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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

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THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN

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Guest Editorial

Spirituality

Graham Warne

I have been actively involved in Churches of Christ through all of my 50+ years, yet it seems only in recent years that the term "spirituality" has come into vogue. However, while it has become a popular term amongst us, very few have stopped to define it. While "spirit" is a very common term (found 385 times in the New Testament), and the adjective "spiritual" fairly common (26 times), the noun "spirituality" is a distinctly modern creation. The nearest New Testament equivalent would appear to be the Pauline use of the adjective as a noun in 1 Cor 3:1, where he states, "I could not speak to you as 'spirituals'" (πνευματικοί). The nearest equivalent to "spirituality" in the New Testament comes as a warning to those who think they have it, when in fact they do not! A sobering thought indeed.

It would seem to me, that there are three distinct perspectives or approaches to spirituality. The first of these may be described as "mystical". The essence of mysticism is to make direct contact with Divine Reality, to enter into conscious union with the divine. Mystical spirituality requires a certain detachment from everyday life in order to cultivate a consciousness of God. It is, then, a spirituality of detachment. The mystic renounces the distractions of the world and retreats into a world of contemplation and reflective meditation. For the mystic, spirituality consists of quiet reflection, meditation, personal devotion and prayer. The problem with pure mystical spirituality is that its detachment from everyday life may produce a kind of spiritual schizophrenia in which one may be very "spiritual" while engaged in "spiritual" activities (such as in Sunday worship or when having one's "quiet time"), yet be utterly unchristian in the way in which one lives! As Luther discovered, the devil was very active in the monastery!

The second type of spirituality may be described as "concrete". Whereas mystic spirituality is characterised by disengagement from the world, concrete spirituality is characterised by active engagement in the world, in the name of Christ. These "spirituals" perceive the whole of life as belonging to God and immerse themselves in the world in order to transform it. Concrete spirituality finds God in every aspect of cultural life, in music, the arts, in convivial hospitality, in empathy and in social transformation. Examples of this kind of spirituality may be found in Brother Lawrence's "God in the Kitchen", Fr Damien's

ministry to the leprous or Mother Theresa's ministry to the dying. It is a spirituality which is "down to earth", a spirituality of self-giving in the name of Christ. The danger with concrete spirituality is that one may become so involved in doing, that there is little time for reflection on the reasons of one's action. This ultimately may produce a spiritual pragmatism or even workaholism, which is constantly active, yet never pauses for inward refreshment, nor to reflect on the purposes of its activity. As Calvin Miller notes, "Outwardness often becomes an unending spiritual performance that lasts until the actor drops from empty exhaustion." (Miller, *The Table of Inwardness*, p. 15)

The third perspective may be described as "rational". In this perspective, the highest aspect of the human soul is associated with the mind (vous), wherein true reason (λογος) may be found. Through the exercise of the mind, one may come to know God in the fullest sense. In this perspective, spirituality is associated with knowledge. (This form of spirituality reached its highest form in the medieval scholastics.) Unfortunately, there are two serious side effects to this emphasis. On the one hand, such a perspective may generate a superior sense of spirituality which associates factual biblical knowledge (perceived truth) with spirituality. (This was most probably the problem at Corinth and the gnostic sects which emerged later.) On the other hand, this kind of spirituality may degenerate into a cold and logical credalism. Could Churches of Christ have possibly fallen into this trap? We would like to think that we are "spiritual" because we know the truth, but have we "lost the plot"?

Where then is true spirituality to be found? True spirituality is not confined to mystical detachment, no matter how blessed such an experience may be for the individual concerned. Nor is it to be found in religious activity, no matter how beneficial that may be to the society at large. Nor is it found in a legalistic credalism, no matter how "right" that may be! At its best, spirituality is grounded in a deep conviction that God is "through all, and over all and in all" (a rational affirmation of the mind), a conviction which captures our whole being, fires our imagination (inward awareness of God) and which drives us on in our service for Christ (concrete expression). True pneumatics ("spirituals") are those who live the life of the Spirit, that

Continued from page 2

is, whose whole life is energised and motivated by their passion for God. This spirituality embraces the totality of both our being, our thinking, and our doing.

Perhaps Romans 12:1-2 sums it all up. Paul uses a word here (*λατρεία*) which has frustrated the translators. The King James Version translated it "reasonable service". The NIV translates the same word "spiritual act of worship". The NASB translates, "spiritual service of worship".

The real truth, encompasses both aspects: the highest form of spirituality is the commitment of our lives, totally and absolutely—mind, heart, will, flesh, action—to God. It must of necessity embrace the dimensions of solitude (inward reflection), of the mind's highest thought (rational perception) and affirmation of true life (concrete action). Far from being detached, Christian spirituality is positively life-affirming of all that is beautiful, good, kind and just.

Like The Little Brothers of St Francis (Tabulam, NSW), perhaps we should see that, "An important ingredient in our life is to delight in such things as friends, laughter, meals together, because we see in them Christ's life, who came among us, rejoicing and delighting in such things." When it comes to spirituality, we still have much to learn!

❖ *Graham is lecturer in Biblical Studies, Mission, Preaching and Theology at Kenmore Christian College, Queensland.*

1993 Index

The index of 1993 issues of *The Australian Christian* has been sent recently to all subscribers who have requested a copy in past years. If any current subscriber would like a copy of this index they can contact us at *The Australian Christian*, PO Box 101, Essendon North 3041. Phone (03) 379 1219 or fax (03) 379 0015.

Directions Set for New Era

NCCA inauguration report

Aborigines and Armenians, bishops and bell-ringers, Catholics and Copts gathered in Canberra from 1-5 July to usher in a new era of ecumenical commitment with the inauguration of the **National Council of Churches in Australia**.

The heads and delegations from the 13 member denominations, with a host of observers and staff, shared in worship, study and debate to give a fresh focus and momentum to their mutual quest for closer ties.

The NCCA, embracing the Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches, the Salvation Army, Churches of Christ, Religious Society of Friends and seven Orthodox churches, represents 85% of Australia's Christians.

It supersedes the 48-year-old **Australian Council of Churches**, which in 1988 initiated the process of working towards a more inclusive council of churches.

The Lutheran Church also participated in the planning, but a ballot of their national synod members in June failed by only eight votes to reach the two-thirds majority required for them to become a founding member. The question of membership probably will be reconsidered at their next synod in 1997.

Six years of planning and preparation reached their climax when the NCCA officially was inaugurated at a spectacular and colourful service on 3 July.

The service, which saw over 1000 cram into St Christopher's Catholic Cathedral, Manuka, and overflow into an adjoining hall, was a moving blend of song, dance and prayer from a variety of cultures, including an opening Aboriginal ritual of cleansing and call to worship.

Centrepiece of the service was a stunning 7m by 3m coloured silk tapestry, representing the mantle passed on from the Old Testament prophet Elijah to his successor Elisha,

symbolising the succession from the ACC to the new council.

For the following two days, 84 voting delegates met in the NCCA's first biennial National Forum to work through issues, proposals and resolutions to give practical expression to the vision and purposes enshrined in the new body's constitution.

Three areas were given highest priority. Questions of faith and order will be addressed by a new **Commission on Faith and Unity**, initially to be based in Melbourne with delegates appointed from each member church. The meeting acknowledged the need for indigenous people to be represented on this commission.

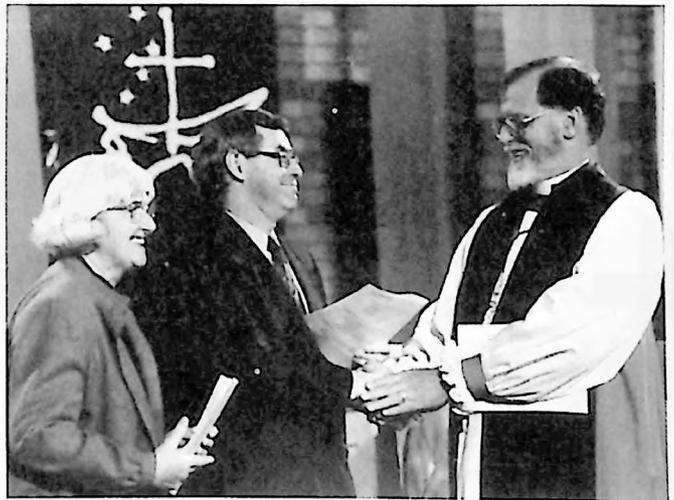
The ACC's Commission on World Christian Action, responsible for the Christmas Bowl Appeal, will be replaced by **Christian World Service** which will bring together the council's work with overseas church partnerships, refugee and migrants, justice and development education, and **Christmas Bowl and Force 10**. An interim structure was approved until its permanent mandate is presented at the next National Forum.

A working group of Aboriginal and Islander people was appointed to continue the work of the ACC's **Aboriginal and Islander Commission** and to consider an appropriate entity by which indigenous people may relate to the NCCA.

A fourth area given high priority was youth. A resolution presented by youth delegates, unanimously endorsed, made youth development and participation "a matter of high priority" during 1994-98. It called for the establishment of an ecumenical youth internship program and ensured the continuation of the ecumenical networks and liaison already in place.

Other areas acknowledged as important but referred to the incoming Executive included evangelism, women's issues, promotion and communication and relationships with people of other living faiths.

Recognising the importance of maintaining links with similar bodies at a regional and global level, the NCCA resolved to become a member of the **Christian Conference of Asia** and an associated council of the **World Council of Churches**.



• Anglican Bishop Richard Appleby greets Australian Council of Churches President Ian Allsop and Patricia Firkin (Religious Society of Friends) after the National Council of Churches is inaugurated in worship

CALL in Action

Christians ALL

SA women have, since May 1992, received *CALL*, a magazine-type newsletter, published on behalf of all women associated with SA churches.

It is a "stand alone" publication, financed wholly by an annual subscription paid by the majority of recipients. This year, *CALL* has become an 8-page magazine and has the potential to reach non-church women. We understand that there are over 2,000 readers.

The aim of the *CALL* Editorial Advisory Panel is to "reach all women, who associate in any way whatsoever with the local church life, be it in leadership, worship (both regular or occasional), women's groups, children's or teens' club, part of a friendship, parents' or other group, or none of these".

In response to a survey of regional women's groups in 1993, people saw the magazine as a vital "link" between women throughout the state, but they also wanted a wider variety of articles and writers. They sought a magazine that would provide encouragement to live out their Christian faith within their family, church and community, while continuing to address the wider church needs through mission. Respondents also expressed the

desire that *CALL* be modified to provide a frank and open ministry which could include those people on the "fringes" of church life—people who attend the outreach programs of the local churches.

CALL has been designed to reach all women, from 18–90 years, and their family and friends. Feature articles are written by talented Christian women, on a variety of subjects. Recent editions have included articles about ECPAT (Ending Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism), family life, musings, updates on the three areas of mission supported by SA women and profiles of people and churches in action.

Reports indicate that *CALL* is indeed reaching non-church women. People are finding it a real benefit to them as they associate with the church.

There is an "expanded print version", which has gained increasing popularity. We believe it is the only newsletter-type magazine in the southern hemisphere which is published with a large print edition.

CALL is an acronym for **Christians ALL**—reaching all women for Christ and his church.

—Lori McDonald
(Editor)

God has Blessed

Margaret Street's move



• Bruce Armstrong in front of the new chapel in Hume St, Toowoomba

This time last year we were getting excited about the sale of the Margaret St, Toowoomba, Qld, chapel and subsequent building of our new plant in Hume St. Then came the loss of sale from Heritage Listing problems. We have still not sold Margaret St!

However, our contractors have completed our new building in Hume St. We have some work to do inside. That will take us six to eight weeks.

The decision to relocate was made in 1986. The land was

purchased in 1988. The building was commenced this year. All up, with the purchase price of the land plus the four bedroom brick home on site, the paid work on drainage and sewerage, as well as the building and its fitting out to this stage will have cost \$1.3 million.

We only owe \$240,000. We are yet to sell Margaret St. Our people have been most generous and God has blessed their sacrifice.

—Bruce Armstrong

Revives and Rejuvenates

Marriage Enrichment weekend

A successful Marriage Enrichment Weekend was conducted by the Nunawading, Vic, church in conjunction with the Vic-Tas DMED in June. The couples who participated enjoyed the opportunity to enrich their marriages under the guidance of John and Linda Rowe.

As a result of the weekend, couples wrote the following: "I would recommend the weekend because it is a good way to honestly assess how you are going, to be open with each other, to improve communication skills and to set goals for your marriage" and "I would recommend the weekend because it helps you to get in touch with your real inner feelings

and wants. It revives and rejuvenates a flagging marriage and puts new sparkle into the relationship."

A weekend is planned for ministry couples in August. If you are interested in either this weekend or learning more about Marriage Enrichment phone John Rowe on (03) 877 6077.

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Enquiries and requests for application forms should be directed to Rev David Stark, Director Clinical Pastoral Education on 496 2895. Written applications should be submitted by 31 August, 1994. AB638



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Calendar

Debt and Families

For One World Week a community forum "Our Global Family", which looks at the impact of debt on families throughout the world, is being held from 12.00-2.00 pm on 10 August at St Paul's Centre, Grenfell St, Adelaide. BYO lunch—tea and coffee provided. For information contact the SA Council of Churches on (08) 232 0070.

Victims of Crime

Sydney City Mission is hosting a National Victims of Crime Conference on 19 August (8.30 am-4.00 pm) as part of National Victims Awareness Week (14-21 August). The conference, which has the theme "Healing the Pain", is being held in the Coles Theatre, Powerhouse Museum, 500 Harris St, Ultimo, Sydney. The conference is for victims of crime, support workers and the public. The cost is \$35 (includes lunch). Bookings by phoning Sydney City Mission on (02) 219 2000 or 219 2064.

Convention on Holy Spirit

"The major churches in Australia are ignoring the Holy Spirit" says Dr Alan Walker. To come to grips with this, a Pacific Convention on the Holy Spirit is being held at Pacific College for Evangelism, Sydney, 19-22 August. The theme is "The Holy Spirit Now" with speakers Dr Tony Chi, Rev Rae Trenery, Rev Alan Robinson and Dr Alan Walker. The following conference (22-26 August) will be on "Updating the Local Church". Registration and enquiries to Dr A. Walker, Pacific College for Evangelism, 6 Lincluden Pl, North Parramatta 2151. Phone (02) 630 0777, fax (02) 630 0678.

SLM Annual Conference

Sports & Leisure Ministry's annual sports conference (19-20 August at Wesley Centre, Sydney) will feature three areas—Christian athletes, church sports and sports chaplains. Other key features are a Sydney 2000 Olympic ministry report, the annual ministry banquet and a night of champions at the opening of Dural Baptist's Sports & Recreation Centre. The cost is \$70 for the two days. Information contact SLM National Office, Dr Mark Tronson on (044) 74 3554, fax (044) 74 4869 or at PO Box 229, Moruya 2537.

"Joseph" at Kidsmin Playhouse

For all ages

Churches Of Christ Kidsmin in SA, in endeavouring to utilise the full potential of the Kidsmin Team and the Kidsmin Playhouse, negotiated a Performing Rights Licence to perform a major Christian musical production.

The popular musical "Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" will be performed in the Kidsmin Playhouse (50 Clifford St, Torrensville, SA) on 19, 20, 26 and 27 August by arrangement with Warner/Chappell Music, exclusive representative of the Really Useful Group Ltd, London. Tim Rice wrote the lyrics and Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote the music of this Biblical story.

"Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" tells of Joseph in Canaan and his brothers who sold him as a slave. The musical appeals to all ages, as Joseph's adventures as a slave in Egypt unfold with his rise to fame as an inter-



• Mrs Potiphar (Donna Lanyon, centre), the wife of Joseph's master, with her servants Sarah Rodda (left) and Tracy Selfe

preter of dreams in Pharaoh's Court.

The award-winning musical is presented by Claudia Hillman (Director), Robert Coombe (Musical Director), Kylie O'Donohue (Choreographer) and the Kidsmin Play-

ers. Limited seats are available, for bookings, phone Jenny Thomson on (08) 352 4273 or Jean Feder on (08) 356 1565

The musical was performed on 21 May at Barmera and 4 June at Naracoorte to packed audiences.

First Hmong Service

Removing a barrier to ministry



• Attenders at first Hmong service

On Sunday afternoon, 5 June, the Cairns, Qld, church held its first service in the Hmong language.

During the past year, several Hmong families have joined the church. These families escaped as refugees from Laos, and spent many years in a refugee camp in Thailand, before com-

ing to Australia. Hobart, Tas, church also has a ministry to Hmong people.

The language barrier has been a big problem for the Cairns church in ministering to people with very limited English and services entirely in English haven't helped. So it was decided to experiment

with a service in the Hmong language. The first service was led mainly by Xong Chang and Lue Chang. The sermon was delivered in English by Craig Jensen, who has coordinated the introduction of the service, and translated by Nhia Kue.

Current plans are for the services to be held each month. The second service was held on 17 July.

Churches of Christ

Brim Centenary Sunday

11 September 1994

9.15 am Speaker R.W. Marshall
10.45 am Unveiling Plaque
12.00 noon Basket Lunch

NCCA Inaugural Service

A personal perspective

It was "a service that was different" for most of us—the visual impact, based on a mantle, was like nothing we had experienced.

Christians from Canberra, together with delegates and observers to the inaugural meeting of the new National Council of Churches in Australia, crowded into St. Christopher's Roman Catholic Cathedral for the inaugural service on Sunday evening, 3 July.

"The idea for the mantle came from 2 Kings (2 Kings 2:1, 6c-15a); it represents the spirit of Elijah being handed on to Elisha and symbolises the old council being reformed into the new, more inclusive council. The designers saw that the cross of Christ is our centre and the basis of our unity, from which the Spirit goes into the world, flowing as the river of life."

As the mantle passed over the congregation, while the choir sang from Isaiah 61 ("The spirit of the Lord is upon me") and the congregation responded "You are my inheritance O Lord", one sensed the presence of the Spirit. One sensed that indeed responsibility was passing from the old Australian Council of Churches to the new National Council of

Churches in Australia and that the Spirit was leading us to new things.

Churches of Christ in Australia were represented in the service by Robert Leane who appeared with the other heads of churches, Ian Allsop, the last president of the Australian Council of Churches, and Thelma Leach, from the Belconnen, ACT, church, who read the Gospel.

Churches of Christ were also well represented in the business sessions. Ian Allsop chaired the sessions, our voting delegates were Robert Leane, Thelma Leach, Linda Gordon (Balwyn, Vic), Jonathan Moore (Ormond, Vic) and Flo Grant (ACT). Other voting delegates were Greg Foot (president of the Tasmanian Council of Churches) and Joan Pye (president of the Victorian Council of Churches). Observers were Eunice Reidy (representing Australian Church Women), Eira Clapp (ACC Commission on the Status of Women) and Paul Potter (media). I guess we were much over represented in terms of our numbers, but this is not unusual in ecumenical circles and probably not unexpected in view of our origins and history.

So how is the new body different from the old? The most obvious difference is the presence of the Roman Catholic Church (unfortunately, the Lutheran Church narrowly failed to decide in favour of joining). The other major difference is that the organisation will be oriented more to the official church organisations than to individuals in the churches. The effect will be that when the NCCA speaks it will be able to speak authoritatively on behalf of its member churches.

Churches of Christ representatives elected to the new executive are Robert Leane (with Ian Allsop as alternate), Thelma Leach and Jonathan Moore. Two commissions came into being, Christian World Service (successor to World Christian Action) with John Gilmore representing us and the Aboriginal and Islander Commission on which Cecil Grant is serving.

Incidentally, the membership of the Council is probably unique in the world—it is unlikely that any other country has such a comprehensive range of significant churches (a result of our multicultural society)—including as it does the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox churches, the Anglican Church and Protestant churches.

—John Pye

Calendar

Christmas Missions Fair

11 churches and aid agencies in the Waverley, Vic, area are combining to assist various missions and offer an early solution for Christmas shopping. Christmas Missions Fair is being held at Holy Family Church, Stephenson Rd, Mount Waverley on 20 August (10 am-4 pm) and on 21 August (10 am-1 pm). Each church will hold a stall for the mission of its choice. Each "gift" is acknowledged by a personally calligraphed greeting card, which will have details of the "gift", the mission which will receive the donation and the donor's name.

Special Children's Lecture

The Australian Institute of Archaeology at its Ancient Times House (116 Little Bourke St, Melbourne) is holding a special children's lecture on "The Ancient Romans" by Garry Stone on 21 August. Ancient Times House is open 2.30-4.30 pm with the lecture commencing at 3 pm. Admission: Adults \$3, children \$2 and families \$6.

AFES Annual Dinner

The Victorian AFES annual dinner is being held on 10 September at 6.30 pm at the Salvation Army Hall, 7 Bowen St, Camberwell. Cost \$20. Speaker: Professor Allan Harman, Professor of Old Testament and Principal of the Presbyterian Theological College, on the topic "An unchanged gospel for a changed Australia". Details and booking to Mrs Jillian Quartel, 641 Whitehorse Rd, Mont Albert 3127, phone (03) 898 5493. Bookings by 2 September.

Being Jewish Today

The Council of Christians and Jews (Vic) is holding a symposium "Being Jewish Today" at the Adele Southwick Centre (St Kilda Hebrew Congregation), Charnwood Cres, St Kilda on 22 September at 8 pm. The establishment of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948 profoundly affected the manner in which Jews think and act. A supper will be served in the adjoining Succah (tabernacle) it being the middle days of the festival of Succoth (tabernacles). Cost \$8. Enquiries: Council of Christians and Jews, 179 Cotham Rd, Kew 3101. Phone (03) 817 3848 or fax (03) 816 9036.



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A Weekend of Sitting

Useful inaction

Atibam, Pekene, Manis, Mark, Lisin, Frank and myself were originally meant to leave Momonup, PNG, on Thursday morning and travel to Yamen. Frank and I had arrived at Momonup the afternoon before and Pekene and Manis flew in on Thursday morning. The others were to leave Bunam by boat early and pick us up at Momonup. They didn't make it till Friday lunch time!

Most of the time between we spent sitting, waiting.

Finally, we got away at about 3 pm and arrived at Yamen close to 6.30 pm. We were able to take some short cuts as the creeks were high. However, what should have been a short cut between two sections of the Keram became a long cut because water flowed in both ends and brought logs into the middle with nowhere for them to go. Our only way was over them and through them. In part, we had to be very careful and alert as the vines hanging down were full of thorns. Not the best thing to get caught up in the hair. It was the first time I had seen the Yamen creek with so much water in it. This also meant there were plenty of mosquitoes.

Frank and I went to the mission house to spend the night while the others stayed in village houses. People came to talk for a while and some also brought us some sweet potato and pumpkin for tea. After even-

ryone had left, we put a couple of thin mattresses on the floor and went to sleep.

We were at Yamen for a meeting and the guys came around to the house in the morning to discuss things and pray before meeting with the leaders. We met in a large open house, that is floor and roof only. The floor being split palm logs and the roof woven leaves. Because the creek was up, it was sitting out in the water and, with a bit of a breeze, it wasn't too hot. After sitting and waiting, the leaders came about 10 am and talk got underway. The talk went for four hours before an agreement was reached. We left the building at 3 pm and went and gathered our few things ready to leave. We were invited to Roskeli's house and given our first meal for the day, sweet potatoes and pumpkin. We left Yamen at 3.40 pm.

As it was late, instead of going straight to Manivek, as planned, we stopped at Bamaga, Ati's village, and spent the night at his place. The boat trip took about three and a half hours. Again we sat in Ati's house and talked till late. Next morning we were on the river by 7 am. This time Ati's wife, Anna, and son came too. We made some stops on the way to Nagru.

The purpose of this trip was to talk with the owners of the land at Gandep which had been given for the new Training Centre. It was now 10.15 am and that meant the church service had begun so we walked through the village to the church and joined in the worship. Pekene and Manis kept on going as they had a three hour walk ahead of them to Tumba on their way back to Bunapas. As we sat down, the president came and asked if Frank would give the sermon.

After the service we walked back to an open house and sat down and started talking about the land agreement, when it would be signed and when the work would start. The talk took

until 2 pm, so then it was back into the boat again. We'd only gone a short distance when the motor started to play up. So we pulled into the bank and Ati worked on it, finally getting it going, but not before the mosquitoes had their fill.

We stopped off at Angisi to let Mark and Lisin off, then at Bamaga where Ati's son also left us, as he needed to get his things together to go back to school for another week. We pulled into Momonup about

6.30 pm. We were all very tired but pleased with the things that had been achieved during the time away.

Sitting for long periods can be very uncomfortable. It can be very costly when it means so much river travel, but it also means the gospel reaches out into new areas. It can mean teaching comes to older churches. It can mean bringing God's word of harmony into difficult situations.

—Ros Beale

It's on Again!

Venture for Victory



• 17th team with enthusiastic friends "Ready to go again"

Another missionary team of basketballers will be touring in the Philippines and Hong Kong sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with crowds of spectators in villages, at Universities and High Schools and with special opportunities in prisons.

The Australian Venture for Victory Board invites Christian basketball players to write for an application form now!

Selection for the team to play overseas from 30 December to 28 January 1995 will be completed by 31 August.

Twelve athletes are needed.

Rev Bill Cochrane, who toured with the 17th team in the island of Bohol, the Philippines in January 1994, presented a glowing report of the value and effectiveness of the team's ministry. "The commitment of the players to Christ

and the privilege of working alongside national pastors and missionaries with a 'servant role' attitude was highly commendable. Games were very competitive and the 'half time programs' were a faithful witness for the Lord in song and personal testimony. Many prayed to receive Christ as Saviour and hundreds signed up for the Bible Correspondence Course."

Young men who are above average basketball ability, in excellent physical condition and spiritually mature need to apply now. Each man selected for the tour is expected to raise his own finance—at least \$2950.

The closing date is 15 August and application forms are available from: The Secretary, The Australian Venture for Victory Basketball Board Inc, GPO Box 1717, Adelaide 5001.

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\$70,000	\$496
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Letters to the Editor

Letters are limited to 200 words

Hell

To the Editor,

If, as some assert, there is no hell (or more preferably, no second death Rev 20:6, 21:8) then please explain what happens to those involved in the second resurrection? (Rev 20:11-15)

If there is no eternal separation, what nonsense the writers go on with by saying that certain types will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9, Gal 5:21 etc).

If there is no sense of the wrath of God against those who violate his character and his church, what do you do with 2 Thess 1:8-9? It is everlasting destruction, however you wish to view it. If there is no restriction on those entering heaven, then what is the force of the words in Rev 22:15? To be outside surely cannot indicate they are on the inside.

If there is only a "hell" on earth then some wicked people are having a "heavenly time". To go to a better place would infer that even such people are going to have it better than they are having it now. That surely does something to our appreciation of God's justice.

If there is no hell, then we who preach that there is such a place don't lose much. Some "egg on the face" is soon washed off. However, if there is such a place then those who deny it's possibility have a heavy burden to bear. Wishful thinking from the human heart is not the same as wise theology from the God-breathed testimony of Scripture.

—Ray Hawkins
(Maitland, NSW)

Church Government

To The Editor,

Owen Wainwright ("AC" 4 June) seeks to legitimise autocratic church government and the idea of succession, from various sources. For an understanding of the legitimate nature of church government I would want to turn to more scriptural sources, especially to what Jesus had to say about leadership.

In the first place, Peter claims that we are all priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9). The church does not contain a priesthood—the church is a priesthood.

In the second place, we have the telling words of Jesus to his disciples when James and John sought places of authority and power in what they believed to be his coming kingdom on earth (Mark 10:35-45). He rejected any ideas of autocratic leadership, or position of power.

Third, Paul explains that we are the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) and Christ is the head of the body, the church (Col 1:18). There is no way that some members of the body can form an authority to control other members of the body. There is only one head of the church and the members are called to function under him. This surely implies a democratic approach to leadership.

A fourth factor concerns what may happen when a small group of members gain control in a local congregation. Some of the faithful members, who have been pillars of the church over many years, can be virtually frozen out, with unsettling results. Authoritarianism always creates uncertainty and dissension. —Geoff Whiting
(Mitcham, Vic)

The Wrath of God

To the Editor,

In Romans 1 we read that, "The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness". There follows a list of the sins which are an abomination to God and for which sins and sinners, "God gave them up".

Now this list includes, "dishonourable passions" of men with men and women with women, giving themselves over to shameless acts, resulting in them, "receiving in themselves due penalty for their error."

We also read a long list of sins for which "God gave them up". This list includes such abominable sins as "improper conduct" such as covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolence, haughtiness, boastfulness,

disobedience to parents, foolishness, faithlessness, heartlessness, ruthlessness, etc.

So God gives all ungodly conduct up. It is a trifle tiring to read letters and letters and more letters time after time on the sins of homosexuals.

How about giving, say, the gossips, snobs and such a bit of attention?
—Rex Morris
(Katoomba, NSW)

Hell and Inspiration

To The Editor,

In commenting on the letter "Hell is now, not Eternity" ("AC" 2 July) by David Allison I must ask him if he knows the true mind of God better than others to be able to say that the authors of the Bible were inspired by but not controlled by the Holy Spirit. Has he any evidence for that statement? We must look at the words of Jesus to get closer to the true mind of God. Too many people place

their own convenient interpretation on what the Scriptures say in their determination of the true mind of God. Some people disparage the sayings of Jesus on the grounds that the Gospel writers gave their own version of what Jesus said. Sure there are differences in some sayings, but not on the essential philosophy of eternal salvation for those who accept rather than reject the saving grace of Jesus.

Jesus must be distressed by people who reject eternal damnation on the grounds that our God of love would not allow it. But what was the point in God sending his son to be our saviour if he intended to save all people from hell regardless as to whether they accepted or rejected the eternal salvation offered by Jesus?

Where do these ideas originate? In our theological colleges and then from the pulpits?

Letters to a Travelling Companion

"Non-Believing" Friends

Dear Daniel,

In your letters of late, you have mentioned a few times the unease you now feel when mixing with people who are, as you put it, "non-believers". This unease is not uncommon among Christian people for a number of possible reasons. One reason may be that we become so heavily involved in the life of the church that there is little time or energy left for other social contacts. Another reason might be that we develop something of a fear of those who do not share our beliefs, world-view and lifestyle and, therefore, avoid developing relationships with these people. A third reason could be that we like to avoid situations where we may be put in an uncomfortable position when the behaviour of the group around us cuts across our moral beliefs.

Whilst these concerns are very real, we should try not to let them make us into insular Christians who have no significant relationships outside the safety of our own Christian belief system. If we are to take seriously the call to "go into all the world and make disciples", we will need to be courageous enough to overcome our fears and concerns and venture into significant relationships with "non-believers". Relationships built around mutual trust and respect are, by far, the most effective medium for sharing the hope and truth of the Gospel to those who need to hear it. So Daniel, don't be frightened of friendships with "non-believing" mates, go ahead and enjoy them. You never know, you might do each other the world of good!

Until next time,
Pastor Salt

Letters to the Editor

From some ungodly authors? Or from Satan and his servants? Not much wonder some of our congregations are powerless beyond their social work. Where are the Churches of Christ heading?, I'm worried, do I go or stay.

—W.R. Wade
(Batemans Bay, NSW)

Baptise ... Wash?

To the Editor,

Gordon Stirling ("AC" 2 July) makes some bold comments on this controversial subject which has generated a lot of heat but not much light over the generations.

In Luke 11:38 the verb "baptise" is used to refer to a washing that is plainly not immersing; "Jesus did not first wash before the meal" (NIV) refers obviously to partial ritual washing (not immersion). One cannot assume that every use of the word and its derivative always refers to immersing, though that is the primary meaning.

During 40 years of ministry in many places, I have shared a lot of discussion and read and written on the matter. One thing I learned was that a lot of misunderstanding and assumption exists.

Boiled down, the questions are:

a. is baptism an act we do as a public confession of faith (see page 7 of the same issue); or

b. is baptism an act God does for us to commence/confirm faith via the word in baptism.

In a the candidate will be instructed, confess faith, and then be baptised. In b the teaching comes after baptism (Matt.28:18-20).

Many questions arise both with regard to "believer's" baptism and "infant" baptism. Churches which practise the latter also practise the former—if not by immersion. Many Scriptures besides those which include derivations of "baptism" need to be considered, as well as the practice of the Apostolic church. Is the amount of water essential? What is a valid baptism?

Theological dialogue would help both sides of the argument to understand each other in this and other areas of belief I pick up from your excellent *The Australian Christian*. Who knows, the results of such dialogue might even be printed in our respective Australia-wide magazines!

I am looking forward to the next issue and "Re-baptism". As the "pot stirs" who knows what may come out of it?

—Pastor David O. Paech
(President, Lutheran Church SA/NT)

Leadership

To the Editor,

I am disappointed that Ted Keating ("AC" 21 May) did not address the real issue in my question ("AC 7 May) which was, what motivates some contributors to *The Australian Christian* to advocate autocratic/authoritarian leadership styles and in doing so devalue democratic values that have been part of our position since our beginnings.

In the Report of the Nationwide Evangelism Consultation (Australian Churches of Christ) 1988, entitled *Australia Grow*, to which Ted was a contributor, Herb Miller, the then

Church Growth Consultant wrote that in the 1990s there will be: "increasing responsiveness to denominations that allow key leaders (both lay and clergy) to make decisions by participatory democracy and decreasing responsiveness to denominations that make major decisions by representative democracy or by authoritarian pronouncements of leaders who hand them down through hierarchical structures".

It is interesting that the Victorian Municipality of Mornington has just introduced participatory democracy into its decision making processes.

Perhaps your readers would like to state whether they support the above analysis by Herb Miller.

—Bruce McIntosh
(Upper Yarra, Vic)

Baptism and Initiation

To the Editor,

Whilst conceding that the early church practised immersion as Gordon Stirling says ("AC" 2 July) I question that the Greek βαπτίζω always and only meant immersion. Before thousands of students of Greek descend upon me in wrath, I am going to appeal to initiation ceremonies throughout the Indo-European world from Iceland to New Zealand. In both countries, a child's name was given with the sprinkling of water. In western Europe the verb was *chrissen*, derived from a common ancestral word from which the Greek *christo* (*christos*) was derived. Its similarity to Christ has led to all sorts of strange ideas, the most important being its confusion with baptising into Christ. There is a range of words

springing from the same root and not from the Greek.

The inauguration of generals, even on the battlefield in India was done by sprinkling and that of some Irish kings by immersion in horsebroth. Brahmins practise cleansing rituals by rinsing the mouth with water. And so on and so on.

I suggest that all these rites were once a full immersion and necessity and convenience lead to a more symbolic act. Are we certain we are right about the Greek word?

—John J. Alderson
(Havelock, Vic)

Conflict Resolution

To the Editor,

I have recently attended a seminar on conflict resolution for volunteer organisations. It became very clear to me that grievance and dispute processes, and rules of behaviour, when people are in conflict, are highly desirable. There are profound implications for the local church. Whilst we might like to think that we have biblical "rules" clearly set out in the Bible, from personal experience and observation, the local church is often the worst of examples.

I have no doubt that others have faced up to the aftermath of conflict and have attempted to establish agreed and overt conflict resolution processes. I would be very glad to correspond with any who have made such efforts.

We don't have the need for such a process, at this very moment, but being human, some day we will. "Be prepared".

—Dave Reynolds
(PO Box 178, Aldinga Park
5173. Phone (085) 56 5958)

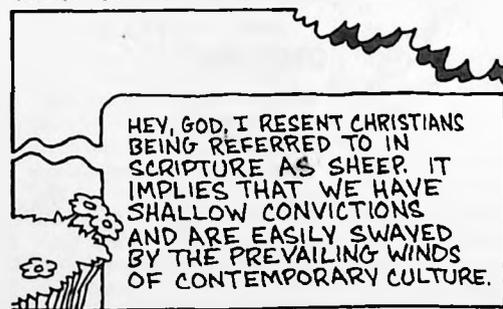
All Precious

To The Editor,

"Some very pretty birds were enjoying working together for their master. But trouble came and dark clouds of unhappiness hung over the cage. Feathers were ruffled, beaks sharpened and many tales were chirped around the cage—

Continued on page 11

Pontius' Puddle



Papers

A Complete Directory of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania from 1853 to 1994

By K.W. Barton

Ken Barton has produced a booklet which lists the dates for all churches in both Victoria and Tasmania. The starting dates (where known) and closing dates (when this has occurred) are given for each church. Along with this, there is a page of notable dates and events for both Victoria and Tasmania. A very handy reference tool.

Available from Ken Barton, 22 Judd St, Camberwell 3124. Phone (03) 889 5856. —CRA

A Complete Directory
Of Churches Of Christ
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From 1853 To 1994



Books

Revelations: A Panorama of the Gospel Age

by Fred P Miller (Moellerhaus) \$25 plus postage.

A Commentary on the Book of revelation, interpreted from the historical perspective.

The historical approach was, for centuries, the most popular method of interpreting the Book of Revelation. To students of Revelation, much of what Fred Miller says will be "old"; but it will be made to be new and alive! He uses maps, quotations from original sources, illustrations of his own and a wealth of historical information. Fred Miller accurately predicted the imminent dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism before it happened. Find out this and many other issues as you read his book with your Bible open.

The book is available from Good News Books, 50A Reibey St, Ulverstone 7315 or from Church of Christ Charlestown, PO Box 358, Charlestown 2290. —Peter Rama Rau

Return from Tomorrow

by George Ritchie with Elizabeth Sherrill (Kingsway Publications) \$14.95.

This book can be read through at one sitting. It is about what happened to a man during the 10 minutes after he was pronounced to be dead by army doctors in Texas in December 1943.

Given the startling nature of the subject matter, it is important to note that both Catherine Marshall and Elizabeth Sherrill, respected Christian writers, have given the story their stamp of approval. In fact, Elizabeth Sherrill helped with the writing, ensuring a well-written book.

The author, George Ritchie, is a psychiatrist. At the time of his life changing experience he was a recruit in an army camp preparing for war service. During an influenza outbreak, when many of the recruits died, George Ritchie, checked twice by doctors for clinical signs of life, was also pronounced dead.

During the 10 minutes of his death, he found himself in the presence of Jesus who allowed him to see something of what lies beyond this life. Some scenes were distressing, such as the plight of those who had committed suicide, and some were puzzling, like the place where there were people serenely



intent in the pursuit of knowledge; but encompassing all was Jesus' love and compassion. Just before he returned to his earthly body he had a glimpse of the heavenly city.

George Ritchie had made a commitment to Christ at the age of 11 and, although his decision had apparently not affected his life much in his teenage years, after his experience of dying in the army camp at the age of 20, he began to read the Bible. It was the Bible, he says, which made his experience comprehensible. On page 117 he says, ".Reading over and over the accounts of the crucifixion, I understood at last where that certainty had come from, in his presence, that I was not condemned, in spite of the ugly actions I had committed which were paraded in plain view before us. It was his death, I came to see, that had already paid for these things, the light of his resurrection in which we stood."

Return From Tomorrow is the kind of book to make us reassess our values. It will inevitably raise questions in the reader's mind, but the author's conclusion is simple, "As for what we'll find in the next world. I believe that what we'll discover there depends on how well we get on with the business of loving, here and now." —Zillah Williams

Turtleshell

by Peter Lawrence (Albatross Books) \$6.95.

Turtleshell is about Shaun, a boy who lives on Turtleshell Station. He meets Sam, an Aboriginal boy, and begins to hate him straight away, and then finds out that Sam is the son of the new station hand. After Sam's father hurts the baby when having a fight with his mother, Shaun realises that Sam seems so irritable partly because of his fear of his father and decides to get along with him. It is then that they go camping together in a gorge near Turtleshell and see someone chase a prospector friend of Shaun's, who has recently had a good find. They set out to help him.

The main issue of the book is Aboriginal land rights and preservation of Aboriginal dreaming sites. This is brought out in conversations between Shaun and his parents and what Sam says about Turtleshell, a mound looking like a half-buried turtle's shell. The book also brings up issues such as parents fighting, racial discrimination and friendship in a realistic way.

The book is interesting and easy to read. In some places, it is exciting and in other places thoughtful, letting the issues sink in as Shaun changes through his experiences. It is worth reading this book. —Jonathan Dixon (aged 12)



Letters to the Editor

International

Polish Protestant Rights

The Polish Parliament has approved a law regulating the rights and activities of the country's two main Protestant churches—the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran) and the Reformed Church. Both churches will now have the right to organise catechism classes in state schools, as well as to publicise their activities in the media. They will also have access to prisons and the right to appoint chaplains in the Armed Forces. The two churches' financial and tax affairs will be regulated in a similar way to those of the predominant Roman Catholic Church.

Video Games Addicts

British researcher, Dr Sue Fisher, has found that children who play too many video games risk pathological addiction to them in the same way that many adults are addicted to gambling. She said that the games were training an entire generation to become gamblers. Her study found that two-thirds of those surveyed played arcade games, and 6% were deemed to be "pathological players", half of whom had stolen to fund their habit.

Martyrs' Plane Discovered

MAF workers in Ecuador have discovered the wreckage of the Piper aircraft which, on 8 January 1956, carried their colleague Nate Saint and four missionaries to their death at the hands of Auca Indians. Their martyrdom inspired a new generation of missionaries. The attackers were later contacted by Nate Saint's widow, Rachel. They and many other members of the tribe have since been led to Christ.

American-Asian Disciples

There are about 36 American-Asian Disciples of Christ congregations established or in formation in North America, 70% of them Korean. In addition to the 21 firmly established Korean churches, there are three Chinese, three Filipino, two Japanese and one Vietnamese congregations. Half of the churches are in California, five in Georgia, one in Canada, one in Hawaii and the rest scattered around the US. In the last 20 years, more than 675,000 Koreans immigrated to the US—6% of all immigrants.

some true, others untrue. There was much unhappiness!

A new leader came and the birds preened their feathers, sang joyful love songs and decided to heap all the blame for past troubles on one particular old bird. This sad old bird weighed down by guilt and despair, waited to be forgiven and reunited with the flock. It was not to be and finally her services to her master were terminated. Seeking her freedom, she flew away. Unfortunately, there is a sad ending to the story, because lacking spiritual food and fellowship, this bird in its new found freedom, will surely die."

Sadly, no one is completely innocent in my story. The old bird had many failings, had made many mistakes in her 43-years of service and probably deserved to be kicked out. But while we rush around saving more souls, perhaps we should also think about other souls who litter our cities and suburbs—terminated people who only wanted to serve their Lord. Please don't let it happen in your church. Jesus died for everyone and every soul is very precious in his sight.

—Valda Smith
(Brooklyn Park, SA)

Acceptance of Fellow Christians

To the Editor,

In his article "Baptism ... By Immersion!" ("AC" 2 July), Gordon Stirling generously concedes the validity of the position taken by other communions on the subject of baptism, asking the question, "Are we saying to other Christians that baptism for us is by immersion, and that for them it is effusion, which is OK by us if they see it that way?" and then answering that question in the affirmative in his conclusion: "Millions (of unimmersed) ... still have died and risen with Christ." They are then, fellow Christians, and must be accepted as such.

I am not familiar with Statement 5 of the Vic-Tas Mission Statement, but Gordon's open-hearted comments make refreshing reading and offer

promise of a better understanding between the denominations on this questions.

I look forward to his further pot-stirring! —H.P. Head
(Rye, Vic)

[As a matter of information for our readers the Vic-Tas Conference Mission Statement states in Point 5: Witness to, and practice of believers' baptism by immersion. —Editor]

Reading Encouraged

To the Editor,

May I encourage your readers to read any books written by the Episcopalian (Anglican) Bishop, John Shelby Spong. Such books include *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, *Living in Sin* and *Born of a Woman*.

A Bishop who confesses he cannot stand religious people, has something worthwhile to say that appeals to many, both within and outside of the institutional church, who are looking for an intelligent approach to Christianity.

—Pat Rivett
(Knoxfield, Vic)

Memories

To the Editor,

The recent change of wrapper for delivery of *The Australian Christian* brought back memories of days at the Austral Printing when Monday morning (or was it Tuesday) was set aside for the apprentice to print the wrappers.

The next morning was "all hands on deck" as the paper was folded, inserted, stapled, then wrapped ready for delivery.

I well remember the chairman of directors, A.E. Kemp, arriving each week to work with the manager, Douglas Pittman, as part of the wrapping team to be sure the paper was out on time.

The Australian Christian has a fine tradition with editors A.W. Stephenson, C.G. Taylor, Wilkie Thomson, A.E. White and G.R. Stirling giving information, challenges and leadership to the churches through the printed word over the past 50 years. They carried on a standard already set by previous editors.

I write to thank you for continuing this tradition. Keep up the good work.

—Tom Frazer
(Boort, Vic)

Baptism and the Forgiveness of Sins

To the Editor,

These past three years or so, some of our top brains have been indulging in fervent debate on "first principles" (Heb 6:1-6) in your columns, particularly on "leadership" to little avail.

I commend all read and memorise Bruce McIntosh's article in the 5 February issue.

My friend, Gordon Stirling's article, "Baptism ... By Immersion," ("AC" 2 July) coincides with my research for the Brotherhood's Sesquicentennial. The Kellems-Richards Mission—chiefly Melbourne and Adelaide, 1923, is strongly featured in the October issues of *The Australian Christian*.

Dr Kellems has a lengthy article in the 11 and 18 October issues of the "AC" giving exhaustive treatment with footnotes concerning his teaching of "Baptism and the Forgiveness of Sins".

Kellems-Richards had 465 confessions of whom 333 joined the churches in Adelaide. Hinrichsen-Stewart followed up in their tent campaign with over 400 commitments.

Salvation in Acts saw the penitent believer baptised by immersion and the same response made them church members. See Acts 2:38, 41, 47, 22:16, 1 Peter 3:20-21, etc.

Gordon, gives a palatable treatment of "baptism by immersion" and commendably associates same with the washing of regeneration, but he says nothing as great numbers of our preaching ministry are likewise minded, about "repentance and baptism for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit".

Maybe, you could give reprints of the Kellems articles and confirm many in the faith.

—Arnold C. Caldicott
(Adelaide, SA)

Continued on page 12

Letters to the Editor

Hell not a Human Concept

To the Editor,

David Allison ("AC" 2 July) has, sadly, undermined not only the integrity of the Scriptures, but also the integrity of God in his mistaken and poorly founded thesis that hell is "a human concept".

David makes much of the love of God but he sadly ignores an equally important Scriptural attribute—the justice of God.

These two great attributes of God stand side by side in the Scripture—they are not mutually exclusive.

The two come together perfectly at the Cross, with the love of God reaching out to rebellious humanity and the justice of God meting out punishment on sin.

Inote with interest that David is quite prepared to accept God's justice when it is meted out on an innocent and sinless man (the Lord Jesus), yet, at the same time, he rejects that very same justice when it condemns a rebellious sinner to hell. Such an attitude smacks of hypocrisy in the extreme and says "I don't mind Jesus taking the rap for my sin but don't expect me

to bear responsibility for my sin".

God will stay the day of judgement for many people for a long time in order that they might repent; at times, as A.W. Tozer has said, he may even incline us to repent—but he will not force our wills. Tozer even suggested that it was better for a man to go to hell with his free will intact than for him to be robotically and mindlessly forced into a heaven that he did not choose.

The fact is this—people are going to hell and the church needs to wake up and be about the business of sharing the gospel in order to see people won from an eternity without Christ.

I suggest that David go back to the Scriptures and search them diligently so that he might become more consistent in his beliefs and not as selective as he has demonstrated by his letter.

—Rob Furlong
(Thornlie, WA)

Hell and Literal Understanding

To the Editor,

As one who has been officially accused of "not believing" the Bible, and of "bad teaching" in regards to hell. My

views are along the same lines as David Allison.

In a recent debate about the fires of hell and eternal torment, it was said, "If I don't accept a literal interpretation of Jesus words in Luke 16, then I don't believe the Scriptures".

But if we do take this story as being literal, then those who are in Hades/hell can see those in Abraham's bosom, and vice versa. Therefore, those in Abraham's bosom will be able to see those being tormented in hell. The thought that maybe one of my boys, or my late father, or any of my loved ones or friends may not make it to heaven, but go to that place of eternal torment and I will forever see them tormented, and hear them call out for a cool drink and all that can be said is, "Sorry, but the God of love has set it up this way, there is nothing that can be done for you." That to me would be the "Hell of Hells" in heaven. That doesn't fit my concept of a God of love.

Those who said that I don't believe the Scriptures, don't take literally Jesus' words in Luke 18:18-22. "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and

you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." They haven't done this! Don't they believe the Scriptures?

As Marj Buckingham rightly points out ("AC" 16 July), they can't have it both ways!

—John Inman
(Batemans Bay, NSW)

Homosexuality

To the Editor

It is sad to see "God's word" invoked to support such opposing arguments as those carried in your pages.

The church has no right to judge on his behalf. It has no right to reject in his name.

If the church, and those who speak for it, were to lose the hypocrisy inherent in human nature for just a moment, we would see that there are more important issues where continued silence is unjustified. But, no, it is easier to pick on a community already outcast by most of society and still struggling to understand their place in the world.

In the homosexuality argument in your pages, fear and ignorance are getting in the way of more productive discussion.

—Mark Fletcher
(St Kilda, Vic)

Continued from page 15

affected their outlook on religion, namely their pragmatism and materialism. Their outlook of the church triumphant may be measured by the same yardstick as their laissez-faire economic one: as well as a Coke in every hand and a McDonalds on every street corner, the Americans know how to reach, to many "markets" in order to deliver the "Word". They must be about the only people who can make religion pay.

However, one must also enjoy their energies in the matters of the Spirit; those of us who were working in Christian education a generation ago learnt to admire and respect their earnest scholarship, sound methodologies, and organisation in these fields.

As some may look askance at many aspects of religion in

America, it should never be overlooked that she is still the world's largest and most active Christian democracy, however that description may be interpreted. In a world of militant fundamentalism and paganism, we may yet need an America as a latter day advocate of the faith.

As American attention turns increasingly westward, as it must, now that the "westward march" extends far beyond the Mississippi and Sunset Boulevard, we Australians may be drawn into an even deeper partnership than existed in the days of the Pacific War. We should appreciate the best this giant has to offer as well as resisting the blandishments of her cultural imperialism—including some of the religious components. As Australia moves to a redrawing of its own Constitution and a species of independ-

ence devolving upon a republic, our friendship with America could enrich both of us. No nation, not even one as great as America, can stand alone any more. All of us must work out

our own forms of salvations and lifestyles with appropriate fear and trembling with a little help from our friends, much less help from him who is the real ruler of the nations. ♦

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Vision 2000

JOE HARDING is widely recognised for his preaching and writing on Church Growth issues and is regarded as an enthusiastic motivator of ministers and church leaders. In 1986 he was appointed Director of Evangelism and Church Growth Ministries with the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church. He has held numerous leadership positions in his church. Joe was organising pastor of a new congregation and as senior minister of one of the larger churches saw the church grow to 1,100 in worship in a time of community decline. His great passions are for a contemporary evangelism thrust and planning for ministry into the next century. His ministry at Spring Conference will be visionary, inspirational and practical.

Nationwide Evangelism Initiative
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Executive Director
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WOLLONGONG CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE TEAM



TED KEATING COMMENCED AS SENIOR MINISTER AT WOLLONGONG IN JULY AFTER 20 YEARS OF MINISTRY AT NUNAWADING. HE HAS SPECIAL INTERESTS IN CHURCH GROWTH AND EVANGELISM, MUSIC AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION. TED IS IN DEMAND FOR SEMINARS AND TRAINING EVENTS AND HAS LED MANY SUCCESSFUL STEWARDSHIP AND CAPITAL FUND RAISING CAMPAIGNS.



GRAHAM AGNEW IS SENIOR MINISTER AT MARION CHURCH. HE HAD A BACKGROUND IN MARKETING PRIOR TO ENTERING MINISTRY. GRAHAM IS HIGHLY REGARDED AS A BUSINESS CONVENTION SPEAKER AND IS AN INSTRUCTOR WITH THE DALE CARNEGIE ORGANISATION. HE IS A COMMITTED PRACTITIONER IN ALL AREAS OF CHURCH DEVELOPMENT.



ALLAN MEYER IS SENIOR MINISTER AT MT EVELYN, VIC, ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S FASTEST GROWING CHURCHES. ALLAN'S INTERESTS INCLUDE CONTEMPORARY EVANGELISM AND WORSHIP. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RECOVERY GROUP PROGRAM IS A MAJOR FOCUS.



DAVID RATTEN COMMENCES AS SENIOR MINISTER AT NUNAWADING IN SEPTEMBER AFTER EIGHT YEARS AT MILDURA. DAVID'S COMMITMENT IS TO MAKING THE CHURCH RELEVANT IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY AND REMOVING GROWTH BARRIERS.

Alan Hirsch is senior minister with the South Melbourne Restoration Community. His major interests are in evangelism, church planting and urban mission. Neville and Pam Wight of Carnegie will team with Alan to share their experiences of church revitalisation.

Lynette Leach is a field director in educational services in Victorian-Tasmanian churches. Her special interests include adult education and ministry with women.

Ashley Barker leads the Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope project at Springvale, Vic. He previously worked with Youth for Christ. The UNOH project is significant for its work among underprivileged youth and young adults.

Allan Anderson (Wollongong) and Bruce Graham (Nunawading) have a common interest in computers. They will lead an elective on the use of computers in outreach, pastoral care and worship.

Leroy Garrett is a distinguished church historian and author from our churches in the United States. During his visit, he will also lecture at our theological colleges.

Carol Preston is the Academic Dean of the Institute of Contemporary Church Leadership. She will be joined by staff members Robert Lynch, Monique Ten Hoopen (youth ministry), and Elizabeth Hah (worship).

Tammy Tolman is a consultant in children's ministry and previously served at Wollongong.

Tim Foot is director of music ministry at Northside Community Church. He brings great musical talent and innovative skills to his elective on contemporary music.

Carol Wilson (Director of Ministries, Northside) and Anne Spoelder (Nunawading) have special interests in Singles Ministry. Anne recently returned from an overseas study visit.

Jayne Wilson (Wollongong) and Eleanor Roberts (Nunawading) are deeply committed lay persons with experience in the reception and assimilation of new attenders.

Jay Bacik is senior minister at Northside Community Church and host of a Sunday evening talkback radio program on 2CH. He will host the 'Hypothetical' session on Monday.

Don Smith is the author of "Harvest: The Idea For Our Time"—an assessment of Churches of Christ in Australia and future directions. He will lead an elective on Leadership Styles.

PROGRAM

SATURDAY

JOE HARDING

TED KEATING

ELECTIVES

A NIGHT OF GOSPEL MUSIC
PREACHER—JOE HARDING

SUNDAY

WORSHIP WITH CONGREGATION
PREACHER—JOE HARDING

GRAHAM AGNEW
LEROY GARRETT
ELECTIVES

GOSPEL CELEBRATION
PREACHER—JOE HARDING

MONDAY

JOE HARDING
TED KEATING
ALLAN MEYER
RON KALLMIER
ELECTIVES
JAY BACIK

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PREACHER—JOE HARDING
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People

People

NCCA President



Archbishop Aghan Baliozian has been elected unanimously as the first President of the newly-formed National Council of Churches in Australia. He is primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Australia. He arrived in Australia in 1975 from Syria and became the denominational head a year later. The Armenian church is well-established in Sydney and Melbourne, with smaller churches in Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. Australia has about 32,000 Armenians, all but about 1000 of these have come to Australia during the 1960s or later.

Ian Borham Dies

Ian Borham died in Madrid, Spain, on 20 July at age 45 following a brain haemorrhage. After completing theological training with Churches of Christ, Ian joined WEC in 1974 and left for Spain. Ian always had a deep love for Spain and the Spanish people. He married Mari Fe and they gave themselves to a pioneer church planting ministry in the central region of Spain.

Keith Crosby Dies

Keith Crosby, one of the leading laymen in our SA churches, died suddenly on his farm on Yorke Peninsula on 23 July, aged 82. Garry Harris (Dulwich/Rose Park United Parish) conducted the memorial service at Gartrell church.

Schindler's Survivor

Leo Rosner, one of the Jews who were saved by Oscar Schindler and who is featured in the film *Schindler's List*, is telling his story at the 7.00 pm worship service at the Ormond, Vic, Church (cnr North Rd and Arnott St, Ormond). He will also be playing his piano accordion during the service.

A special servant

Eric Hart

Eric Hart has been our family minister since his induction into the pastorate of Bexley North Church of Christ, our home church, in 1959—the year I entered Woolwich college. He soon became my spiritual father and joined in training me for the ministry of Christ.

The inspiration, prayer support and expertise of this diligent pastor, teacher and preacher has always stood me in good stead. Especially his ministry motto "Always available" and one of his favourite texts "I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord ... who counted me trustworthy in making me his minister" (1 Tim 1:12).

Eric exemplified the teachings he gave me in his own life. He preferred to be called a min-

ister, claiming always that the word "minister" was inclusive of pastor, teacher, preacher and evangelist.

I was appointed as his student minister in 1962, a year of intense training for me. Eric's gifts as a teacher about the ministry were woven into my life. All our family was nurtured and strengthened in Christ through his ministry.

My wife, Lorna, and I were prepared for marriage by Eric, who conducted our wedding in 1977 and later dedicated our daughter, Geraldine, in 1980. He gave guidance to Lorna for partnership in ministry, which she often remembers and always practices. His beloved Madge, his daughters, son-in-law and grandchildren were his



pride and joy. Eric was having a good day when we visited him at Ashfield, 10 March, when we shared in fellowship together. After I had read from Psalm 46 and Romans 8 and led in prayer, Eric then prayed for us and sent us away with God's special blessing.

May God be praised for his servant, Eric T. Hart.

—Ron V. Holt

PK's US Accent

Shaws in America

Speaking with a distinct American accent, 17 year-old Bronwyn Shaw was back in Australia during July, visiting friends in Victoria and South Australia. Bronwyn was enjoying the break between finishing High School in Oklahoma and starting at Phillips University where she is undertaking a four-year course.

Bronwyn is the daughter of Greg and Jenny Shaw and this is her first visit home after three years in America.

Her older brother Donovan, who has no American accent at all, will graduate from Phillips in May 1995 with a Degree in Sports Science. Donovan plans to return to Australia for further study. Bronwyn's younger brother Andrew, now 10, has also picked up an American accent as he attends Cub-Scouts and prepares to go into Grade 6 at school.

Bronwyn's mother Jenny is secretary of the Tecumseh Chamber of Commerce, and her dad Greg is the associate minister at Crown Heights Christian Church in Okla-

homa City. Crown Heights has about 250 members and is a strong, positive church that is creatively reaching out into the community.

Greg and Jenny Shaw came to CCTC from Western Australia and, after ministries in Victoria and South Australia, accepted an invitation from Dr Bill Tabbernee (former CCTC Principal) to undertake further studies at Phillips. Greg will complete his Doctorate of Theology in about nine months.

For Bronwyn the highlights of her three years in the US have been the great people, the really different schools, living in a really, really small town and a school excursion to the White House.

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American Interdependence Days

Viney Longthorp

We Australians seem to have a rare generosity of spirit, we love to join in the celebrations of other nations and make these events our own. For years, we have remembered the significance of Bastille Day; as long as most of us can remember, we have remembered, to the point of actually observing, the "Glorious Fourth of July" with our American cousins. It is a safe guess that neither the French or the Americans would ever have heard of Australia Day.

One wonders about the significance of all this. Of course, in a poly-cultural nation, we may expect the French and Americans among us to celebrate these events as much as our Brazilian citizens celebrated their victory in the World Cup. But one suspects that the causes lay deeper. Maybe 4 of July is a continuing expression of gratitude to our allies in the Pacific War years. Or is it yet one more symptom of that dreaded "cultural cringe"?

However, compared to other years, the media coverage of American Independence Day for this year was decidedly muted. One ABC-FM station did have a program in which Karl Haas broadcast the works of some American composers of the more serious variety; then the weatherman on one TV station made reference to "Independence Day" but then quickly (and significantly) added "American Independence Day—of course." For once, the daily newspapers had nothing to report about protest meetings outside American embassies or the offices of American corporations, as in former years. Maybe that song in the American musical *1776* has assumed fresh relevance: "We must be doin' something right, To last two hundred years."

On the other hand, one newspaper did put the spotlight on

America; the *Weekend Australian* issue of 2-3 July ran a full coverage in its Review section entitled "Stars and Strife". The sub-title went on, "The lesson for Australia in the crumbling of America." In spite of this somewhat onerous heading, the articles which followed contained some excellent insights and positive comments on the world's remaining superpower, as well as words of dire warnings. I'm sure that many readers of the "AC" would have found this material both profitable and interesting.

Maybe the time has come for a more dispassionate look at America. However, understanding "God's own country" is never easy. One article admitted that "America is a land of extremes. [It is] the oratory of Martin Luther King [and] the madness of Charles Manson." Others reminded us that in this, the wealthiest nation on earth, there runs a poverty belt which resembles the direst conditions in some Third World nations. The editor claimed that, we as a vigorous multicultural society could learn from the American experience. Maybe we can, but America is so big and varied that it is never easy to "read". As Lewis Mumford once noted, America is really four or five distinct regions never at ease with the other and almost ungovernable. Her only unity lies in the mystique afforded the office of the President.

But America fought hard for her independence from British misrule. Thus, in the midst of the conflict against King George III's redcoats, one Richard Henry Lee of Virginia moved independence on 2 July; it was what Congress wanted to hear. The Declaration of Independence was adopted in haste on 4 July. Foremost in the minds of those congressmen was that independence meant the expulsion of the British and, with this, isolation from the troubles

of the perfidious Europeans—the French excepted. But whilst independence lasted a while, isolation could not. The Napoleonic Wars which followed and, of deeper significance, the Industrial Revolution, meant that the fledgling government was forced on to the world scene. Those small original 13 states were soon to be added to by wars, treaties and purchases to form the great continental power we know today. America's global involvement and interaction never ceased from those heady days of independence. America was not long in joining some of the great European powers in imperialistic adventures; in the 1890s the President of Mexico one Porfirio Diaz sighed, "Poor Mexico, so far from God, so near to the USA." World War I emphatically put an end to any longings for isolation, though many factions didn't grasp realities until Pearl Harbour, 1941.

Economically, the story is much the same. Early on, America was practically self-contained in every way and in the end of the 19th century was the great creditor nation of the world. But today, as her recent incursions into the Middle East have demonstrated, America is now very much dependent on overseas supplies of oil. Geographically, she remains highly vulnerable over the integrity of the Panama Canal, as her heavy-handed diplomacy in the Caribbean region shows. The present huge trade deficit with Japan is another important indicator of her dependence on others. The American experience points to the fact that political independence does not automatically mean economic independence.

Since the break up of the Russian communist empire, America has been able to give up the role of being the world's policeman. In the Cold War years, this at least nurtured that

sense of "manifest destiny" and the myth of national righteousness which remains so important to the American peoples' sense of purpose. Now that the "communist" demon is no more, many American observers are fearful as to what other "demons" may be invented in order to justify her crusade to "make the world safe for democracy". Some of the articles in *The Australian* hinted darkly that for the first time after 200 years, the Americans may be running out of that vision which made the nation great.

Religion in America is an integral part of national consciousness and also shares in the contradictions and paradoxes of that great people. On the back of the Greenback (so-called) is the motto, "In God we trust". But America is a secular state as well as being pluralistic, liberal, and multicultural. Yet the Americans as a whole do profess dependence on God as do few others, if judged by the fact that it is a land of some 500,000 churches which has one Protestant church alone for every 500 adults. Then there are no fewer than 2,000 denominations. It has always been thus from the earliest days of British settlement in the 16th century.

It has been wryly commented that Britain sent America her intellectuals but sent Australia her criminals. Certainly the mental baggage of the Pilgrim Fathers was different to that of the Botany Bay fraternity of 1788. The Pilgrim Fathers had a deep faith in God and a profound trust in his providence. Foundations are important and it is possible that the differences in our respective beginnings explain the differences in our national attitudes to religion.

But that noted American scholar, Lewis Mumford detected another factor in the American psyche which also

Continued on page 12

Classifieds

BIRTHS

SALMON (QUAIFE) Ken, Andrea and Mitchell, and their families, are delighted to welcome Lachlan Quaife Salmon. Born 22 May 1994. A precious gift from God.

DEATHS

MARSH Alfred George 27.7.94. Loved husband of Edith. Father of Kevin and Graham. Father-in-law of Wendy and Eden. Grandfather to Andrew and Elizabeth, Matthew and Janine, and Brendan and Dariel. Great-grandfather of Rebecca. Much-loved friend of Frank and Denise Lowery. Died peacefully in his sleep. At home with his loving Saviour.

PURDIE Gordon Claude passed away peacefully in hospital on 20 May. Dearly loved husband of Iris and the late Muriel. Father and father-in-law of Don and Moira Purdie, Valmai and Dean Radbone and Pam and John Peacock. Step-father and father-in-law of Gloria and Colin McKenzie. Dearly loved by all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Aged 84 years. At peace in God's care.

SOMERVILLE Frank (1906-1994). Loved father of John and Margaret. A good wise man who enriched our lives and helped us to become more human.

IN MEMORIAM

GRAHAM William Gordon. In loving memory of our dear husband and father who passed away 29.7.54. We continue to see the

fruits of his labours and praise God for every precious memory. Still missed and held dearly in our hearts—Nita and Mary, Alan, Bruce, Don and families.

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Biblical Reflection

Psalm One

Louis Clun

Psalm 1 has justifiably been called the faithful doorkeeper* and it is no accident that it stands first. In it we find life encompassing an uncompromising black and white choice between two ways.

This choice revolves (implicitly) around a reliance upon, or a rejection of, God's word.

Verse 1 begins by revealing who is blessed, first in negative and then in positive terms. It must be noted that this blessedness is not so much a reward for conduct, but a result of a righteous life.† That it begins by defining this blessedness in negative terms is not strange; wrong conduct surrounds us and we are of necessity continually taking a stand against it.‡

In addition, verse 1 displays elements of Hebrew poetry. Most people on hearing this assume that it must be a rhyming and metered verse and therefore lost in translation. However such is the nature of Hebrew poetry that one of its more outstanding characteristics, parallelism, can be observed in English translations.

(Parallelism is where two or more clauses are placed to-

gether in order to reinforce the same thought using different words or to contrast opposite ideas.) Thus the three phrases: "walk in the advice/counsel of the wicked", "stand in the way of sinners" and "sit in the seat of mockers", are parallel, since they state virtually the same thing as well as cleverly using the verbs of posture to link them together.

Although these parallel phrases express the one idea, they also appear to indicate an increasing scale of wickedness. In the first case a person is persuaded to take wrong advice; we may be told, "It is easier this way. Why make waves?" Yet it is wrong.

The second case is that of habitually doing wrong; thus lying or unethical business practices, for example, become second nature.

The third case, "the mocker", is not one who merely follows bad advice or who acts wickedly, but who openly mocks God and what is good. Such a person will bring others to disdain what should be their delight. Hence the mocker is chief among God's opponents.

In verse 2, the positive element of blessedness is quite

simply a delight in the law of the Lord. This flows from a delight in God. By law (Torah) more is implied than just the Old Testament laws. It is the entirety of God's revelation—now including the New Testament.

This verse also contains an interesting word chosen by the psalmist (הִתְהַלַּךְ), a verb usually translated "meditates". This word, when used of lions means "growls", or of doves means "cooing" and of people often means "sighing". It does not mean what the modern understanding of "meditate" now means: ie an inner contemplation. The word indicates the production of some sound.

In the ancient world, it was normal to read out loud. Those who read silently were regarded with suspicion.

Is the ancient reading habit worth emulating? Reading Scripture out loud is a means of reinforcing the message and does help prevent one being easily distracted.

The one who delights in the word of God is like a tree planted near a watercourse (v. 3). This simile draws us to conclude that as a continual water supply brings strength and

fruitfulness to a tree, so too a continual ("day and night") reading of God's word brings these to us.

"Not so" with the wicked (v. 4), for they are "like chaff". The surprise here is that we expect the wicked to be likened to some poor wind-blasted little tree. But the psalmist leaps to chaff—the most useless of plant materials, blown off the grain at winnowing. Here the life of the wicked, a life without God, is just as empty and worthless as chaff.§

Verse 5 reinforces the transitory nature of the wicked. They will "not stand", ie perish, in "the judgement". This can only be taken to mean the final judgement. By use of further parallelism, the psalmist indicates that "sinners" will not be found in that final assembly of the righteous. This clearly implies that "sinners" not only are in the midst of the present assembly, but that they will only be removed then.

Clearly, the church is the present assembly of the righteous and one reason for its imperfections must be the presence of such "sinners"; cf. Matt 13:24-30, a parable which is undoubtedly about the church.

The psalm concludes by encouraging us to keep to the "righteous" way since the Lord "watches over" (Hebrew: "knows") us. It also spells out the consequences of the wrong choice—for the wicked will "perish".

Let us, therefore, not be slowly led astray, but "day and night" delight in the Lord's word. Then we shall be like trees planted by streams of water. ❖

* Derek Kidner *Psalms 1-72* (Inter-Varsity Press) p. 47.

† Peter C. Craigie *Psalms 1-50* (Word Books) p. 61.

‡ H.C. Leupold *Exposition of the Psalms* (Baker Book House) p. 34.

§ Artur Weiser *The Psalms* (Westminster Press) p. 106.

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The Water That Unites

Graeme Chapman

Churches of Christ appreciate the dilemma facing the Uniting Church as a consequence of the fact that some Uniting Church ministers and councils of elders question the validity of infant baptism.

We commend the Uniting Church for facing this issue honestly and openly and for acknowledging the importance of personal faith, either in believers' baptism or in the progressive appropriation of realities seen to be present in infant baptism.

Furthermore, the canvassing of a situation in which both infant and believers baptism are practiced challenges Churches of Christ to consider their response to this proposition. Some years ago E.L. Williams endorsed such an accommodation, provided there was no restraint on those baptised as infants being later immersed as believers. The UCA response at that time was that this was unacceptable because it tacitly denied the validity of infant baptism.

Tensions are obvious within the document, particularly between ordination vows and personal integrity; and between acknowledging freedom of conscience, in the context of a personal response to divine grace, and the notion that believers' baptism, for those baptised as infants, is a re-baptism rather than baptism.

With respect to the latter, perhaps some attention could be given to an intermediate position that would interpret what is regarded by the UCA as "rebaptism", as a reaffirmation of one's infant baptism, on the analogy of reaffirmed marriage vows, or as an alternative rite to confirmation.

With the Uniting Church committed to the Protestant principle of "constant reform under his Word", it is difficult to see how it can deal summarily with those who want to take

a stand on believers' baptism. The Reformation is proof that minorities often represent truth that the majority overlook. To refuse expression to minority opinion, particularly where it is not outlandishly heretical, is to contradict the Protestant principal that justifies the UCA's separate existence. It seems to us that you, the Uniting Church, are on the horns of a dilemma. It will be obvious to you that we have difficulty with arguments offered in support of infant baptism, related to the analogy with circumcision, to household baptisms, to Jesus welcoming of children and to the argument based on a prevenient covenantal grace.

We would argue that there is greater support for believers' baptism than for infant baptism. It is sometimes contended that, because the majority of churches practice infant baptism, there is, therefore, majority support for infant baptism. We would argue, however, that, because most, if not all, churches agree that believer's baptism is scriptural and symbolically appropriate, believer's baptism represents the majority opinion, rather than infant baptism, for which there is less support. Having argued thus, however, we would want to confess that we have given insufficient attention to the experiential realities underlying infant baptism, to the need for a symbolic ritual that celebrates the gift of new life in the context of the community of faith and to an adequate theology of childhood.

We are making some progress on these issues. Most of our churches acknowledge the Christian standing of persons who were baptised as infants in other traditions and who regard their baptism as the beginning of their Christian experience. However, because of our local autonomy, these developments are not reflected in all of our churches.

Some congregations continue to view believers' baptism as the only form of baptism, while others practice open membership.

How are we to resolve our historically conditioned theological differences? Surely we must challenge the hardening of our theologies into ideologies. We must be open to the challenge of continuing reinterpretation in the light of new understanding, to insights from experience and fresh knowledge and to the cosmic, unifying love that grows us, makes us fruitful and draws us closer together; that is, to the primacy of experienced realities over against theological explanations of those realities.

Surely baptism, like any symbol, facilitates our psychological/spiritual appropriation of the reality symbolised. In this case, a grace that is nothing less than an unconditional loving. The reality is more important than the theology that tries to grasp it, despite the fact that theology informs our understanding of the symbol and helps determine the nature of our participation in the reality to which it points.

Thus, while Churches of Christ, argue that believers' baptism was the baptism practiced in the New Testament, best symbolises the process of regeneration and should be the norm today, we acknowledge that the reality is more important than the symbol. We also admit that divine grace, present in baptism, is progressively appropriated at many points in the individual's personal narrative and especially in the context of the community of faith.

This brings us to the point of acknowledging the need for a richly symbolic ritual recognition of an infant born to Christian parents. Dedication services have been our immediate response, but these are inadequate.

The fact that Churches of Christ are considering such issues and the fact that the UCA is even remotely considering accommodating those of their number opting for believers baptism over against infant baptism, is evidence of the beginnings of a greater degree of convergence than has existed hitherto. A convergence that ought to be encouraged by both parties. ❖

PS The Assembly Standing Committee, in September 1993, decided against accommodation.

At the recent UCA National Assembly (held in NSW in July) the UCA affirmed its Standing Committee's policy on baptism with one significant change. Ministers who in conscience cannot baptise infants may still have a future in the Uniting Church. They will, however, have to face the discipline of their local presbytery.

The Standing Committee in 1993 reiterated that the Uniting Church is committed to baptising "those who confess the Christian faith and children who are presented for baptism and for whose instruction and nourishment in the faith the church takes responsibility"; and it requires all ministers, elders' councils and congregations to preach, teach and administer the sacrament of baptism in accordance with the church's adopted position. *"The Water that Unites" is an Uniting Church discussion paper concerning the issues of infant and believers' baptism.*



ON YOUR OWN, YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Christian Singles Fellowship offers friendship through correspondence with other born-again Christian singles and single-again people

Write enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:
CSF, PO Box 17,
Anna Bay 2301

A Church ABC

Westside, Qld, church is both new and old. The church is about to celebrate its first anniversary on 11 September, yet the ministry has been going on there for many more years than that. Westside is, in fact, the result of the combination of two churches last year (Kenmore and Centenary churches).

Westside is located in the south-west suburbs of Brisbane some 15-20 minutes from the city. It is a mostly suburban area with some industry on the fringe. The people in the area tend to be working or middle class. The church itself has quite a large catchment area since a number of significant motorways pass through.

The amalgamation of the churches is not typical in that it was not a reaction to declining numbers or the like. Both Kenmore and Centenary churches were looking at relocating in the not too distant future. Ken-

more was looking at an alternative to using the college facilities and Centenary was examining options for relocation for growth. It seemed, there-

location has not yet taken place and the people meet in the old Centenary buildings, but the increase in numbers means a move to a six month trial of two

to overcome, such as the development of more home groups and Reg and Grant (the ministers) learning how to best work together as a team.

One of the church's great strengths is their community focus. The playgroup has about two-thirds outside participation, with similar figures for the other youth and even for the seniors' work. The church also operates an occasional child-care centre as well as a community craft group at Kenmore. In the future, the church wishes to build on this level of community contact and involvement, with the new facilities hopefully operating as a community centre/sporting facility, especially as there is currently no hall for community use in the immediate area. Included in this vision is a commitment to carry across their balanced service of a range of ministries catering to the spread of ages and needs. ❖



fore, fairly sensible to combine the two relocations into one since the two churches were only about 15 minutes apart—and the churches agreed unanimously (of course there was some apprehension, but the vote itself was unanimous).

After an initial fall-off in numbers, when compared with the sum of the attendance of the two congregations, things have continued to grow, with new folk being added. The re-

services on Sunday mornings. Once the base of resources has been built, then the church will begin the move (currently they are looking at land).

Westside's services are a mix of contemporary and traditional which reflects the needs of the mix of members in the congregation.

The combination of two separate churches brought no major problems, but there were some organisational difficulties

New Hope

The Ancient Trinity

Bill Mills

A noted American anthropologist, that is, one who has studied man from his earliest times, has spoken of what he called "the ancient trinity". No, he was not referring to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He was speaking of something much more earthly.

He was referring to father, mother and their child. Maybe you are a father or a mother. And, of course, whoever you are, you will have been a child with a father and a mother.

This scientist we have quoted went on and said, "This trinity has survived more regular and unexpected changes than any other human relationship. It is the bedrock underlying all other family structures. Although more elaborate family patterns can be broken from

without or may even collapse of their own weight, the rock remains." You may argue with this. You might say, "Well, just look around you. There are many father-mother-child relationships today that are anything but like a rock. Clay easily broken, yes, but a rock, no."

And you are probably right. But that wasn't God's intention. God set father, mother and child as the basic foundation stone of all family relationships.

God meant it to be a rock and some have kept it so. Others have not. But the fact remains that these three have a God-given, particular relationship to each other that nothing should overcome.

Even when something does break it up, most often there always remains a sense of a peculiar attachment one to the

other; a feeling—if they are separated, gone away from each other—of something gone sadly wrong. We find children with a self-centred, careless mother still having affection for their female parent. We find fathers with wild and wayward sons still loving them—deeply. We find mothers who may have had husband and child turn away from them who sometimes weep bitterly over the loss.

The lesson is plain. If you are in a relationship of this kind, do your absolute best to preserve it. The Bible gives us ideal pictures of this trio.

God sums up true motherhood in a question. "Can a woman forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?" David typifies a true

father's love as we read, "David pleaded with God" that is, for the life of his child. "He fasted and lay all night on the earth."

Jesus said, "Honour your father and your mother." This ancient trinity is every bit as important in its earthly way as the Holy Trinity. Do your best to preserve it. ❖

• This is one of the more than 1,800 recorded messages written by retired minister Bill Mills used in the "New Hope" telephone ministry. To hear the latest, ring (03) 11610. Enquiries about "New Hope" may be addressed to PO Box 160, Burwood 3125, or phone Jack Edwards on (03) 568 1825.

The Greatest Error?

Alan Cant

For some time I have been strengthening my belief that perhaps the greatest mistake the church ever made was to put the Hebrew Scriptures and the original Christian documents inside one cover and call them the Book, which soon became one Christian "Holy Bible" and "Scriptures". This action of the church has, I believe, led to an enormous amount of theological nonsense, misleading teaching, and disruption of Christian fellowship.

The Hebrew Scriptures, which the church has chosen to call the Old Testament, can be useful and interesting. Some books like Isaiah are very beautiful and deeply spiritual, but they are not Christian documents.

They can be read for spiritual nourishment, theological background, history, insightful myth, poetry, etc, but they are not in any way prescriptive for Christians.

They are an authority for Jews. Let us never forget that it was the people for whom their Scriptures were especially authoritative who were those most opposed to Jesus.

All the earliest Christians were themselves Jews and we know from Acts that the acceptance of Gentiles was a very traumatic experience for the Jerusalem church. These people carried over their Jewish understanding of Scripture just as they carried over their reluctance to accept Gentiles as members of the church.

If the Hebrew Scriptures had never been published in the same cover as the Christian documents they would have remained what they are; and we would not be bedeviled by having sincere Christians put everything in the Bible on the same level.

Some Christians, even today, believe they have to defend Hebrew myth and legend as history. We are quite able to

read other ancient literature for what it was, be it from Greek, Asian, or Arabic background. Because some books came from the Hebrews many Christians believe they are entirely different, and have a supernatural authorship.

The separation of the Christian documents from the Hebrew Scriptures would very likely have also had the desirable effect of allowing these new writings to remain what in fact they were. They were not written as a holy book, and any such description is quite unjustified. I don't believe there is any suggestion in what Jesus said, or in other New Testament writings that there was any intention that a "Christian Scripture" be compiled.

These fundamental documents of the church are of extreme importance. Their preservation is essential, and the study of them is fundamental to Christian theology and life. They are our authority about Jesus life and teaching. But we must be allowed to read them as they would have been read by their original recipients. Not as a holy book.

Anyone reading the New Testament without having been fed a theory about its writing will very likely be very moved by the story of Jesus and the early church. These documents do not need any theory of special influence or divine oversight. They are documents which came out of that struggling and confused early church battling to keep itself together and preserve the story of Jesus, at the same time trying to preserve some unity in a world with incredibly slow communication.

For me, the New Testament began to become a set of really useful documents when I was able to completely free myself from any preconceived theory about them. They don't need our imposed theories. They are marvellous living documents

showing different understandings of Jesus, differences in emphasis and interpretation of history, differences in theology and sense of purpose.

When we are free to see these original documents for what they are we are fully free to be Christians of the 20th century. There is no requirement to copy from the first century aspects of how they organised or administered churches, whether they were male or female leaders, whether they had instrumental music, etc. From these foundation documents we hear the overwhelming story of Christ, and the way those early people responded to him. Over the centuries and across the world now we see how others have responded. Now I make my response.

The thing about the New Testament is not that it was written in a special way, but that it is about a very special person, and the effect he had on others, particularly Paul. His story stands in its own strength.

The idea of this short article no doubt requires a long book to fill it out properly, but for now my plea is very simple: don't fall into the error of believing in a Christian Holy Book. There is no such thing. Let these documents be simply what they originally were. Is this not New Testament Christianity? ❖

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Spiritual Centre

The Anglican Bishop of Canberra, Bishop George Browning, has presented a vision to the heads of churches for an Ecumenical Centre for Australian Christian Spirituality. The vision is to give Australia a spiritual centre, a focus for expression of its religious and Christian heritage. The Centre aims to provide an expression of the spiritual insights of Australians and provide spiritual hope for our nation. It will also be a place for major national religious state occasions and a centre to develop our religious identity and unity.

Call for Homosexual Discussion

A gathering of Uniting Church members in Adelaide has called on the President of the Uniting Church to open discussion on matters affecting the participation of lesbian, bisexual and gay people in the church. Approximately 120 attended the national gathering "Daring to Speak, Daring to Listen" to affirm the place of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, their friends, family and supporters on the life of the Uniting Church in Australia.

"Invasion" Painting

A painting from the Aboriginal and Islander community, depicting a striking commentary on the history and relationship between the Australian church and indigenous people, was presented to the new National Council of Churches at its first session on 4 July. Titled "Invasion", the painting by South Australian Aboriginal artist "Munnari" John Hammond A'Hang, depicts the encounter between black and white cultures and the influence of Christianity.

Removing Radio Religion

The ABC's Radio National manager is proposing to drop Radio National's Friday "Religion Report", in a major wind-down of religious broadcasting. The major changes, reportedly driven by ratings, include the cessation of Caroline Jones' long-running "Search for Meaning", the complete cessation of the Friday "Religion Report", and the confining of religious broadcasting to early Sunday morning and late Sunday afternoon.

Short Story

The Meeting

Don Haddleton

The old tin hall was hot, and crowded. Dan Cooper, the church secretary, mopped his brow, the plain blue handkerchief was already damp. His brow puckered in thought. He could not remember when he had seen so many members at a church meeting before, but then this was a special meeting. The large number of people present, the heat which had been building up all day, the frayed tempers and tensions generated by the discussions thus far, had all contrived to make Dan wish he were somewhere else! He cleared his throat, eased back his chair and stood up. Leaning forward, he rested his hands on the table in front of him. Looking around at the hurt and angry face before him, he cleared his throat again.

"We have heard a very serious charge brought against our senior pastor," he began. "We have discussed at length the motion arising from that charge." Dan paused. "If that charge is true ..."

A large crash interrupted Dan in mid-sentence, as Loraine Carruthers leapt to her feet, sending her metal chair crashing to the old wooden floor.

"What do you mean, if it's true?" she demanded stridently. "I saw him with my own eyes. I saw the pastor coming out of that pub with my

own eyes, large as life he was, no shame, carrying that brown paper bag full of beer. I ..." Loraine never finished her tirade.

"Enough!"

Dan's voice trembled with emotion. Loraine's jaw sagged. In 30 years as church secretary, no one had ever seen Dan Cooper angry. He was angry now, his eyes staring hard at Mrs Carruthers. Loraine sat down heavily on the now upright chair. Dan fought to control his emotions. Tears of anger and hurt, were forming in his eyes. Some of the ladies began to sob quietly.

"Friends," Dan's voice cracked, his chest heaved as he sucked in air and began again.

"Friends, based on what our sister Loraine saw, we have been asked to vote on the motion that our pastor be asked to resign. The charge is that he is a drinking man and as such forfeits the right to pastor this flock."

Calmness and control were edging back into Dan's voice. He paused, the hall was very quiet now.

"Loraine, dear sister." The words were spoken with gentleness and sincerity, as Dan turned to face the stunned Loraine.

"Please forgive my outburst, but I was not doubting what you had seen, only that we

needed to be sure that the conclusions you drew from what you saw were correct, and justified."

Dan turned to face the whole congregation.

"It is essential that we do not leap to conclusions in this matter. The ministry and reputation of a Christian brother is at stake here. We need to be sure we know what we think we know."

He continued, "Paul instructs Timothy not to listen to, or even consider, any charge against an elder, unless it is supported by the evidence of two or three witnesses. On that basis alone, we should dismiss this charge against our pastor and the motion before us today". Dan let that thought sink in, then proceeded. "Second, none of us, including Loraine, have any idea what was in the brown paper bag the pastor was carrying, other than that it appeared to be bottles! No one saw the contents!"

Dan glanced at Loraine, her shoulders were slumped, she was looking at the floor.

"Third, no one saw our pastor enter the pub; he may have had that paper bag with him when he went in!" Startled looks and vigorous head nodding from some of the members accompanied Dan's last point.

Dan moved from behind the table and walked to the centre of the hall, he was rising to the moment. "So here we are faced with the self-evident fact that no one but the pastor knows what was in that brown paper

bag. It could have been cordial, non-alcoholic wine or lemonade. We just do not know!"

He paused and very quietly he asked, "Did anyone ask the pastor?"

The question dropped like a bombshell in that hot, stuffy, overcrowded room. The ticking of the old clock on the wall sounded ominously loud in the stunned silence that followed Dan's question.

Moving back to his traditional place behind the table, Dan sat down in his chair. He suddenly felt very weak, tired and vulnerable. "Dear friends, we could be guilty of a very serious error, as well as an unchristian act, if we even consider voting on the motion tabled before us today. Our pastor's ministry takes him into some very strange places, places, that as Christians, neither you nor I would normally desire to go. We have got to trust our pastor on this one, because none of us bothered to find out from the pastor what he was doing. We have made ourselves judges of his conduct. We need to extend to him, what we ourselves would wish in similar circumstances. I would hate to think that if any of you saw me coming out of the TAB, last week, you would think I was a betting man! I would like to suggest that the charge and the motion against our pastor be dismissed and erased from the record".

The beginnings of a cool southerly breeze began to ruffle the worn lace curtains hanging at the windows. Dan felt the pleasant coolness on the back of his neck. The love he felt for this, his church family, flooded his spirit. "Let's pray ..."

(Author's note. Any similarity between the people described above, and the conduct and circumstances of the meeting so described, and your own church people and meetings are purely in God's providence.)



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•Lisa Jenner, Marianne Downes,
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Rosenberg, Andrew Masters, Mildura,
Vic •Mark Maxwell, Bentleigh,
Vic •Graeme Jaensch, Ross
Trahair, Prudence Marr, Jessica
Marr, Glenys Bodilly, Bendigo, Vic

Marriages

•Barbara Pender and Ralf Hagenmuller, Parkdale, Vic •Sharon Baker and John Marley, Tuggeranong, ACT •Kerryn Castleman and David Gibbs, Mildura, Vic

Deaths

•Clara Young, Numurkah, Vic
•Aaron Hoang, Basil Devine, Lismore, NSW •Lucille Joan (Niki) Puls, Taree, NSW •Edi Williams, Chelsea, Vic •Hayden Lea, Arthur Rosendale, Lloyd Freeman, Mrs Ettie Davis, Echuca, Vic •Vee Matis, Bob Schurman, Boronia, Vic •Wayne Greville, Tom Kennedy, Sheila Robinson, Mildura, Vic •Vida Reed, Peel St, Ballarat, Vic •Mrs Olive Comber, Bendigo, Vic •James Sawyers, Ainslie, ACT •Joy Combridge, Belconnen, ACT

Changes

Cunningham, J.C. & A.G.—Unit 159, 18 McHarg Rd, Happy Valley SA 5159. Phone (08) 381 2627.

Obituaries

Obituaries are limited to 100 words

Purdie, Gordon Claude (20.5.94) Born at Piccadilly, SA, 1909, Claude gave his life to Christ at Colonel Light Gardens in his early teens. He served his Lord well while attending Queenstown, Stirling, Dulwich, Mt Compass and Colonel Light Gardens. During this time, he had influence on hundreds of people's lives, having taught Sunday School for over 25 years (also Superintendent), was church treasurer and lay preacher. He was an elder, active at Conference, attending World Convention in Scotland in 1960 and served on Aborigines Board for years as secretary. Claude had a strong faith and witness which has been a source of strength, not to mention his courage during his long illness. He excelled at sport, loved competition and challenge. His words were, "The Lord gives you ability to do the best you can."

Simpson, Frank
Frank Simpson was a significant Horsham, Vic, identity over his 83 years. Our oldest member at the time of his death, Frank was baptised in 1922. He was active in Sunday School, Christian Endeavour, read the Bible, helped and was a lay preacher. His great love was sport. He played in the church tennis, cricket and football teams. He also loved golf, cycling and bowls. He worked for 51 years with Wilson Bolton & Co finally becoming its general manager. He is remembered for his natural charisma, friendliness and example. Our sympathy is offered to his wife, Ada, and children, Robert, Margaret (Schreck) and Brian.

—H.A.L. Clark

Vic

NUMURKAH Local attendances down a little during winter, some with sickness, some on holidays. Pleased to see some visitors ... Holiday program going for children ... Playschool, Young Crusaders, youth group all going well ... Our sympathy & prayers to Glennys & Neil Kelsey as they mourn the passing of Glennys' Dad ... Outside of church & kitchen have been painted ... Successful jumble sale held last week.

CHELSEA (Ian Whitelock) Big 70th anniversary celebrations in March ... CWF 70th celebrations in May ... Ern Tagg, aged 80, baptised in June ... Ian Whitelock invited for a further year's ministry for 1995 ... Evening service started ... Developing cooperation with Parkdale ... Edi Williams passed away ... Ian Hunt & family visited for missionary support focus, combined with Parkdale ... Many gone north chasing the sunshine.

ECHUCA (Arthur Symes) With deep regret we announce we had four funerals in the last two months. Condolences to the families ... Our pastor has been granted another 12 months with us before he leaves to take up a position in Tasmania ... Very blessed with newcomers in church. We pray we can be open to them to show love & let them know they are wanted.

PARKDALE (Keith Pitt) 17 families involved in Faith Comes by Hearing project ... Keith Pitt making good progress after spinal surgery ... Guest speakers have been Ann Nanscawen, Paul Bauer, Trevor Giles & Lynette Leach ... Conference President (Keith Milne) shared in a leaders' dedication service ... "Impact" participated in Youth Conference & State Youth Games ... Monday Moppets talent show successful ... 16 involved in Global March for Jesus.

BORONIA (Keith Milne, Andrew Henley, Andrew Ratcliffe) Planned Giving Plus program in cooperation with DMED led by Ron Brooker combined setting of goals & a fresh vision for church with financial side of church life, proved successful ... Olive Goodwin named a Paul Harris Fellow by Bayswater North Rotary for her life of service to others ... CYF attended & participated in Youth Conference & State Youth Games.

LATROBE TERR, GEELONG (David Jones) Evening services, at 6 pm, are appreciated by members, with Terrace Band contributing to program ... 80 present at family service with Ric the Magician using magic to illustrate bibli-

cal stories to rapt congregation ... Linda McGregor appointed chief pilot at Batchelor, NT ... Men conducted a CWF meeting, having Ian Westerland, with his guide dog, as guest speaker.

MILDURA (David Ratten, Neale Meredith, Doug Clark) David Ratten concludes ministry September. Mike Folland commences as senior minister February 95 ... Bruce Armstrong, Toowoomba, guest speaker at Sunraysia Conference (with Sgt Leon!) ... Church participated Awakening '94 March for Jesus ... Young adult group (males) spent weekend on Mt Arapiles ... Young adult group (females) spent fellowship weekend in Adelaide ... Old manse modified to create small groups meeting room—valuable asset church & community groups.

BENTLEIGH (Roy Armitage) Enjoyed visiting speakers once a month, Alan Niven (CCTC), Covenant Players, Peter Breen (CBMI), followed by fellowship "cuppa" ... "Sing n' Chat" monthly outreach activity numbers increased because of radio advertising, especially 3MP. Speakers from East Bentleigh Community Centre (help available) & Australian Animal Protection Society ... Celebrated first baptism for seven years ... Some members on holiday in Queensland, others have been in hospital.

PEEL ST, BALLARAT (Wayne Allen) Minister's resignation received with regret, to take effect from 29 January 1995 after three years of ministry ... Church's 125th anniversary a great success. Guest speaker former minister Harvey Clark ... 17 July speaker Trevor Giles from Dept of Community Care ... 24 July 7pm old time hymn service. Albert Graham speaking, Max White song lead ... All auxiliaries functioning to the glory of God.

SWAN HILL (Lindsay Mayes, Graeme Sonsle) Missionary emphasis over two Sundays during July with David Harmer (OMB) & Malcolm Knowles (Bible Society) as guest speakers ... Year of the Family featured on 24 July with combined 10.30 am service followed by church lunch & afternoon program of group discussion on family life in the areas of young parents, managing money, grandparenting & family abuse.

BENDIGO (John Sweetman) Joe & Joanne Nistico, missionaries home on furlough from Thailand, took all three services 19 June ... Five baptisms over recent weeks ... Missionary Committee preparing for second convention weekend in October ... Men's 18/90 Club held mid-year dinner with 28

**Bethesda Hospital
50th Anniversary**

As Bethesda Hospital, WA, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, **commemorative booklets** have been produced which outline something of Bethesda's history and the changes that have occurred within that history.

If you would like one of these booklets please contact The Chaplain, Jenni Ashton, Bethesda Hospital, 25 Queenslea Drive, Claremont WA 6010. Phone (09) 384 6311.

Church News

attending. Gavin Alexander speaker ... Church saddened at passing of Mrs Olive Comber. Sympathy to Wal & family ... Minister & family back from short holiday interstate.

Qld

BRIBIE ISLAND (Bruce Roberts) Church celebrated 19th anniversary 5 June with guest speaker Bruce Armstrong & Sergeant Leon & the Joytones. Cake cut by three foundation members Lan Edwards & Tom & Gwenda Davis ... CWF enjoyed many different meetings with picnic in park, orchid display, Margo Heyburn's lace place visit ... Welcomed Juanita Mutzelburg & Gwen Walmsley to musical team ... Indoor bowls Thursday nights popular with both young & old.

MAROOCHY (Geoff Risson) The transition from Maroochydore Church of Christ was made to Maroochy Church of Christ, North Buderim on the weekend 10 July when the first service was conducted in the new Child Care Centre by guest speaker Bob Smith, DCDE Director ... A farewell celebration dinner was held in the Primary School hall on 3 July with many of the church's original members present.

PINE RIVERS (Neale Proellocks, Wayne Kirk, Alan Hermann) Three new members welcomed recently ... 30 participated in Global March for Jesus ... Ladies fun

night out 16 July proved to be a tremendous evening of fun & fellowship. Highlight of evening was most unusual fashion parade before two very "nervous" judges ... 12 home groups now running ... Kym Holwerda guest artist at next Seeker service 31 July.

Tas

CAVESIDE (John & Colleen Harrison) June was "Faith Comes by Hearing" month ... Young people led service 12 June. First time "up front" for some. A great service ... Bill Howard gave insights into Bible Society work worldwide 19 June ... Home meeting held for CCTC. Team visit much appreciated ... Dot Byard (90 years) hospitalised in Launceston with broken hip ... YP participated in 40-Hour Famine.

LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, D. Tobler) Shanna Powell baptised by her grandfather C.J. Heier on 10 July ... Jeff Weston preached at 7 pm 10 July ... Work progressing well on transformation of our new premises. Cooperation of members, other churches & business firms heart-warming ... Nine members attended week-long conference at Hillsong, Sydney.

NUBEENA (C.G. Henderson) Jean & Tony Hobbs, WEC representatives of Geared for Growth, shared in home group ... Four students from CCTC shared in fellowship tea & meeting ... Once a week,

10 year-olds & over enjoy table tennis & board games ... Ministers & wives get together held at Ross on 16 July ... Tom Edge, Tas Convention President, spoke at am service 17 July ... Minister's mother passed away in Victoria.

SA

HENLEY BEACH (Robyn Walsh) 19 June Sunday School combined with church, cut out material hands, two banners, hands shape of cross & circle ... Sunday School fundraisers—Bibles for children in Russia (Bible Society) \$40, Food busters (World Vision) \$86 ... 3 July Sarah Baughan & Phillip Forster baptised. Family, relations & friends present. Christine (Sarah's mother), Sarah & Phillip welcomed into membership.

WA

KINGSLEY (Peter Clayton) Successful cake & craft stall by Doreen Howlett & helpers at Kingsley Wildflower Nursery in June ... Val Underhill left for Singapore again with OMF looking after children whilst parents study & prepare for missionary service ... Alan & Ivy Morris enjoying relaxed lifestyle. Last greetings from Tweed Heads ... Keith & Betty Povey currently caravanning around Australia ... Bill Gaunson guest speaker 26 June on "Where are the Deaf?"

DIANELLA (Tony Armstrong) Lynette Armstrong ill for several weeks, now recovering ... Good Dianella contending involved in Global March for Jesus ... Over 100 for lunch following 30th anniversary service on 3 July ... Ray Tinetti family home after four-month around Australia car trip ... Youth from Busselton joined Dianella youth for weekend camp ... Roy Knudson speaker at "young family" evening ... Special support for overseas missions during July.

SCARBOROUGH (Mike Halseby, Nigel Merrick) About 80 folk from fellowship participated in Global March for Jesus ... Church rejoices in baptisms of four young men ... Inter-church aid promotional dinner catered for by ladies, under the direction of Enid Tunzi ... Funds for youth group raised by Chinese meal at Hyatt Regency.

FREMANTLE (J. Caporn) On 26 June, Robert Fairman, a retired UC minister who frequently worships with us, told of the preaching tour he had made recently to several countries overseas ... That evening the annual Meal Service was held, the theme being "Remember When" ... Jenny Marshall reported on an-

nual meeting of OMB ... "Ask the Minister" questions considered at CWF meeting ... CWF visited Illawone & Joondanna Villages.

NSW

MAITLAND (R.N. Hawkins) The new building nearing completion. Hoping to occupy in August ... Creation Science program with Dr Swelling & Dr Batten great stuff ... Child dedication for Cathy & Phil Taylor thanking God for Nathaniel John ... Paul Grant gave musical feature in pm service ... John & Debbie Grant visited for Adelaide College of Ministries ... Alan Olsen spoke on a year in China as English teacher ... K. Pond slides of Guatemala.

LISMORE (Ian Phillips) Morning service taken by Corazon musical group ... Many members joined March for Jesus through Lismore ... Association of Civilian Widows attended morning service ... Delwyn, Craig & Cassie Willmot welcomed new baby, Stephanie ... Some of our people attended junior high camp ... New musical group formed for morning services ... Church saddened by deaths of Aaron Hoang & Basil Devine.

TAREE (Peter Wallis) Church recently celebrated 131st anniversary. Guest speaker David Mansell & local singing group provided fine entertainment. Ladies provided delicious meal Saturday night, well attended ... Church mourns passing of well-loved member Niki Puls. Memorial service held in chapel ... Bob Merry is making slow progress following an accident, Daphne Johnson is hoping to return home soon, Jack Harvey is making good progress.

TWEE HEADS (Richard Oakes) Church saddened at Richard's announcement that he will conclude ministry here from 2 October, after seven & half years ... Visiting speakers—Bill Addison en route to USA & further studies, Rod Foster, Qld Conference Secretary, & Steve Templeton, minister Byron Bay, with first couple to become Christians there who shared their story ... Bronwyn Love & Haydn announced engagement ... Several members overseas, three YP on exchange.

THORNLEIGH (Franklyn Elliott, Stuart Wesley) Over 60 from church took part in the Global March for Jesus on 25 June over the Harbour Bridge into the city of Sydney ... During am service 17 July Dianne Jones was interviewed by Franklyn Elliott in relation to her work as a paediatrician with the Slovenia Government in Central Europe & her service for the Lord with the Navigators.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES OF CHRIST OVERSEAS MISSION BOARD

Applications are invited for this position from persons with theological training, an interest in world mission and some accounting skills. We recognise interests and abilities can be developed.

The Assistant Director will share with the Executive Director and work under his guidance in the areas of Administration, Publicity, Deputation and Education. The financial accounting of the Board's funds will be a particular responsibility with backup from secretarial staff.

Salary will be as for South Australian ministers and a manse is available if required. The Board is located in Adelaide. A duty statement is available on request.

For further details or in making application please contact
The Executive Director, Mr Jeff May, 180a Gray Street,
Adelaide 5000. Phone (08) 212 4446.

Claiming the Ground

Launceston Relocates

A short service of praise, prayer and reading from Scripture on 4 July marked a significant occasion for the Launceston, Tas, church as the industrial building and land in Frederick St was claimed to be our new place of worship. The climax to the service occurred when up to 300 gathered in the empty building (after the 10 am service in the Margaret St building) and sang for the first time "Great is Thy Faithfulness".

Jim Harrison, a past member of the Board for over 40 years, gave a prayer of thanksgiving and dedicated the property to God's service. The elders also prayed for the members of the Building Committee, commissioning them with the responsibility of the redevelopment project.

The occasion saw old dreams becoming a reality and seeds for a new vision and fresh opportunities beginning to grow.

The Launceston church has a solid history which was built on the dream of its foundation members to proclaim the Good News to the people of Launceston and to provide a place of worship which closely resembled the New Testament church. Margaret St served the needs of the church for over 80 years, but the cramped seating in the chapel and the lack of parking facilities instigated the demand to relocate to new premises. The present church acknowledges the work of past members and intends to build on their dreams in providing a place of worship which will meet the needs of people living in the 21st Century.

The sense of God's leading was very evident from the time when he made the Frederick St property available to the church.

The sale of the Margaret St complex is part of God's planning and an answer to prayer for the Bible Salvation Assembly who purchased the property. Many who have strong ties with Margaret St are pleased to see that the chapel will remain a place of worship.

God has provided two fine young ministers who have committed themselves to the relocation program. Gratitude is expressed to senior minister, Craig Spaulding and youth minister, Darryl Tobler, who have shared the vision with the congregation, showing enthusiasm and maturity. The church appreciates the services of Jeff Weston who has been appointed to oversee the building program and, with his experience and wisdom, we are confident that the work will be completed on schedule. We wait in anticipation to worship in our new chapel before the end of the year.

—John Powell



• Claiming Launceston's ground

The Last Word

Hope is one of the principal springs that keep mankind in motion.

—Andrew Fuller

Dad, guess what? I can say please and thank you in Japanese? That's more than you ever learned to say in English.

★★★★★

A little learning is a dangerous thing. If you don't believe it, ask any child who has just brought home a bad report card.

★★★★★

As a practical joke, two students drew a donkey on the back of the coat of a friend. As the friend picked up his coat and looked at the picture, one of them said, "Is something wrong?"

"Nothing much," replied the friend with the coat. "Only I'd like to know which of you wiped his face on my coat?"

★★★★★

During a picture review of the story of baby Moses, the teacher asked a class of five-year-olds, "When sister Miriam came out from her hiding place, what did she ask the princess, who was holding the baby Moses?"

Bill's hand shot up, and the teacher called for his answer. It came in revised, modern language, "Do you want a baby-sitter?"

★★★★★

Why does lightning shock people? Because it doesn't know how to conduct itself.

★★★★★

"I think we've just had a puncture."

"How did that happen?"

"There was a fork in the road."

★★★★★

Noticed in an American church bulletin: "The Sunday sermon was titled "How to Test a Prophet", followed at noon by a blood pressure clinic."



"I'm in here—washing my hands."



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