for the person creating havoc within the fellowship of faith.

What we have recorded by John is an event that has tremendous spiritual overtones for all of us. Diotrephes appears to have been a pagan who had been converted, but who had not risen above his pagan background or name. He was trying to live the Christian life and fulfil a leadership role in the power of the 'flesh'. He was exhibiting Diotrephes rather than the transforming indwelling and sovereignty of Jesus Christ.

This is the recurring tragedy of the Christian life and ministry. People live by their personality powers, whether good or bad, and express leadership through 'pagan principles' (today called successful business principles) and wonder why there is so much pain associated with the Church. The Apostle John could understand

Diotrephes. I am sure that when he had a face to face with him it would not have been a time for the apostle to pull rank. I'm sure that John would have borne testimony to his own journey from being a son of thunder (Mark 3:17), to the champion of love. John would have shared how there was a time when he and his brother James wanted to call down fire on a Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-55) and were severely rebuked by Jesus. Imagine also, the difficulty of going to the Samaritans with the message of redemption if the Samaritans could point to a razed village that spoke of carnal revenge rather than heaven's grace.

Today, there is tremendous emphasis being placed upon leadership and its importance for church growth (and other things). However, it needs to be stressed that there is leadership that suits the World and leadership which is in harmony with Christ. Jesus himself pointed this out in Matt. 20:25-28. It is the example he set of being a leader through serving. His qualities of leadership were based upon the authority

of his Father's will and word, his personal integrity and the overruling power of the Holy Spirit. This shatters the soul nature of a Diotrephes and transforms them into a John.

Diotrephes had also forgotten one of the most basic aspects of the Christian life. "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10)

John states that Diotrephes 'loves to be first'. Isn't it strange that apart from this brief mention of Diotrephes by the apostle of love, he is unknown. Surely that has its own significance. The flesh profits nothing. The Church of Christ continues in spite of the pain that is wrought within by such people. It is a vital principle for all to learn, especially those in training for ministry. If you sow to the flesh you reap destruction (and cause pain), but if you sow to the spirit you reap eternal life (and experience joy). For as Jesus said and Diotrephes reveals, without Jesus you can do, be and achieve nothing! (John 15:5)

Christian Women and Men

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Reviewed by G. Stirling,

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Gordon Stirling

Christ—Still In The Shadows!

Gordon Stirling

After World War I there appeared a David Low cartoon depicting Versailles conference table where the leaders of the victorious allies were discussing reparations to be forced on the defeated Germany. At the table there were the fierce Clemenceau of France and President Woodrow Wilson of the USA who, as an active Christian, wanted a more magnanimous outcome. Clemenceau had sneered at Wilson, "You talk like Jesus Christ!" Billy Hughes was in the cartoon, diminutive and belligerent, thumping the table. In the shadows of the cartoon was Jesus Christ. The caption was, "Will he be invited to the board?" Well he was not invited and Germany was left destitute, with the Weimar government practising and impossible austerity that impoverished its people leaving them hopeless and depressed. They were ready for the madman Adolph Hitler and his Nazi nationalism and his promise of a German Golden Age as top nation of the world. So there was World War II.

The victorious allies after the Second World War were not going to make the same mistake and Germany and Japan were given the opportunity to recover and to rebuild and to take their places in cooperative world. America pumped millions of dollars into its Marshall Plan to rehabilitate Europe. Maybe Christ was not consciously "invited to the board", but the new attitude was more harmony with his mind.

Then came the Third World War, which they called "The Cold War"; that often "hotted up" almost to the brink. But mostly it was fought between the USSR and America in other nations' back yards.

The West spent billions of dollars on the Cold War while third world countries sank deeper into poverty. The USSR also spent its billions in order to keep up, until finally she became bankrupt under the weight of Cold War expenditure. Then came Mikhail Gorbachev, one man who showed promise of engineering a new order of things. Down came the Iron Curtain. Down

came the Berlin Wall. And the republics of the former USSR looked to the West for practical help to get great peoples back on their feet.

And Christ was in the shadows waiting to see what they would do. But the nations that had formerly made up most of Christendom, and some of which are still looked on as Christian nations, suddenly forgot him and tightened their purse strings. A year before, they had more than enough money to make the most sophisticated and deadly weapons ever known. They were ready to squander billions to take war preparation into outer space. They were willing to expend billions in an Arabian desert to save their oil supplies. But suddenly there was no money to give more than a mere token assistance to the great nation that had lost the Cold War, and that little assistance tied to conditions that suited the donor nations.

As in the days of the Weimar Government in Germany, Gorbachev, and later Boris Yeltsin, have been forced into

leading their people into unbelievable austerity.

And now the Russian people are looking to another madman, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, with his belligerent nationalism, to give them the opportunity to leave their endless shopping queues outside of empty stores and get back to some respect as a nation.

We read about Vladimir and see him on TV and think that surely the Russian people will not make such a clown their leader. So we thought about the German people and Hitler. We joked about his endless speeches. We comforted ourselves that the tanks of his great panzer divisions that later rolled over Europe, were really made of three ply in a sabre rattling effort to impress the world media.

It is dangerous for people and nations to leave Christ in the shadows. Maybe it is still not too late to "invite him to the board" of the United Nations, of the national parliaments, and to the table we sit around at home while we watch the latest on television.

New Hope

The Broken-Plate Pattern

W. Mill

Have you ever belonged to a friendly group in which you all deeply shared some common interest? Maybe you have. It could be an ex-servicemen or women's club, a sports group, or one with a passion for some such thing as play-going or stamp collecting.

But, whatever, you have probably gained a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure from it. Maybe you have had some

kind of insignia or a membership medallion or token, something that gave a strong sense of unity to your group. It's sad to see such a group break up but that must inevitably happen.

A man wrote about what he called a "broken-plate" group. This group used to meet only a few times each year. At their first meeting a plate was broken and each of the members received one of the broken

pieces. When a member died the piece of the plate he or she had was returned to the group.

When the last piece was finally returned the group was then disbanded for good. So that in the finish while the plate was restored to its wholeness the members had all disappeared. It's a solemn picture of life and death.

People, we being humans that is, are on this earth for only a brief period. We die and leave

this world but inanimate things—buildings, things of wood and stone, possessions of our own like houses, cars, caravans and boats—they remain. They stay, like the restored plate; but we pass on.

Life is a fleeting thing. We do well to make it the best life we can. Someone said, "Life is worth living better than many of us live it."

To live life well, to live it in the best possible way, we need

Being Full of the Holy Spirit

Ronald Graham

As we had afternoon tea with a neighbour recently, her other guest testified at length to herself being "full of the Holy Spirit". Along the way, she took Churches of Christ to task, few of whose members, she claimed, were filled with the Spirit. As she talked, I thought of Barnabas, of whom Luke wrote in Acts that "He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith". (11:24) I cannot recall any other person in the New Testament who is described as being good, full of faith, and full of the Holy Spirit. Why did Luke speak so highly of him?

For one thing, Barnabas is portrayed as being a generous steward of his possessions. When he was baptised, his wallet was baptised with him.

Luke says that in the early days of the church in Jerusalem, "There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them and brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need." Then he gave an example, namely,

a model. Make your model Jesus Christ. It's been said that people are directed to heaven better by footprints than by guideposts.

And by walking in the footprints of Christ we find that they lead us only into good and helpful paths. But we need to follow them. Just as a man advised American politicians that it is more useful to imitate Abraham Lincoln than to quote him, so we need to understand that our need is to live in imitation of the life of Jesus.

Things like the broken plate we mentioned outlive us. But if we do our best to imitate the life of Jesus Christ, we will have left behind an example worth more than all the restored crockery in the world.

Barnabas, who "sold a field he owned". (4:34-37)

At the heart of the gospel lies the conviction that God cares for us. God cares about us. And the great thing about Jesus is that he encouraged those who have faith in him to care, to be merciful, to be generous in a practical and tangible way.

At our best, we are in the business of raising up good women and men who take serious account of human need—moral, psychological, and material, within the Christian community and in the larger community beyond it—and then match their resources against that need.

For another thing, Luke depicts Barnabas as being ecumenically minded.

One of the first divisions within the church was between Jewish Christians who spoke only Aramaic and Jewish Christians whose native tongue was Greek. Division within soon found its counterpart in persecution without, some of it at the hands of Greek-speaking Jews from various parts of the Mediterranean world (Acts 6).

In the end, many of the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians were scattered through-

out the coast lands, the island of Cyprus, and Syria. Some made their way 300 miles north to Antioch; and there, without central direction, they began to extend the boundaries of their fellowship, particularly table fellowship, to include those who were not Jews (because they did, some of us Gentiles are Christians today).

For Jews, to eat at one table and to have spoken over it the words of the law was as if to eat from the table of God. Obedience to the food laws was one of the three external identity badges that marked them out as God's chosen people.

This unauthorised stretching of the boundary to include Gentiles among the people of God was unwelcome to many Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, so they chose one of their number to investigate in person. They chose Barnabas, and lo and behold, "When he arrived [at Antioch] and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts." (11:23)

At our best, we are in the business of raising up good men and women whose centre of loyalty is Jesus Christ and whose circumference of interest and concern is as far-flung as the human race.

For a third thing, Barnabas is described as putting the health of the whole church first and himself second.

He was a Christian before Paul. It was he who stood sponsor for Paul in Jerusalem when other Christians could not so easily forgive his hounding of their fellow-believers to death. It was he who, a decade later, encouraged Paul to throw in his lot with the Antioch church. They were missionaries together, and until 13:42 it is always Barnabas who is named first. At that point, without explanation, the order is reversed: the latecomer overshadows the one who earlier was a towering

person (cf. 9:27; 11:25-26, 30; 12:25; 13:2, 7; 13:42).

What this signified in their relationship we do not know. What we do know is that Barnabas' zeal for the gospel and his commitment to the church's outreach did not diminish. He did not have a hungry ego that needed to be fed by honourable mentions. He did not use the church for self-aggrandisement.

At our best we are raising up good women and men who seek first the health of the whole church, putting themselves second.

Finally, I recalled that it was the apostles who gave this Christian the name Barnabas (4:36). It has been variously translated. Taking liberties, as it often does, the Living Bible, has this: "the apostles nicknamed [him] 'Barny the Preacher'". The most common is "son of encouragement."

What Barnabas had was a gift for commending the gospel to the hearts and minds and wills of people. He quickened and uplifted their spirits. He aroused hope in those who had lost hope. He put a new song in their hearts.

At our best, we are in the business of raising up fathers and mothers, teachers and psychologists, social workers and public servants who do not readily despair, and do not easily give up on others, who are not cynics, but who, rather, lovingly tend the "dimly burning wick" (Isa 42:3) until it rises to a living flame.

When our afternoon tea friend spoke of being full of the Holy Spirit, she had one understanding of what that signified, I had another.

And not incidentally, Luke would be the first to say that raising up people like Barnabas takes the coming together of God the generous, inclusive, inexhaustible, unquenchable Spirit and human spirits that pledge their loyalty to God.



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Fifteen Minutes

Barbara Kennedy

Lord, today I spent 15 minutes with you. Not a long time, but it was precious.

At first I wasn't aware that you were with me. I sat by the lake enjoying my lunch, but also enjoying the peacefulness of the place. I could see the houses, shops and cars on the other side of the lake, but their noise and hurry did not reach me.

The moorhens, with their dark blue and black suits and their striking red noses, were bobbing around busily seeking food in the strangest places. One carried a McDonalds drink cup, lid and straw intact, right down to the water's edge. A curious pelican swam up and chased after the moorhen, which quickly swam into the clump of reeds. It must have known the pelican wouldn't follow and, left in peace, it could investigate its find more closely. I could hear banging noises, but was unable to see what the bird was doing.

A couple of moorhens separately decided to investigate the contents at the very bottom of the rubbish bin. When they jumped to the top of the bin they looked so awkward and comical, almost overbalancing, but clinging on with their long, long toes. One emerged with a long piece of red food—I guess it was bacon. It ate some of the meat, holding it in the joint at the base of the toes; using its beak, it picked up the meat and carried it to the water. And there it had to hold tenaciously to its prize—some other moorhens took an interest in the food, followed by a couple of

squawking seagulls. One gull chased off the moorhens, and then set about pursuing the laden bird. It took off, rapidly running through the shallow water. The gull flew after the hen, and I was surprised to see the hen turn and not only face the gull, but charge after it, making sure it gave ground.

These manoeuvres were repeated a couple of times, and I was amused to see that the gull's cries had attracted three or four others from further along the lake. They did not join the chase, but stood close by to watch the proceedings and presumably go in for the spoil if the first gull stole the meat. The moorhen maintained its hold on the meat, and managed to eat it after the gull was intimidated and retired from

the scene.

As I continued to enjoy the peaceful scene of birds swimming and enjoying the sunshine and the graceful flying displays of the pelicans, I realised you were there, quietly talking to me through the birds and the scene around me. Your promise, "I am with you always", came softly to my mind. It was as if your arms were around me, surrounding me with gentleness and love, that I have longed for but haven't recognised for a long time.

Lord, thank you for spending time with me today; those moments now stand outside of time. Forgive me my short sightedness, my failure to recognise you in the hard days of life, to recognise you in the life around me. Thank you for teaching me not only to find what I need in strange places, but also the need to fight to keep what I have gained; that running away may be right for a time, but often a determined attack will deter the enemy.

Thank you for surrounding me with your love each and every day, even when I am unaware of how close you are.

Thank you, Lord.
Barbara comes from Melba, ACT.

The South Australian Council of Churches Inc. is seeking a locum for

Executive Officer

26 April—22 July, 1994

Applications are invited from persons with a commitment to ecumenism to maintain and promote the continuing work of the Council and to complete a special task in the area of overseas aid or local ecumenism

Job description available from:

SA Council of Churches Inc.

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Adelaide 5001

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Applications close 11.2.94

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A Qualified and Experienced Minister

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Cross-cultural ministry

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For further information contact:

Mr Jeff May, 180a Gray Street

Adelaide 5000. Phone (08) 212 4446

Churches of Christ in Qld Social Service Department invites applications for the position of

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for their 70 bed Aged Care Hostel

"Marana Gardens"

located at Southport, Queensland

The successful applicant will be a Registered Nurse, well acquainted with the care of the aged in hostels, and familiar with the current requirements of the Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG&CS) in relation to Aged Care Hostels.

The chosen applicant will be responsible for the delivery of Personal Care to Hostel residents, will have supervision of all Homecare Workers and in conjunction with Administration, will have responsibility for the maintenance of sound documentation essential to meet PCAI recurrent funding requirements.

Marana Gardens offers a very high standard of care in 8 Hostel houses, each one providing accommodation for 8-10 residents. Five independent living units are included as part of the complex, and the Director of Care would accept responsibility for emergency calls from unit residents.

Marana Gardens provides a unique and innovative form of domestic hostel housing for the aged, and is currently piloting another new concept in aged services, i.e. ethnic-based care. To this end, a new 10 bed hostel home has been built to cater for the special needs of the Jewish community.

The person we are seeking would need to be self-motivated and have proven interpersonal relationship skills and a strong ability to direct staff in the delivery of a high standard of compassionate, competent care to residents in a homelike environment. Salary will be commensurate with qualifications of the successful applicant.

Position will be available as of mid-February, 1994.

Please phone Marana Gardens for your formal application, which will need to be completed and lodged, together with your resume before February 15, 1994.

The Administration Officer

Marana Gardens

10 Ridgeway Avenue

Southport 4215

Telephone: (075) 711288

Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Carr, Irene Beryl

(28.11.93) Born 1921, Irene Beryl Withers, as a nursing sister, met Victor Allan Carr, of maintenance department, in the hospital, they married in 1955 and had three children, Rosemary, Peter and Phillip. Irene was member of the Bowral, NSW, church for 22 years, until her death. Loved and respected, both, by her church family and her many friends in the Southern Highlands, an area she loved. Irene's enthusiastic zest for life was never dampened despite much illness and her joy in the Lord shone on her face. She was unselfish, kind, always happy and loved a good chat. She leaves her children and three grandchildren. She is with her Lord and having a great time.

—Debbie Luttrell

Clough, Mrs Florence Ethel

Born Florence Sewell of Bet Bet, Vic, in 1899, she later accompanied her school teacher husband to Havelock, Newbridge, Smythesdale, Shepparton, Ballarat, Hamilton, Avoca, Seymour and Ararat. She retired to Ballarat and then to Horsham. Though a keen and active member of Churches of Christ, Flo attended whatever Protestant church was available when there was no Church of Christ in her town. She served as church organist at the Dawson Street church in Ballarat till she was 80. She is remembered for her dry wit, sharp tongue, and independent nature. She was always outgoing and mixed well. Though in her 90s, she was still a keen reader and could

see hear and think clearly. Sympathy is offered to her daughter, Margorie Day and family of Horsham and her foster daughter, Audrey.

—H.A.L. Clark

Phillips, Bert

Born in Stawell, Vic, in 1909, Bert worked in a variety of occupations including farm labouring in the Stawell and Nandaly districts. He served in New Guinea during World War II. He also worked in Horsham for the State Rivers. Formally a Methodist, at 69, he and his wife Mary felt the need to be baptised by full immersion and joined the Church of Christ in Horsham. A regular attender at the services, we appreciated his friendliness, generosity, caring, practical down-to-earth approach to life and strong convictions. Both RSL and Masonic services were conducted at the grave side. Our sympathies are extended to daughter, Jan Aisbett and family, Horsham, son, Jim and family, Canada, and the family of his deceased son, Rob, also in Canada.

—H.A.L. Clark

Potter, Dorothy Elsie Jane

(24.12.93) Dorothy, together with husband Eric were deeply-respected and much-loved members of the Ann Street church and the Queensland Conference. Born Dorothy Clapham, she was granddaughter to W.T. Clapham, pioneer minister of City Church at the time of her birth. She was baptised at 15 and went on to serve faithfully until her call home. One son, Ronald, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She served the local church, state and national fellowship. In CWF, she was both

President and Secretary of Ann St and the QCWF and a past Federal President. She served on the HMC, Youth Dept, Kenmore, Historic committee and League of 5,000. Her interest extended to Aust. Christian Women, National Council of Women, WCTU and the Council for Aging. With Eric, she served Meals on Wheels for many years, also participating in a special university study program for the elderly. Other interests included travel, mountaineering, philately, history and music. She was an inspiration to us all. Many attended a service of tribute at Ann St during which A. Taylor, R.V. Holt and A.C. Male participated, assisting L.G. Armstrong in the tribute. A.C. Male commented, "Dorothy—a gem who climbed each of the Glasshouse Mountains will be remembered by us as we drive past. We may even catch a glimpse of the glitter of the 'gem' as it shines from the highest peak."

—L.G. Armstrong

Quayle, Lesley Lenore

(8.1.94) Born 4 March 1919, Box Hill, Vic, the eldest of four children. Survived by brother Max. She worked at the Government Clothing Factory, later training as a Nursing Sister. Lesley Gedye and Vic Quayle were married at the Canterbury Baptist Church in 1948. They had three children: Rosemary, Jenny and Len, and seven grandchildren. Lesley shared very much in the life and work of the church, actively supporting Vic in ministry. Lesley developed her own unique ministry of caring and encouragement, especially through flowers, cards, letters and phone calls. For a number of years she has not enjoyed good health, however, she continued to use this special gift. Lesley will be remembered for the

joyful faith she enjoyed which she shared with others.

—CPC

Squirrel, Dot

(3.1.94) Dot died after a three-year illness. She accepted what was happening to her with grace and dignity, endearing herself to all who cared for her at Greenvale and Taylor Lodge Nursing Homes, never losing her sense of humour or smile. Her funeral service, conducted by Ed Ots, a real celebration of her life, and was attended by friends from Moreland, North Essendon and East Keilor churches; friends with whom she worked, grew up and played tennis. "If you were a friend of Dot's, you were a friend for life!" commented Ed Ots. Dot loved sport, music, ballet and was a great encourager of young people in these areas. She loved to sing, especially enjoying being part of the singing groups at East Keilor. She loved flowers and visitors would never leave Dot's house without a flower from her garden.

—Barbara Ackerman

Webster, Hazel Rita

(18.12.93) Hazel Webster (nee Edwards) was born at Medindie, SA, 12 May 1933. The eighth of 13 children she grew up at Hindmarsh and then Mannum. She married Les in 1958 and they had two children, Michael and Mary. Hazel was baptised at Strathalbyn and then became a valued member of the Milang church. She enjoyed craft work, was a Lavender Lady at QEH and was involved in CWA, CWF, Red Cross and Milang Fellowship Group. In the past year Hazel has battled cancer, but her faith and peace were an inspiration to all. We thank God for the privilege of having known and loved her.

—Grant Simpson

Adelaide (Grote Street)—Minister

The Church of Christ at Grote Street in Adelaide is seeking the expression of interest from a qualified Minister to serve in the capacity of full-time Minister of the Church.

The congregation at present numbers 60 active members and therefore requires a Minister with vision for growth.

The position would ideally suit a gifted pastoral minister with strong administrative abilities and a commitment to evangelism.

For additional information please write to:
The Chairman
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Church of Christ
100 Grote Street
Adelaide 5000

Initial enquiries may be made to Mr Geoff Thompson, phone (08) 293 5954.

Churches of Christ in Queensland Townsville Magnetic Island Camp Committee Position Vacant Managers/Caretakers Camp Irwin, Magnetic Island

An active, capable couple are sought to fill the position of Camp Manager and Caretakers at the Churches of Christ Camp on Magnetic Island, Townsville.

The position entails all of the on-site management and operation of the camp. The successful applicants will be required to live permanently on site and should be available for commencement between approx. 1 April and 1 June 1994. Remuneration is by way of benefits only.

Interested persons can obtain further details by contacting Tom or Jill Cummins on (077) 79 3700 after 17 January 1994.

Changes

HENLEY BEACH: Minister—Robyn Walsh, 271 Military Road, Henley Beach, SA 5022.

SA STATE MINISTER: David Brooker, 12 Correa Street, Blackwood, SA 5051. (Office address—263 Melbourne Street, North Adelaide, SA 5006. Phone (08) 239 0233, fax (08) 239 0914).

DANDENONG: Secretary—Mrs Vicki Foster, c/o 139-151 David Street, Dandenong, Vic 3175.

APPLECROSS: Minister—Sean Bainbridge, 3 Grimsay Road, Ardross, WA 6153. Phone (09) 364 7634.

DAWSON ST, BALLARAT: Minister—Darren and Pauline Kittel, 46 Montgomery Street, Wendouree, Vic 3355. Phone (053) 31 3225.

FINGER, Glynthea (Christian Conference of Asia, Educational Secretary)—CCA Pak Tin Village, Mei Tin Rd, Sha Tin New Territories, Hong Kong.

CHADSTONE: Minister—Paul M. Creasey, Office, 149 Waverley Road, Chadstone, Vic 3148. Phone (03) 888 2696.

SPRINGVALE: Minister—John Carmichael, Unit 23, 19 Sandra Avenue, Noble Park, Vic 3174. Phone (03) 546 2559. (Temporary address)

ORMOND: Minister—Jonathan Moore, 1 Arnott Street, Ormond, Vic 3163. Phone (03) 578 2727.

Baptisms

•Steve Fisher, Ian Bryce, Adrienne Houghton, Adam Hansen, Shepparton, Vic •Trevor Leane, Fullarton, SA •Phillip Chan, Bowral, NSW •Sarah Law, Julie Green, Maitland, NSW •Del Jackson, Horsham, Vic •Pauline Symonds, Olwen Marshall, Salisbury East, SA •Bob van der Heuvel,

Ian Sanders, Bill Anns, Aldinga Regional, SA •Kimberley Temple, Nicole Maroney, Mark Morffew, Anne Preston, Brian Bourke, Michael Smith, Stephen Smith, Howrah, Tas •Nigel Bradbury, Nowra, NSW •Tatiana Mirosnichenko, Valentina Mirosnichenko, Andrew Jimenez, Fairfield, NSW •Rebecca Hind, Cole Bottrill, Maryborough, Vic •Carl Milne, Torrensville, SA •Anne Clarke, Robert Stephens, Nicholas Dennington, Barry Warn, David Aldred, Launceston, Tas

Marriages

•Robyn Layton and Andrew Moore, Carnarvon, WA •Lauren Day and Simon Avery, Nowra, NSW •Shannon Randall and John Matthews, Scarborough, WA •Lyndell Elliott and Jay Hart, Thornleigh, NSW •Kathryn Hardwick and Wayne Charleston, Maisie McCulloch and Richard Ayton, Devonport, Tas •Rachael Baines and Matthew Pental, Louise Derry and Gavin Riches, Kalamunda, WA •Suzanne Dubbeld and Mark Bannon, Louise Geiger and John Alderton, Launceston, Tas

Deaths

•Ann Clydesdale, Shepparton, Vic •Ron McGregor, Mrs Holton, Fullarton, SA •Irene Carr, Bowral, NSW •Sid Silcox, Twyford St, Bundaberg, Qld •Lillian Chester, Vern Collinge, Albany, WA •Beryl McCall, Doug Gribble, Scarborough, WA •Mrs Paula Halvorsen, Thornleigh, NSW •Ern Hunter, Brian Lodge, Torrensville, SA •Robert (Bert) Phillips, Mrs Florence Ethel (Flo) Clough, Horsham, Vic •Lesley Lenore Quayle, Brunswick, Vic •Leslie Ladner, Fremantle, WA •Colin Clarke, Carnarvon, WA

Vic

SHEPPARTON (Robert Hough)

Past Conference Presidents service held with 50 guests ... Four baptised in recent weeks ... Long time member Glenys Parrot farewelled ... Funeral conducted for Ann Clydesdale ... Church leaders planning day provided inspirational vision for the future ... Christmas social a great success ... Elders leading Christmas service as minister & family away over Christmas.

GREENSBOROUGH (G. Warren)

December focus on presentation of "The Talking Christmas Tree" produced by Liz Roxburgh & Jo Bishop. Newsletters, leaflets & advertising boards in prominent positions used to invite locals to this service ... Choir visited Yarrawonga & presented items ... Malcolm Wilton returned from three months in Mozambique with World Vision ... Farewell lunch for Doyles (WA), D'Ambrosios (Surrey Hills) & Vaughans (Darwin).

HORSHAM (Harvey Clark)

Associate minister Ian Hunt's term expires end 1994 ... Decision has been made to appoint a youth pastor in 1994, applications being considered ... David & Robyn Harmer & family welcomed back after several years of service with the Churches of Christ in PNG.

ECHUCA (Arthur Symes)

Welcome to new members, Kuiper & Frew families, may your time with us be long & joyous ... Christmas Celebration in December, many enjoyable items—a night to remember—followed by supper. Congratulations to all who took part, as a result, one came forward to accept Jesus as Lord & Saviour.

RED CLIFFS (S. Mackie)

CWF held end of year dinner at TAFE College again ... Kids' Club finished year with concert on the Saturday night. Their end of year, on the Monday, then out carol singing. One group to church members' homes, the other to Elderly Citizen's Flats & Nursing Home.

NORTHCOTE (F.B. Alcorn)

Minister, in endeavour to increase spiritual well-being in our church, had an altered worship service on 16 January ... Seven different ways of service are suggested & members are asked to choose one or two ways in which they can serve ... There still continues to be much sickness among members, some needing hospital treatment.

MAIDSTONE (A. McMillan)

Healing service held ... Congratulations to Rob Colwell (37 years CFA Agent), Stephen McMillan (Queen's Badge, Explorer Boys West Smith

Encouragement Award) & Stella Phillips (tennis trophies) ... Christmas carols & service shared with Tottenham Baptists ... Church praying for several sick people ... Thanksgiving offering amounted to \$1622 ... Explorer Boys West involved in Murray Marathon ... Pulpit exchange with Geoff Casey (Footscray).

MITCHAM (Mark Butler)

Young marrieds' retreat held at church ... Annual fete raised \$5000 ... End of year functions included young families' lunch, retired men's & CWF luncheons, break-ups for cell groups ... Prior to Christmas presentation by Sunday School, carols involving community, church choir presented nine lessons & carols ... Church full for Christmas services ... Foundations poured for building extensions ... Recent preachers Dr Geoff Whiting, Jim Wright, Gordon Stirling.

MARYBOROUGH (Louis Clun)

Sunday School children presented nativity prior to Christmas ... Sympathy extended to Harold & Hilda Walters on death of their daughter Margaret Tyers ... Average weekly communicants 40 ... Members providing groceries for community welfare ... Mary Witnish facing surgery ... Speakers in minister's absence were Don Oakes (elder), Ken Weir (deacon), Wayne Kelly & Will Marshall ... Rebecca Hind (nee Weir) & Cole Bottrill baptised in January ... Informal gospel service fortnightly.

COBURG (Don Milne)

Great day of celebration 28 November as Val Mitchell & Lorna Holman baptised & welcomed into fellowship at morning service ... Marc Breault, former member Branch Davidian cult Waco, Texas, gave inspiring message at evening rally. Young band members from East Keilor led singing. 115 attended ... Foyer library now operational ... With arrival of Adam Lewis Carroll, great-grandchild of Hazel & Bert Blain, four generations now part of church family.

TOOTGAROOK (M. Glezendanner)

Attendances down over Christmas period due to inclement weather ... Visit of Conference President for New Year service much appreciated ... Many visitors welcomed later in holiday period as weather improved ... All auxiliaries set to move into new year, expecting great things for God as he leads.

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Barb Richards (03) 889 7536 if you can come.

Church News

NSW

BOWRAL (Garry Towle) BBQ/Sunday School picnic held Fitzroy Falls ... Leadership Seminar held recently ... Church saddened by sudden death of Irene Carr ... General meeting well attended ... Steve Bradley appointed new deacon ... Ladies Fellowship very strong with well attended, enjoyable meetings, great food ... Student pastor, Geoff Griffiths, to work also with Ross Wakely next year ... Church growing spiritually & the Lord is greatly blessing.

MAITLAND (R.N. Hawkins) Dr & Mrs K. Turner & family have four months in NZ with BHP ... Church shared in tribute evening for Jenny Moore who died of asthma aged 18. Held at Kurri Anglican Church ... Minister involved as lecturer at Tahlee branch evening college ... Guest speaker Gary Coleman, chaplain motor sports.

THORNLEIGH (Franklyn Elliott, Stuart Wesley, Keith Morgan) Highlights of the Christmas period were—Christmas bash on 18 December, including time of worship, fun & fellowship & a spit roast dinner; Christmas Day service, led by Robert Garrett, speaker Franklyn Elliott. Both of these very well attended.

FAIRFIELD (Clive Berrick) Clive appointed uniformed Police chaplain for three Fairfield areas ... Three young people baptised ... Church fully involved in "Awakening 1994" ... Choir's carol singing outside chapel & Forum Shop Centre drew Christmas crowds ... Ethnic academics searching for fellowship, understanding of Christianity. Geoff Goninon found work for some ... Clive & Helen & Ethel conducting small Bible study groups extra.

Qld

SOUTHPORT (W. Thornburn, J. Hohnke) Stephen & Vicki Smith will be missed in ministry to primary aged children's work. Their term at Southport concluded & farewell supper held ... Exciting reports from every facet of work presented at annual meeting, 1 December. Vision statements of planning for outreach into community, university opposite & missions overseas. Principles of guidance updated & approved. 10 deacons elected, bringing total to 14 ... Andrew Boutros to commence as youth minister 10 January ... Rebecca Hohnke farewelled—12 months on the *Doulos* ... Allan & Liz Vincent, Nic & Judith Chambers off to Cornerstone, Burke ... Kerry Laughton home from Vanuatu ... Bill Thorburn

study leader for 1,000 youth at Mt Taborine ... Smiths confirmed in ministry at Gladstone ... Andrew Boutros commencing as Youth Minister.

TWYFORD ST, BUNDABERG (Paul Scully) Church held annual general meeting on 24 November ... A group is presenting a Christmas musical for the residents of Argyle & Carlyle retirement Villages on 17 & 18 December ... Tweenagers youth group celebrated end of year with a camp at Woodgate ... Farewell was extended to Wilson Aitken who moved to Victoria.

BRISBANE NORTH (Graham Woodward) Graham Woodward will commence ministry 30 January, with induction service performed by Dr Don Stewart, Director of Qld Social Services Dept ... A newly renovated Queenslander home acquired for use as a manse ... A Monday Club has commenced & picnic outings enjoyed in the church bus monthly ... Special Advent services conducted based on the theme "Love, Light, Peace and Joy".

SA

FULLARTON (Ken Wray) Church numbers have remained steady throughout year ... Church shocked by sudden passing of board chairman ... Tuesday Bible study & Thursday Friendship Club in Christmas recess ... First two meetings for tea & informal worship times well attended ... Recent baptism of Trevor Leane ... Tuesday communion service at Glenrose Court averaging 30 seniors ... AGM planned for February following commencement of mid-week meetings.

HENLEY BEACH We thank Pastor Ron McLean for his interim ministry which finished end of November ... Mark Dodd student minister December—January ... Robyn Walsh commences ministry 1 February ... Large attendance for church dinner ... Congratulations to Jodie Dodd who completed her medical studies ... Ken & Lorna Graham & Pauline Bampton welcomed into membership in October ... Mrs Rene Tucker celebrated 90th birthday in October.

TORRENSVILLE (D. Short) 1993 a positive year ... Lisa & son Alex Matingly welcomed ... Carl Milne baptised. 75 witnessed baptism ... Church delighted with manse plans ... October concert for Torrens ville Nursing Home, grant received by Council ... Bus trip to Taillem Bend ... Children's service led by Stephen Wright. Children painted mural ... Church saddened by two members' deaths in Nov/Dec.

ELIZABETH (Ralph Oke) Christmas family service on 19 Dec had puppet presentation & children from Sunday Club sang Christmas songs ... Christmas Eve, Christmas Day & 26 Dec saw good numbers present ... Brian Hill, Jim Loveday & Bryan Sellars elected to eldership, now team of eight ... Outreach Task group formed. Goals to foster greater participation in home fellowship groups, discipleship classes, studies on baptism & community outreach in 1994.

DULWICH/ROSE PARK UNITED PARISH (Roger Brown, Jo-Anne Fulton) Following departure of Rob & Colette Williams for Bordertown Uniting Church at end of 1993 after five years valued parish service, Jo-Anne Fulton was commissioned for six months interim ministry ... Roger & Judy Brown complete their 10 year term on 6 Feb ... Roger conducted notable service 23 Jan commemorating approach of Australia Day ... Dr Garry Harris will be inducted 9 Feb.

Tas

HOWRAH (A. Blyth) 18th anniversary, November 7, Chek Chia speaker; also seminar "Towards Growth" ... Colin Ashby & Robert Cumine in "Bikes for Bibles" ... 256 attended Children's Sunday Celebration ... Plan to extend approved ... Faith offering—\$20,000 gifts, \$29,000 commitments ... Christmas Eve & Day services well attended ... Many visitors over the holiday period ... Church helping Shirley Byard re-establish after house fire ... Loyd Cooke speaker from 23 January while minister on leave ... "Keep Climbing" is the goal for Vision '94 ... Elders looking to extend ministry team.

DEVONPORT (R. Chapman) New illuminated sign lifting profile of church ... "Joy to the World" Christmas celebration concert sponsored by church in Town Hall. "Full house" of 500. Profits to Salvation Army Christmas "Wishing Tree" appeal ... Ron Chapman recovering after heart attack, now on holidays ... Guest speakers K. Edwards, E. McCulloch, S. Wagner, E. How, G. Langmaid, R. Graham ... All groups in recess during school holidays.

LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, D. Tobler) Many visitors at Christmas Day services ... Church renting house at rear of Op Shop for storage & use as community house ... Ladies raised \$1300 for Building Fund from catering for a local church's centenary dinner ... Groceries brought during December for Launceston City Mission ... Five baptisms in recent weeks.

WA

CARNARVON (K. O'Brien) Combined churches met in our chapel for worship and communion on Christmas morning. To be an annual event ... New deacons commissioned: Wayne Bell & Darren Law Davis with portfolios of "Worship and Music" & "Secretary" ... Baby shower party held for "Shani-Jo", daughter of Darren & Wendy Law Davis ... Claire Day devotional speaker for ladies craft night—demonstrations of jewellery making, paper tinting & "heirloom bags".

ALBANY 1993 a year of strengthening fellowship & outreach through playgroup, CWF & church fellowship ... CWF successfully raised missionary funds, 40 Christmas cakes for Life in Focus ... Dorothy Holstein, Covenant Players & Helen Duncan (Bible Society) guest speakers ... Seniors Friendship group to start in February ... First mission project to help send John Bolton to PNG ... January evening services feature "The Adam & Eve Factor", videos on human relationships.

SCARBOROUGH (Nigel Merrick, Mike Halseby) Nigel & Loida Pyle visiting from Cebu Bible Centre in the Philippines ... Visiting speakers include ex-Scarborough young men, Stewart Wesley (now youth minister of Thornleigh, NSW) & Max Randall (minister of Turkey Foot C of C, USA) & church elder Geoff Dunning ... Rodney Donaldson & Derek Staats safely returned from basketball ministry in the Philippines.

KALAMUNDA (David Shalley, Paul Sanders) As part of our special Nov-Dec outreach into the community, church participated in carols by candlelight, carol singing on Christmas Eve & Christmas Day service was held in local park ... Fellowship enjoyed with visitors & returning students ... Farewell to Mary & Graeme Foster & family as they leave to study at Carlingford ... Rod Baines & Rex Halse appointed as elders.

FREMANTLE (J. Caporn) Leslie Ladner, elder emeritus, died on 19 Jan, aged 92. The funeral service was conducted by E.J. Sewell, a former minister ... New officers of CWF are Kaye Caporn (Pres) & Eileen Onions (Treas).

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Centre for Urban Mission

Urban Encounter starting

Urban Encounter, a ministry training centre specialising in equipping Christians for various essential aspects of urban mission, will begin functioning in February. The ministry will be run by Restoration Communities, a movement dedicated to the creative evangelisation of inner-city Melbourne.

What's unique about Urban Encounter is its curriculum structure, which allows for maximum diversity in course material, high flexibility for those with time constraints and total adaptability into the curricula of the various key Bible and Theological Colleges around Melbourne. Alan Hirsch, pastor of South Melbourne Restoration Community, director of Urban Ministry Development for the Churches of Christ in Vic-Tas and director of Urban Encounter says, "The course was specifically designed to fill the gap in the training of Christians in vital aspects of modern urban mission, particularly in an Australian context. As such, it does not conflict with or undermine in any way, the ministries of the various colleges around Melbourne. In fact, the course was specifically created to be adopted into the various curricula of the theological colleges so that

they can educate those students that wish to specialise in distinctively urban mission and ministry. The emphasis will be on practical training with theological reflection as-we-go. We hope to get all of Melbourne's key colleges to associate with Urban Encounter. We envisage that the resultant coalition of training and educational organisations will invigorate urban ministry, stimulate new paradigms in thinking and produce innovative approaches to mission at this pivotal stage of human history, as we hurtle headlong into the next millennium."

What this association/coalition will mean academically is that full accreditation (and therefore Austudy in various cases) will be available for students wishing to affiliate with the college of their choice. What it will mean practically is that there will be a truly trans-denominational energy centre training people to minister effectively in post-modern, fragmenting, Australia.

Already, Kingsley College and Tabor College have affiliated and it is expected that the Bible College of Victoria, Churches of Christ Theological College and Harvest Bible College will follow suit in ways that will suit their respective academic requirements and curricula. Others will also be approached.

Urban Encounter is by no means limited to full-time students. It is flexible enough to be accessible to all Christians wishing to grow in their ministry skills and mission effectiveness.

If you are interested, write to The Registrar, Urban Encounter, PO Box 105, South Melbourne 3205. Phone (03) 699 1536 or fax (03) 696 0224.



The Last Word

To speak ill of others is a dishonest way of praising ourselves.

—Will Durant

Discussing his tennis technique, a stout bald man panted: "My brain immediately barks out a command to my body. 'Run forward, but fast,' it says. 'Start right now. Drop the ball gracefully over the net and then walk back slowly.'"

"And then what happens?" asked a friend. "And then my body asks, 'Who, me?'"

Don't be surprised if your next income tax return is simplified to contain only four lines.

1. What was your income last year?
2. What were your expenses?
3. How much do you have left?
4. Send it in.

What do you get when you cross an elephant with a computer?

A 5 tonne know-it-all!

Why do people laugh up their sleeves? Because that's where their funny bones are.

"We are sending Johnny to camp for the summer holidays."

"Does he need a holiday?"

"Not really. But we do."

Mother: "Quick, Henry, call the doctor. Johnny just swallowed a coin."

Father: "I think we ought to send for a minister. They can get money out of anybody."

The minister was invited over for dinner and asked to lead in prayer for the meal. After the brief prayer, the youngest child said approvingly, "You don't pray so long when you're hungry, do you?"

Doctor: "Well, your leg is swollen, but I wouldn't worry about it."

Patient: "No, and if your leg was swollen I wouldn't worry about it either."



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"New car or not, Harold, you can't keep the bugs off the grill forever!"

Source: *Marriage Ain't for Wimps: The Best Cartoons from Marriage Partnership* (Zondervan Publishing, used with permission).