

Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 100 No. 22, 13 December 1997

PRINT POST APPROVED PP349181/00418

Christmas

DO YOU THINK THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN JUST WATCHING SHEEP?

LIKE WHAT— WATCHING CATTLE?

HANG ON A SEC! WHAT'S THAT??

BE NOT AFRAID — I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY!...

DID YOU GET ALL THAT?

SURE DID! BETHLEHEM, HERE WE COME!

NOW, ALL WE'VE GOTTA DO IS SCOUR THE TOWN AND FIND A NEWBORN BABY, LYING IN A MANGER!

THAT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD!

HOW ABOUT HERE?

LOOKS PROMISING!

SORRY TO DROP IN ON YOU LIKE THIS, MA'AM, BUT WE'VE HEARD SOME PRETTY GOOD NEWS FROM ON HIGH TONIGHT!

IN A NUTSHELL: LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH BECAUSE UNTO US A SAVIOUR IS BORN — AND GUESS WHAT? IT'S YOUR LITTLE BABY BOY!!

WOW, THIS HAS BEEN SOME FANTASTIC NIGHT!

SOME DAYS, JUST BEING A SHEPHERD IS A PRETTY GOOD THING TO BE!

MOORE



THE AUSTRALIAN

Christian

NATIONAL JOURNAL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AUSTRALIA

Vol. 100 No. 22, 13 December 1997

Editor: Don Smith, Production Manager/Sub Editor: Nigel Pejram Issue 11 February Deadline 29 January; Issue 25 February Deadline 12 February; Issue 11 March Deadline 25 February. Address for All Correspondence PO Box 101, Essendon North 3041. Telephone (03) 9379 1219, Fax (03) 9379 0015, E-mail acedit@ozemail.com.au Member publication of the Australasian Religious Press Association. The Australian Christian is published by the Board of Management of The Australian Christian, a Department of the National Conference of Churches of Christ in Australia. Keith Aird, Chairman (SA); Lindsay Mott, Treasurer (VIC); John Batchler (Tas); Tom Glynn (NSW); Allen Smyth (WA). Printed by New Litho Pty Ltd, 63 Sunbury Crescent, Surrey Hills Vic 3127. Responsibility for electoral material is accepted by Don Smith, 2 Larkspur Ave, Doncaster 3108. This publication is indexed in the Australasian Religion Index. ISSN 0004-8852. Advertising Rates: Displayed: \$5.50 per column centimetre, Classified: \$14.00 for the first 25 words and 25c for each additional word.

Editorial

A Gift to Share

DON SMITH

This issue marks the last for 1997, the completion of 100 years of publication and, of course, the rapid approach of Christmas. In her article "A Polish Christmas" Wieslawa Naumiuk shares an experience of people far away from us, who have personally been through some of the momentous and troubled events of this century. * For all our readers we would hope your Christmas will be a happy one. But that is probably to expect too much given the realities of life. I am drawn to the Apostle Paul when I reflect upon the variability of life. Paul describes his inner life as possessing an "inextinguishable joy". This



experience flows from the Christmas message. It is the announcement to the Shepherds. It is the gift of Jesus. * Hans Lilje, pastor of a Berlin church, tells how he remembered Christmas 1944. He was in an SS prison. In his solitariness he thought of his family and was thankful for a nativity scene, the gift of one of his children. The prison Commandant, a humane man, had allowed a prisoner condemned to death to play his violin. The Christmas chorales filled the vaulted prison chambers. And then suddenly his number was called. Filled with fear, he was taken to another cell. Here he recognised a Count whose brother had already been executed after the attempt on Hitler's life. The Commandant arrived and the violinist was brought in. The Count had asked for communion and to make his confession. Lilje gathered his thoughts and spoke of the Light of the World amid the darkness and the inner joy of Christ's presence. Lilje parted from the Count with a warm handshake and blessing. When Lilje reached the corridor, the Commandant shook his hand twice, with an iron grip; he was deeply moved and said, "Thankyou! You cannot imagine what you have done for me this evening, in my sad and difficult daily work!" Shortly afterwards, the Count was sent to a concentration camp, and the violinist died at the hands of the Gestapo. * Our personal Christmas time will include some interstate grandchildren descending upon us. How different from the troubled state of an Alzheimer's sufferer or a memory of 1944. Whatever the situation, Christ's gift is "inextinguishable joy", a gift to share. *



Christmas

We look at different aspects of Christmas in four lands: Poland, Fiji, Sri Lanka and Australia.

<i>Polish Christmas</i>	10
<i>Saying Yes to God</i>	11
<i>The Virgin Birth</i>	12
<i>Christmas in Fiji</i>	13
<i>A World of Terror, Fear and Violence</i>	14
<i>Christmas Stamps</i>	15

News

<i>Leadership and Administration</i>	
<i>Diploma</i>	4
<i>Episodic Encounter</i>	5
<i>Reconciliation Representative</i>	5
<i>Death of John Wimber</i>	5
<i>Australians Discover Indonesia</i>	6
<i>Parliamentary Prayer</i>	7
<i>The Racial Debate</i>	8
<i>Perth Bible College</i>	9

Regulars

<i>Editorial</i>	2
<i>Media Matters</i>	17
<i>Pastoral Care</i>	16
<i>Snippets from History</i>	20
<i>The Last Word</i>	20
<i>Update</i>	3

Update

Dear Readers,

In reviewing our centenary year we see 1997 marked by strong positive comment from readers, a growing number of new subscribers, a most successful financial response from church and personal donors. Advertising income reached an all-time high. In addition, we were pleased to receive the "Most Improved" award from the Australasian Religious Press Association.

We thank the feature article writers and our regular contributors. It has been good to increase the number of contributors Australia-wide and introduce a growing number of women writers. Some ten volunteers contribute in various ways. Readers will be interested to learn that Helen Page, now of Moruya Heads, NSW, recently wrote and identified herself as the eight-year-old girl sitting third from the left in the front row of our cover picture in the

issue of 1 November. The photo was of the Hinrichsen Mission at Wagga in 1942. Helen said the photo evoked many memories of those days and the contribution she saw Hinrichsen making to the churches in later times.

We look forward to a brief respite in the coming weeks. There is much to do before we launch into the first issue of 1998 with close of copy on 29 January. In January you will be receiving your invoice for your 1998 subscription. We look forward to your continuing support. It is also our hope to stimulate your thinking and keep you informed on the many issues before the church.

Keith Aird, Board Chairman, and Nigel Pegram join me in wishing you the blessings of Christmas.

THE AUSTRALIAN **Christian**

SEND THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN TO-
 NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 _____ POSTCODE _____
 CHURCH _____ AMOUNT ENCLOSED:\$ _____

A GIFT FOR 1998 COSTS JUST \$32
 WE WILL SEND A GIFT CARD SAYING "THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN IS FROM"

PAYMENT CAN BE MADE BY BANKCARD, VISA OR MASTERCARD
 PLEASE CHARGE MY- BANKCARD VISA MASTERCARD
 NUMBER
 EXPIRY DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN PO BOX 101, ESSENDON NORTH 3041

A Christmas Gift that lasts all year



330-350 Frankston-Dandenong Road
 Seaford Vic 3198
 Phone (03) 9786 8679

Managed by
 Church of Christ
 Frankston

1- and 2-bedroom villas
 Motel-type lodge suites

Waiting list open

Leadership and Administration Diploma

New Diploma in Church Leadership and Administration offered from mid 1998

A Graduate Diploma in Church Leadership and Administration will be offered by the New South Wales Theological College (Wollongong campus) from mid 1998. The Diploma, accredited by the Sydney College of Divinity, will be a one year full-time and a two year part-time course. The course will act as a "refresher" in areas of Biblical studies and theology as well as covering practical ministry areas such as time management, goal setting and working in a team. Four-day and two-day modules will be taught at the Wollongong

Church of Christ, the first being the "Church in Australia" (Dr. Stewart Piggitt of Macquarie University), 18-19 June. Another unit, "Advanced Church Growth", will be taught by Colin Noyes 7-10 July. Each module will include mentoring sessions with Ted Keating, Senior Minister of the Wollongong Church of Christ. Negotiations are being held with Australian and Overseas Theological Institutions for those completing the Graduate Diploma to have advanced entry for various Master's programs.

Inquiries can be directed to Sue Walker, Ministry Centre Coordinator, or Ted Keating, (02) 4226 5022.



PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY WORKERS COMPENSATION DIRECTOR'S AND OFFICER'S LIABILITY

EQUIPMENT FAILURE HOME AND CONTENTS FIRE AND PERILS

DESTRUCTION CAUSING LOSS OF OFFERINGS GLASS BREAKAGE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST PROVIDENT FUND-NO. 1 FUND

announces the appointment
of
Rupert Taylor Insurance Consultant Pty. Ltd.
as
Insurance Consultant Coordinator

The purpose of this appointment is to raise funds by way of "commissions" on insurance transactions. All policies will be underwritten by QBE Insurance Limited, a wholly owned Australian underwriter, where the premiums and profits remain in Australia. QBE has branches in every capital city and many major country towns where a fast claims service is provided. All churches, conference committees and facilities, together with church members are invited to seek quotations *when you receive your next current renewal notice*. Simply telephone Rupert Taylor on the toll-free number, i.e.

1800 023 270

Rupert Taylor has been acting as insurance advisor to the Churches of Christ in NSW for over forty-five years and has been instrumental in raising well over \$1,000,000 in commissions that have gone into the Lord's work. Your insurance transactions can be of assistance to the Churches of Christ Provident Fund-No. 1 Fund. Accordingly we invite all ministers, church and conference officers as well as church members *who are not committed to other worthy causes* to seek professional advice on their insurance transactions from Rupert Taylor. By doing so you may save on premiums, you will keep your insurance premiums in Australia and you will assist the work of the Churches of Christ Provident Fund-No. 1 Fund.

Jim Ashley
Secretary

Nicole McGing
Office Manager

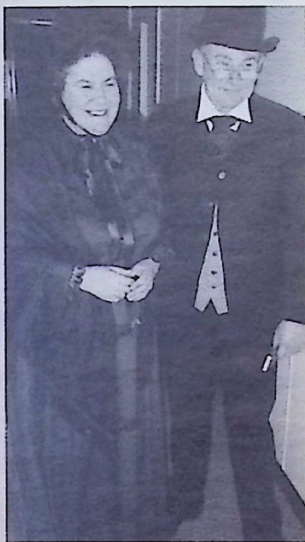
PUBLIC LIABILITY PRODUCTS LIABILITY VOLUNTARY WORKERS COVER BURGLARY MONEY LOSS

Episodic Encounter

One hundred and twenty years celebrated at Montrose, Vic

Harvey Clark, minister of Montrose, Vic, church and his wife Elizabeth dressed for the period 1877-1887 as part of the church's 120th Anniversary held 25-26 October. The story of the church was told in episodes from 1877-1997, with the narration prepared and presented by Janet Thompson. The church's history was interwoven with world events of the time.

At the Sunday service a time capsule containing children's messages was placed in the foyer wall to be opened in 30 years time. Greg Elsdon of CCTC Mulgrave was the speaker. Gordon Chandler, who is 90 years old and a grandson of one of the founding members, lit candles on a large cake to mark the occasion at a



special morning tea. Each of the events was crowded with past and present members.

Reconciliation Representative

Robert Leane serving on reconciliation task force

Robert Leane, the National President of Churches of Christ and a Churches of Christ representative to the National Council of Churches of Australia, is currently serving as chairman of the Council's Task force for a Just Reconciliation.

The Task Force comprises Aboriginal Christians from NSW, Qld, NT and Torres Strait Islanders and representatives from member churches.

The Task Force aims to assist indigenous people to achieve a reconciliation which recognises their equality with others.

The principle of negotiation is being stressed as a way forward where there are difficulties and differences between the negotiating parties.



Robert Leane

Death of John Wimber

Vineyard great dies

John Wimber of the Association of Vineyard Churches died 16 November of a brain haemorrhage. He was 63 years old. Wimber was well known in charismatic circles and travelled widely overseas, including Australia. He became an international conference speaker, author, worship songwriter and leader of the Vineyard movement, which has some 450 churches in the USA and 250 overseas. In 1996 Wimber severed connections with the Toronto Airport Vineyard congregation over theological differences and issues related to the "Toronto Blessing" phenomenon.

A call for a
Second Reformation
Seminars with **Bill Beckham**



If you are serious about releasing every member into ministry and evangelism through **cell church life**, then be sure not to miss these strategic cell church seminars planned throughout Australia in 1998.

SYDNEY, 9-12 February
DUBBO, 13-14 February
BRISBANE, 16-18 February
MELBOURNE, 20-21 February

Each Seminar includes ...

- A dynamic overview of the cell church model
- Why — the biblical context
- What — the structural nuts and bolts
- How — practical principles and steps

Howard Snyder has this to say:

"Drawing on extensive experience as missionary, church planter, pastor, and teacher, Bill Beckham's presentation combines biblical insights, historical and theological analysis, and practical common sense."

Phone (02) 9907 0953 or e-mail <info@rnc.org.au> for registration form. Early bird and group rates apply.

Australians Discover Indonesia

Report from study tour of Indonesia

Fifteen members of a study tour returned from an eleven-day visit to Indonesia hosted by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. The party was led by Caesar D'Mello, NCCA Victorian Secretary. The purpose of the tour was to increase our awareness of the Indonesian way of life, especially in regard to matters of faith, and to better understand one of Australia's closest neighbours.

Indonesia currently holds the fourth largest population in the world, with close to 200 million people, of which 110 million are on the island of Java.

The Republic of Indonesia contains 17,000 islands (half are inhabited) and 300 dialects.

Indonesia's population consists of approximately 90% Muslim, 10% Christian (6.5% Protestant and 3.5% Catholic), and 1% Buddhist and Hindu.

The total number of Indonesian Christians outweighs Australia's total population.

One of the keys to the Indonesian way of life is "unity in diversity", and this is particularly strong in matters based on religion, where atheists and communists are frowned upon. Religious tolerance is essential, where people of dif-

ferent faiths attempt to dialogue and understand something of the divinity of each other's faith.

Father Bono of the inter-faith dialogue group Interfidei assured us that as a Christian he is not forced to compromise his beliefs in an endeavour to acknowledge where somebody else is coming from. He is called to witness to Christ who is the centre of his life, and if a person accepts or rejects Christ as a result of Fr. Bono's witness it is their business. (Isn't that the task of us all, no matter what the context.)

The work of Interfidei encouraged me as I reflected on the Australian scene where specific denominations struggle to embrace other Christians, let alone those of other faiths.

Father Banawiratma highlighted the dangers of aggressive evangelism, which was a factor in recent riots, and the "Americanisation" of the church.

This highlighted another example of the church's arrogance in believing that Indonesians need to conform to the Western way of expressing their faith.

The church in Indonesia is flourishing in some areas, with congregations of upwards of ten thou-



Farming in the rice terraces in Indonesia

sand people not being abnormal (both Catholic and Protestant). With such huge numbers, pastoral care is being encouraged to be the domain of all, not just the ministers (sounds like the "priesthood of all believers", familiar to our movement).

The church needs to be seen to be building churches from the ground up, emphasising their solidarity and care of the poor, otherwise Christians are viewed as merely proclaiming words and failing to be active.

The Communion of Churches in Indonesia is educating young girls and women wanting to learn the

art of tailoring and hair-dressing (who cannot afford this education), to either find employment or begin their own business.

Two examples of the church in action was an effort to reach out to two small communities, enabling preschool education to take place, and the building of a community centre.

The church is alive and active in Indonesia, and still the hub of community life. We were somewhat silenced when a journalist asked us, "Do you still have those beautiful churches in Australia that are empty on Sundays?"

—Paul Bauer



**SWANSTON STREET
CHURCH OF CHRIST**
Melbourne
(cnr Swanston &
Little Lonsdale Streets)

Sunday

9.00 a.m. & 11.00 a.m.

Worship & Communion
Services
Gospel Celebration

7.00 p.m.

Wednesday

1.15-1.45 p.m.

Lunchtime Service

For further enquiries, please ring (03) 9663 3884

L. C. F. Higgins

7 The Parade
Norwood SA 5067
Phone (08) 8362 1665

- Accountancy Services
- Business Management
- Retirement Planning
- Taxation Returns



Chartered Accountant

**Strack
Removals**

Removals—Storage—
Packing—Pianos
All Suburbs—Country—
Interstate

David Strack
(Proprietor)

Office and Store
45 McIntosh Street
Airport West 3042
Telephone (03) 9370 3737
(03) 9330 2211
Fax (03) 9330 3039
AH (054) 27 0472

"Service since 1907"

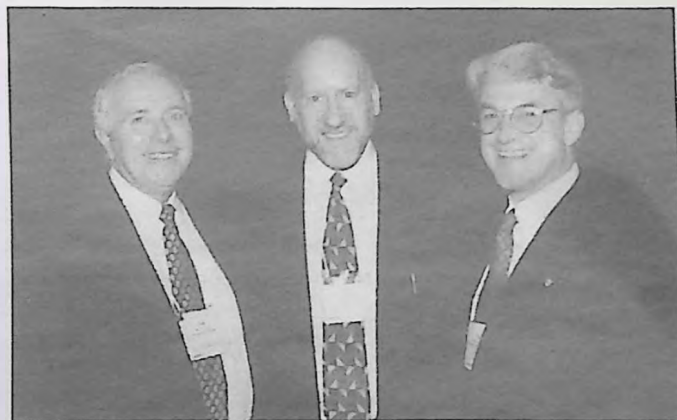
Parliamentary Prayer

1997 Parliamentary Christian Fellowship breakfast

The 12th National Prayer Breakfast in Canberra, organised by the Australian Parliamentary Christian Fellowship, had two parts. On Sunday evening 16 November members from Canberra churches joined Christian leaders from around the country in a service of praise and worship in the Great Hall of Parliament House. Worshipers included the Governor General, Sir William Deane, Government Ministers and Members from both Houses. Some 1,200 people were present. Worship was led by Russell Fragar and the Hillsong team. The speaker was Gordon Moyes of Wesley Mission, Sydney. He challenged Australian Christians to a commitment to biblical values and the ministry of reconciliation we have been given by Christ. His message was typically strident and inspirational. Several Mem-

bers of Parliament led in prayer concerning issues facing our nation and our world.

On Monday morning 17 November, 650 gathered for breakfast, a time of prayer around the tables, and a challenging address by Chuck Colson, a former aide of Richard Nixon. Colson encouraged us to consider that public virtue grows from private virtue. Recognising this, he said we need to proclaim the Christian faith as the answer to the needs of our nation, because it provides virtues to be good and to do good, is the basis of truth, justice and reconciliation, and provides protection for human rights. Colson, like Moyes, urged Christians to consider whether we let our culture interpret the Bible, or the Bible interpret our culture. That's a big, and important question! Among those involved up front were the



Stan Curtis, left, and Paul Cameron, right, of Doncaster Church of Christ, with John Forrest, centre

Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, and the Treasurer, Peter Costello. The Governor General, Sir William Deane, was also present at the breakfast. Following breakfast, participants broke into groups of about 50 for responses and reactions to the

input. The breakfast was an inspirational event. It also showed the number of people of positive faith and values who are active in public life. That is encouraging! Chairman of the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship is John Forrest, the Member for Mallee and a member of the Swan Hill Church of Christ, Vic. In his role as chairman he presented himself as a humble, warm leader with a positive, encouraging spirit.

—Paul Cameron

Templestowe Orchards Retirement Village

established by the Templestowe Baptist Church, is a resident-funded village with 44 independent-living units and 53 luxury fully-serviced apartments, offering mature residents the security, comfort, support and companionship of a caring environment.

Situated in an established residential area, we provide:

- * 24-hour staffing and emergency call system
- * respite care
- * quality personal care for all Village residents
- * dining room where freshly-prepared meals are served daily
- * mini bus for shopping trips and outings
- * regular social activities and entertainment
- * many other quality features.



Templestowe Orchards Retirement Village

107 Andersons Creek Road
Doncaster East Vic 3109.

Melway Ref: Map 34 E7

A ministry of Templestowe Baptist Church.

Telephone (03) 9842 8433 to arrange a visit or further information.

Open Invitation

The
Church of Christ
Orange

69 Burrendong Way (March Rd), Orange

30th Anniversary
14 & 15 March 1998

6.30 pm Saturday
dinner celebration
Special Guest—Mr Ray Hawkins

10.00 am Sunday morning
"A time of Worship"—Mr Ray Hawkins

The Church of Christ Orange
serving Christ in the community.

Phone (02) 6362 0878

The Racial Debate

Church participates in current debate

Politicians and church leaders joined forces to discuss "The Racial Debate in Australia", in a public meeting hosted recently by the Maylands Church of Christ, SA. Keynote speakers were the Hon Christopher Pyne, Federal Member for Sturt, and Dr Malcolm McArthur, Executive Officer of the South Australian Council of Churches.

The meeting, chaired by Richard Lawton, minister with the

Maylands church, was called as a contribution by the church to the debate, which has been dividing people in the Christian church as well as in the Australian community at large. The church wanted to provide a forum in which rational discussion could take place and in which a Christian viewpoint could be presented. Christopher Pyne spoke on why the debate had arisen and on some things that could be done about it. In the

course of his presentation, he very strongly opposed the public statements of Pauline Hanson, the Federal Member for Oxley. Malcolm McArthur gave a Christian overview of the debate, touching on our appropriate response to matters such as The Stolen Generation, Aboriginal land rights, refugees, immigration, multiculturalism and racial prejudice.

The meeting was advertised through fliers in letterboxes, in the local press and on radio. A number of people with no church connection attended the event, which was held in a good atmosphere, with no violence! The church has previously held public meetings on a Prostitution Bill and on a Euthanasia Bill when they were before the State Parliament. —Richard Lawton

Ministers and Church Leaders

Mark the dates for Dr LeRoy Lawson



"Your Church – Beyond 2000"

Seminars focussing on LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH HEALTH

- SYDNEY: Saturday 7 February, 9.00 am – 3.00 pm
Northside Community Church
Contact Bruce Armstrong (02) 9630 7533
- ADELAIDE: Saturday 14 February, 8.30 am – 2.00 pm
Marion Church of Christ
Contact Graham Agnew (08) 8277 7388
- MELBOURNE: Monday 16 February, 10.00 am – 2.30 pm
Doncaster Church of Christ
Contact Paul Cameron (03) 9848 1546

Sydney Adelaide Local Country

BEAR'S 

- Free quotes • Packing
- Insurance • Storage

7 Swift Way, Dandenong Vic 3175

Moving and Storage Pty Ltd.
Member of the VRTA

Twice weekly to Qld (03) 9706 5616

Visiting Canberra? Stay with a Church Family

A number of Canberra church families offer accommodation in their homes at basic bed and breakfast rates to help raise funds for "Home Mission" extensions in the ACT

If you would like to enjoy friendly "one of the family" hospitality in Canberra write for particulars to:

Lyn Swift 34 Yiman Street, Waramanga ACT 2611 Phone (062) 88 2050	Barbara Kennedy 6 Sharp Place, Melba ACT 2615 Phone (062) 58 1360
--	--

Advance bookings appreciated

Kingsford Church of Christ

Sydney

Wanted as Soon as Possible

An Associate Minister

for this multicultural church situated near the University of New South Wales.

The person appointed will be expected to study the cell church system we have recently adopted and to work with the present minister in establishing and developing that system. (Further information on request.)

Details of training, experience and interests to:

Honorary Secretary
399 Anzac Parade
Kingsford NSW 2032.
Telephone (02) 9663 2272.

You are invited
**1998 Summer Series at Seven
 Southern Community Church**
 New Worship and Community
 Centre,



SURVIVING THE MILLENIUM

SUNDAY JANUARY 4 AT 7.00PM
THE MILLENNIAL BUG

SUNDAY JANUARY 11 AT 7.00PM
DECODING THE X FILES

SUNDAY JANUARY 18 AT 7.00PM
GLOBAL WARNING?

SUNDAY JANUARY 25 AT 7.00PM
D DAY & THE BIBLE CODE

Gerald Rose. speaks of the of meaning the
 Apocalypse as we move towards 2000

8 Chesterville Rd. Cheltenham Vic.

Burleigh Heads Church of Christ

invites applications for the position of

Full-Time Pastor 1998

Burleigh Heads is situated in the centre of the City of Gold Coast, a major tourist destination with great potential for outreach ministry throughout the year. Membership approximately 140. The person we require will need to fulfil the following criteria:

- Experience in Churches of Christ ministry
- Age 35-50
- Marital status—married
- Bible college graduate (conservative evangelical).

This person will need to:

- Join in ministry with our eldership team
- Take pastoral care of the congregation
- Be strong in preaching, teaching and evangelism.

The Pastor will be backed by a strong oversight, able to assist in many aspects of ministry.

All applications will be treated as strictly confidential.

Please send your applications to:

Mrs Merryl Tree
 Secretary, Board of Officers
 43 Palm Beach Ave
 Palm Beach Qld 4221.
 Phone (07) 5534 2675.



Perth Bible College

Churches of Christ students in WA



Klara Fodor (Nollamara) received her Diploma in Christian Ministry from Max Rivett (Warwick) at the recent Perth Bible College Graduation. Klara and Andrea Jackson of Churches of Christ were two of seven students awarded the Diploma. Dr Alan Meers, Principal, acknowledged the support and input from Churches of Christ congregations and members. A course on Churches of Christ History and Witness is offered.

Full-Time Minister

We are a growing congregation of around 250 English-speaking Asians, with a children's ministry of 100.

We are looking for an experienced, born-again, evangelical minister with:

- formal theological training
- strong vision for growth and outreach
- ability to lead a strong lay ministry support team
- spiritual gifts in teaching.

Please forward your application to:
 The Pastoral Search Committee
 PO Box 29
 Glen Waverley Vic 3150.

Closing date 31.1.98

Initial enquiries can be directed to tel/fax (03) 9803 5409 or e-mail <jyklm@netspace.net.au> or <khmc@skynet.net.au>.

Christmas

Polish Christmas

WIESŁAWA NAUMIUK

When I think of Christmas, one of the images it brings to mind is of a warm room lit by candles and smelling of a Christmas tree. I can sense in the atmosphere the feeling of readiness and expectancy. The picture is completed by the sound of quietly falling snow outside the window, with carols being sung on the radio. In a moment, the whole family, smartly dressed, will be seated around the table—grandma, grandad, my brother with his wife and children, and my husband and myself, ready to eat the unforgettable Christmas Eve supper. This is the start of how we celebrate Christ's birth. *

There are twelve dishes, as many as there were apostles.

For my family, just like for many other families in Poland, Christmas is a holiday carefully preserved down the generations, so that its significance is kept alive. Much thought and care is put into the holiday. Like my grandmother and my mother, I clean every corner of the room, together with the windows, and the carpet is beaten. The children make decorations from straw and paper to hang on the Christmas tree. * We go shopping, looking for presents for our loved ones. These will be wrapped the day before Christmas and put under the tree. We send Christmas cards to those who will spend Christmas away from us. * On Christmas Eve everybody helps me prepare the Christmas Eve supper. My husband sets in place a beautiful Christmas tree, smelling of the forest. The children then decorate the tree. I lay

the table with a white tablecloth and my best old china *Roshental*, which we only use for special occasions. Finally the dishes, prepared according to old traditional recipes, are placed on the table. Before we eat, the oldest family member reads a passage from the Bible, we pray and sing a carol. *

Christmas, together with Easter, is one of the most widely celebrated holidays in Poland. The Christmas Eve supper, eaten the day before Christmas, is one of the most unusual meals we have. We sit down at the table at dusk, the minute the first star has been spotted by the children. Most people start the meal by breaking wafers together and giving each other Christmas greetings. It's a moving moment like no other, bringing back memories of those who are not able to be with us. *

At that moment all bad feelings towards other people are forgotten and we kiss and make peace with each other. There is an old custom that an empty chair and place is left for someone who is lonely or looking for shelter. There may be a knock at the door (but this happens only in the countryside now) bringing carol singers bearing large stars and singing carols which are inseparable from Polish music and culture. *

The dishes for this traditional supper are prepared throughout the day. Some things you can buy ready-made, but usually they are made from family recipes. There are twelve dishes—as many as there were apostles. There are always fish dishes prepared from different fish and also soup, either beetroot or mushroom soup. We drink a homemade fruit drink and eat *kutia*, a sweet dish made from poppy seeds, honey, wheat, raisins, nuts, almonds and figs, as well as gingerbread and



poppy-seed cake. During the remaining two days' holiday we eat plenty of rich food of our choice, but the Christmas Eve supper always remains the same, year in, year out. *

After supper there's the time that all the children have been waiting for, probably for a whole year! Present-opening time! Even the smallest gift is significant for it represents the love and friendship between people. The evening's atmosphere continues beyond midnight when the sounds of bells can be heard and churches are filled with people who, just like the shepherds, have come to greet the new-born Son of God. In Catholic churches, nativity sets are created showing the birth of Christ. Sometimes these include real animals, others carved from wood or made with straw. In Protestant churches the most important service is the Christmas Day morning service when we sing carols and greet each other proclaiming that the Saviour has been born. *

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas. *

Wiesława Naumiuk is a member of Warsaw Christian Fellowship (Church of Christ) and Head of Sunday School and Christian English Language School.

Christmas

Saying Yes to God

PAUL CAMERON

The story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, is amazing. Mysterious. Glorious. Because she said yes to God. *

On the day the angel Gabriel spoke to her, he must have been struck by how young she was. She was hardly old enough to bear a child. But he had been entrusted with a message for her. So he gave it. He told her that she was to have a child. And what this baby's name was to be. Who he was to be. And something of the mystery about to come upon her. "You mustn't be afraid, Mary," he said. *

She became the first person to accept Jesus on his terms.

Afraid! When he said it, Gabriel must've hoped Mary wouldn't notice that he himself was trembling. With fear! To think the whole future of creation now hung on the response of a girl! Which leaves us with a few questions. Like, "How?" How did this happen? How did Mary get pregnant? It doesn't seem like a normal sperm/ovum encounter deep within the recesses of Mary's body! Was it a blessed bending of the rules of betrothal? A poetic way of saying that no child can be born without the assistance of God's creative Holy Spirit? A supernatural, artificial insemination? More questions are asked than answers provided. *

That's the wonderfully mysterious thing about the Christian faith, from start to finish. It surprises us. It stretches us. If we're open to the possibility of God entering history and transcending nature's laws, if it's not too difficult to believe God raised Jesus

from the dead, surely we can accept God sent Jesus to earth via a special conception and birth. But maybe the answer to this "how" question isn't as important as the answer Mary needed to give to Gabriel. Or rather, to God. * That answer wasn't easy either. The angelic announcement brought Mary good news and bad news. Good news, because every Jewish girl is nurtured with the dream of becoming mother of Messiah. Bad news, because despite the sublime message, Mary has other things on her mind, mundane, yet profound things. "But I'm a virgin!". She also recalled the ancient stories she'd heard from her parents. Those tales clearly showed that people highly favoured by God do not live a life of unbroken happiness. She knew the history of her people. Failure! Exile! Suffering! Singing the Lord's song in strange places. And she knew before long the small-town thinking of her friends, neighbours, and family would break out. Lacking understanding (or faith?), there'd be accusations of promiscuity and her child's illegitimacy, and the possible loss of her betrothed. No wonder she was greatly troubled! She knew she faced nine months of awkward explanations. Who would believe ... ? *

But Mary's response was different. Although her parenthood was unplanned, she listened to the angel. She pondered on the repercussions of his message, and she responded. "I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said." *

In her matter-of-fact reply, Mary embraced the two edges of the work of God. Great joy and great pain. She became the first person to accept Jesus on his terms. Regardless of the cost. She said yes to shame and glory. *



Mary's submission is a beautiful thing. She was a woman of great character. And faith. Uniquely blessed by God, she received his favour. She became beautiful, because God chose her. Because she said yes. She forgot the world's most common prayer (your will be changed), and prayed the world's greatest prayer (your will be done). She said yes. *

Mary was a simple, unpretentious mortal. Someone with whom we can identify. Her actions nudge our self-centred lifestyle towards a more God-centred, faithful, obedient pathway. Towards beauty. Mary is a model of openness to the power of God. From Mary we learn about having the courage to say yes to God, when everyone and everything else are saying no, when his challenges seem as impossible and outrageous as the angel's news. *

Mary said yes to God. It was the habit of her life. Is it the habit of your life? Do you need to say yes to God about something? It'd be a great way to celebrate Christmas! *

Adapted from a sermon preached by Paul Cameron at Doncaster Community Church of Christ December 1996.

Christmas

The Virgin Birth

LEON MORRIS

Matthew and Luke both tell us that there was something distinctive about the way Jesus was born, namely that he did not have a human father. He was a very unusual person and God chose this very unusual way for his coming into this world. This is a unique feature of Christianity. Some religions of antiquity speak of unusual births, but they never have a virgin birth—they have stories of a divine person having sex with a human (generally a divine male copulating with a human woman). Matthew

Non-Christians think of Jesus as no more than just another man from antiquity.

and Luke tell us something very different. They are writing about a baby who was conceived without a human father. *

Matthew tells his readers that Joseph did not wish to make it public that Mary had become pregnant before their marriage had been consummated (which would mean that she would be an object of public disgrace). So he thought a quiet divorce might be a way out of it all. But God spoke to him in a dream assuring him that what had happened to Mary was the result of a divine activity. Luke's account is quite different and is obviously not dependent on Matthew's. But it makes it clear that the angel told Mary that she would have a son because the Holy Spirit would be at work to bring this about. Luke has a somewhat longer account than does Matthew. He tells us that God sent the

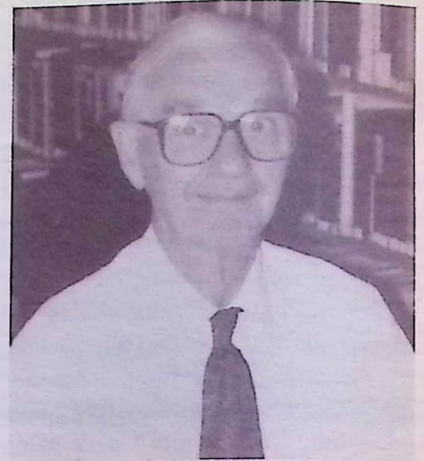
angel Gabriel to inform Mary of what was to happen. The angel told her that she would bear a son who would be called "the Son of God". *

Clearly this most unusual birth was something special in the working-out of the divine purpose. The New Testament account of the way Jesus was conceived makes it clear that he was no ordinary person. One who was to be conceived in the way he was to be conceived was clearly someone very special. Jesus was no less than "the Son of God" and his unusual manner of birth underlines this fact. He was born in the same way as all the rest of us are, but he was conceived without the activity of a human father. The virgin birth enshrines two important truths: the first is that Jesus came into the world as a baby in the way all the rest of us do, and the further truth that the manner in which he was conceived shows us that he was more than just another human being. He was indeed the very Son of God. *

It is important that we hold to both these truths. Non-Christians think of Jesus as no more than just another man from antiquity. But the virgin birth is not just another birth from ancient

The virgin birth enshrines two important truths.

times. It is unique. It is special. It emphasises the truth that the one who was born in this way is more than a man like other men. At the same time the fact that he was born in the same way as other men are born shows us that he was genuinely human. There are many stories from antiquity which tell of di-



vine personages as coming to this earth and doing wonderful things. They looked like men, we could say that they were disguised as men. But in fact they were not men. The stories were stories about deities. *

But the Bible does not tell us about another birth like the many normal births. It is telling us about something unique that God did, something wonderful. It is telling us that the love of God is so great that once, in the person of his son, he came to this earth to deal with the problem of human sin. The Son of God lived a life in many respects like the lives of other people, but with the important difference that he was without sin. And in the end, the one perfect man died on a cross to bring salvation to sinners who put their trust in him. *

The virgin birth underlines for us the truth that the Son who was born in this way was special. He was the very Son of God come to this earth to make the atonement that would bring salvation to sinners. *

Dr Leon Morris is an internationally-known biblical scholar and the author of numerous books. Dr Morris was previously Principal of Ridley College in Melbourne and is now retired.

Christmas

Christmas in Fiji

BARRY WARD

As I sit here at the end of October, I am writing on the day of the biggest Hindu Festival of the year, *Diwali* or the Festival of Lights. *

A warm, tropical breeze is blowing the smell of gunpowder from the endless exploding of crackers and skyrockets through my window and soon we must get ready to satisfy the many invites to drop by at our neighbours' homes and sample Indian sweets. The whole neighbourhood is a mass of colour, with

I took my family to see the Christmas lights ... Suva was like a ghost town

Christmas lights draped everywhere. Gifts are exchanged and relatives visited. Homes are cleaned out from top to bottom to attract the goodwill of the goddess Latchme, the giver of wealth, and pundits offer up prayers before small home altars and clay pots of burning oil. One home we will be visiting has a real air of Christmas about it with Christmas cards hanging on strings and a large "Merry Christmas" sign. Some of the excitement of Christmas I remember from my childhood seems to be present this *Diwali* day (with a little bit of Guy Fawkes night thrown in). * Distractions of the urgent, festivity, religious observances and gift-giving, the challenge of the myths and ancient gods of the Hindus, the pressure to buy beyond your means ... a whirl of thoughts arise this day as I ponder on Christmas in Fiji? Here, as in Australia, Christmas is often a package. The miracle of the Incarnation where God, knowing no boundaries, took on the

confines of a baby's skin, as Philip Yancey puts it, can become a little lost in the context in which he's presented. *

For many of our neighbours Christmas is just the Christian equivalent of *Diwali*, albeit a poor cousin. A less glamorous, quieter festival where much in the community stops but little activity starts. On Christmas eve last year I took my family to see the Christmas lights and to see what was going on in the capital. The lights were sparse and Suva was like a ghost town. From an Indian perspective, Christmas day would no doubt be noted for the drunkenness of many of its adherents and the increase in crime to fund the celebrations and gift giving. *

As I remember our celebrations last year the verse "My power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9) comes quickly to mind. Beneath our home in a predominantly Hindu and Muslim neighbourhood, a Fijian lady with albinism told the Christmas story in rough, simple, local Hindi. Her audience was a group of Indian men, sari'd women and numerous giggling kids. Very awkwardly dressed in what looked vaguely middle eastern, the children presented the stable scene. To my horror, in the middle of all this, someone had invited a workmate to surprise us in his Santa suit, complete with lollies for the kids. Somewhat symbolic of the uphill battle we have to present the meaning of Christmas, we invited the jolly Indian man with the white beard to park his reindeer and come on in. To bring some

The temptation is to try to compete with Diwali



evangelical purity to the occasion, I declared from the pulpit "that even Santa should hear of the hope of Christ this Christmas". *

So what are we to do this year? The temptation is to try to compete with *Diwali*, and have our little church present the loudest, most colourful, most extravagant presentation of the birth of Christ yet to hit the neighbourhood. In the words of Tim the Toolman, what we could need is more "power", "grunt", "megawatts". Temptation resisted, I reflect on the Christ, born of a peasant girl to a despised people in a backwater in a stable. No loudspeakers, no skyrockets, just reality, truth and unmatchable hope. *

This year, through an open air showing of the *Jesus* film, food parcels for poor families, invites to our neighbours to hear the Christmas story in Hindi and see it presented by the children, and by visiting homes and explaining what God has done, maybe Santa will fade away, the below-average quality of the festivities will be overlooked and the power and wisdom of the living God revealed? Pray for us ... *

Barry Ward and his family are serving in Fiji with the Churches of Christ Overseas Mission Board.

A World of Terror, Fear and Violence

PETER OVERTON

The face that you see in this photo is a child who lives in a different world to us, yet is part of the same world we live in. That world is one of terror, fear, violence, torture and homelessness. For nearly two decades Sri Lanka has been gripped by a bloody civil war that shows no signs of ending. The current generation does not know what it is like to live in a peaceful country. *

At one point our vehicle was kept for over twenty minutes with a machine gun pointed at us

Sri Lanka is an island the same size as Tasmania, where eighteen million people live. It is divided between the majority Sinhalese population and a minority Tamil population. Christians represent 7% of a predominantly Buddhist nation. *

I was in Sri Lanka as part of a pastoral team sponsored by Christian World Service (Christmas Bowl) at the invitation of the Churches of Sri Lanka. The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka requested this visit to enable church leaders to gain some understanding of the forgotten war in Sri Lanka and to see and feel some of their pain and struggle. It was a "stand with us" visit. *

I was representing Churches of Christ in my role as Conference President Elect for the Queensland Conference, and an Executive Member of the NCCA.

Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, John Bathersby, Anglican Archbishop of Perth, Peter Carnley, Rev'd Margaret Polkinghorne, Moderator of the Uniting Church Synod of South Australia, and Caesar D'Mello, Executive Officer for NCCA and Christian World Service, formed the rest of the team. *

While we were exposed to an intensive program, meeting a variety of people, by far the most emotional and instructive time was our journey to the Eastern Province to the town of Batticaloa. *

Along the way we saw deserted villages, empty bullet-ridden homes, shells of schools and

destroyed rice mills. We saw people living in primitive shelters without running water or sewerage. We were stopped at frequent army check points. At almost every checkpoint, we saw numerous buses which had been emptied for checking; their passengers including women and children, walked in the hot sun and waited at a point further up for their bus to come to them, but not before each one had been individually searched. At one point our vehicle was kept for over twenty minutes with a machine gun pointed at us from three or four metres away. We felt the anxiety and the real fear that is part of the peo-



ple's lives who live in this country. *

This appeared to be a country of no hope, but in the midst of this war, in Batticaloa, brave Christian people are making a fine contribution. There are many children who have no parents. Most of them have lost both of their parents in this war and many actually saw their parents die in brutal ways. However, they also represent a positive pocket of peace in a land that only knows war. The Methodist Church, with the support of other Christian churches provides a hostel for 86 girls from four years of age to twenty. They live in a secure environment, go to school, and are being cultivated into a different way of life. While they exhibit the pain of war, the Christian church is providing hope in the midst of this suffering. *

You can help make a difference in this imperfect world. Your gift to the Christmas Bowl will bring hope and peace to war-torn countries like Sri Lanka, to drought-stricken PNG, to famine victims in North Korea. Phone toll-free 1800 025 101 or send your donation in the Christmas Bowl envelope in this issue. *

While you fill your plate this Christmas make sure this bowl isn't empty.



Give to the Christmas Bowl

(Generously please)

CALL TOLL FREE 1800 025 101

OR USE THE REPLY PAID ENVELOPE AVAILABLE FROM YOUR PARISH.



THE CHRISTMAS BOWL

Your church is a member of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA

www.christmasbowl.com.au

CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER

Interview Christmas Stamps

KATHERINE SMITH

Every year, Australia Post alternates a religious and secular theme for its Christmas stamps. This year, the stamps depict a class of school children enacting the nativity story. The photographer for the series was Jacqui Henshaw. I asked her some questions about her work for the stamps. *

Jacqui, what does it feel like to have your photography in nearly every home in Australia, and beyond?

The "actors" were three very solemn little Asian boys, and I couldn't get them to smile for me.

We have had a baby this year, our first child. She'll be eight weeks old by Christmas, so in any other year, to have my work all over Australia would have been one of the highlights, for sure. But a new baby of our own rather overshadows career highlights. I am excited, though, to have an impact on the emotions of Australians through my work. I'm pleased that my images will give people a chance to feel happiness. This is my second stamp for Australia Post. My first was a photograph of two little boys sitting side by

side, embracing, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations. The commission for the Christmas photos arose from that piece of work. I am really pleased that both jobs have been a celebration of children. *

How did you find working with the children?

They were all quite shy at first. They treated me like any other school teacher. But they were of an age to really enjoy a bit of stirring, and I had them broken up with laughter after some gentle teasing. I had to teach them a little disrespect! *

Is there anything specific which stands out in your memory of the shoot?

I did the shoot at a primary school in inner suburban Melbourne, where there is a high proportion of students of Asian background. My brief was to capture the fun and spirit of a real class of children performing a nativity play. As it turned out, when I showed the images to Australia Post, all of the children pictured were Asian. Australia Post admired these images, but wanted to illustrate a "broader" distribution of ethnicity, including more Anglo kids, and I had to re-shoot. I was a little disappointed by that, as I felt that the product of the initial

shoot was "real", and alive. One image from the series was a depiction of the three kings, or Wise Men, who visited baby Jesus. The "actors" were three very solemn little Asian boys, and I couldn't get them to smile for me. One of the boys was named Elvis, and by teasingly calling him "King Elvis", I finally got a great reaction from the three boys: they cracked up, they really enjoyed that joke. Australia Post didn't go ahead with the resulting shot, but it was a beautiful image, and I think my own personal favourite. *

Did you get a sense of the children's strongest impression of Christmas?

These days, I think there is a lot made of the commercialism and apparent shallowness surrounding the Christmas season, but I was really pleased to see that schools are still making an effort to teach children the "real" story of Christmas. It's not necessarily taught from a religious point of view, but it is still important for kids to understand the story and its place in our culture. For impressionable little children, toys and presents and lights and bright colours can almost become Christmas. It's up to us adults to show them something different. *



Jacqui Henshaw

You mentioned earlier that you and your husband Keith have had a baby this year. Has this influenced your view of Christmas at all?

I think it has reinforced for us, and for our family, just how much Christmas is a celebration of life, and an affirmation of the love that families share for each other. It also confirms for me that new life is a miracle, and a mystery, which I think is a key message of the Christmas story. *

If you think about the Christmas story, of a newborn baby lying in a feeding trough, in a backyard stable, what is it, do you think, that is so powerful about that story?

I think that the poverty of Jesus, and Mary and Joseph, is the key to the story. It's powerful because it is about a person who doesn't have much, being able to give so much. *

Katherine notes that Jacqui is her sister-in-law and daughter-in-law of the Editor. Jacqui is a professional photographer based in Melbourne.



LANGFORD

CONSTRUCTIONS

Specialists in
RBP Restorations & Extensions
(03)9888 6458
12 Albert Street, Surrey Hills Vic 3127
or **0412 276 170**

Reg. Building Pract. DB-LI2054



National Philatelic Collection, Australia Post

CAROL PRESTON



WEDDINGS

LEACH-TUNKS Rob and Thelma are pleased to announce that the marriage of their son Wayne to Katie, daughter of Russell and Roslyn, will take place at Christ Church Queanbeyan on Saturday, 10 January 1998 at 3.00 pm.

WARING-COOPER Lara and Brett will be married at the Church of Christ, Albury, NSW, on 17 January 1998 at 3.00 pm.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

HOLMES-JOHNSEN Ron and Shirley married 17.1.48 at Cottesloe, WA, E.R. Sherman officiating. Present address 8/22 Marden Road, Marden SA 5070. (Four sons, eight grandchildren.)

DEATHS

CRACKNELL, John (Bill) Frederick (15.11.11-26.11.97) Loved husband of Emily (Em) and loving father (Dad) and father-in-law of Helen and Trevor, Margaret and Norman, John and Wendy, Lesley and Owen. Pa of twelve grandchildren and GreatPa of eleven great-grandchildren. "At peace in God's garden."

GILMORE, Joy suddenly at Gosford on 22 November. Loved wife of Neil. Loving mother of John, Kate, David, Elizabeth, Andrew and loving mother-in-law of Robyn, Jennifer, Peter and Catriona. Grandma to Joseph, Molly, Celmentine, Jemima. "We are confident."

GONINON, Edgar Kitchener (6.8.17-30.10.97) Wife (dec) 1989. Loved father of Robyn, Ray, Heather, Pamela, Carol. Brother of Rose, Douglas (dec Alf, Tobruk), Hazel, Geoffrey. Loved and admired member, Church of Christ, Fairfield, NSW, and his art and photographic friends, Australia wide. Famous for two paintings hung in Archibald Prize exhibition. Numerous awards, both in Australia and overseas. Designs on covers of photographic magazines, art decoration in shop windows in

Mudgee, McDowells of Sydney City and window dresser for seven Downes Men's Stores in Sydney. President and lecturer for several art societies, helping many young and older aspiring painters and photographers. Latterly doing posters for the Fairfield church, requiring change every few weeks. Merrylands church received help in this way. He had his drivers licence renewed on his 81st birthday, but cancer took him within 3 months. We give thanks for his many talents and so did he.

HOLIDAYS

BELAIR Overlooking the Adelaide lights. Uniting Church owned self-contained units for hire. Phone Nunyara (08) 8278 1673.

HERVEY BAY, POINT VERNON Whale watch or explore magical Fraser Island. Premier holiday position. New 3BR house, lock-up garage. All modern cons, has everything. Fully furnished, carpets, colour TV, washing machine, dryer, microwave. Short stroll to Bay, boat ramps, shops and parks. Bookings phone (02) 9790 3710.

HOUSEBOAT "White Heron" 8-berth. Moored at Blanchetown, SA. Phone (08) 8365 1153 or (08) 8540 5250 or write 7 Gameau Rd, Paradise 5075.

McCRAE, Vic Morning Glory bed & breakfast. Enjoy traditional B&B hospitality in a peaceful setting on the Mornington Peninsula. Bay views. Phone Tom & Julie Ede (03) 5986 8744. Also suitable venue for small-group day seminars.

SUNSHINE COAST, CALOUNDRA, QUEENSLAND Two bedroom holiday unit for rent. Ground floor, lockup garage, pool, short walk to shops and beaches. Phone Trevor or Gayle on (08) 8339 2198.

VICTOR HARBOR AND PORT ELLIOT SOUTH AUSTRALIA Uniting Church 2 and 3 bedroom self-contained units available for hire. Phone (08) 8552 1657.

As we approach Christmas this year I'm aware of the struggle people have around relationships. Who will we have lunch with? How will I cope with that difficult relative? How will I deal with the pain of missing those who are not there? How can I enjoy Christmas when it reminds me of such hurtful interactions from the past? How can I bear the joy of others when I'm so lonely? How can we enjoy

Those who love us are gifts beyond any material gift.

Christmas when there is no money for gifts? *

It would be wonderful to think that Christmas could be a time when love reigns and we can all focus on the love of God shown to us in Christ. But in reality, our blessings are often mixed with pain and for many Christmas is a reminder of the distorted, unloving nature of human beings, rather than the perfect, loving nature of God. *

For those of us with loving relationships Christmas will be a time of joy. We can also make it a time to be grateful for the immense blessing we have in those relationships. Those who love us are gifts beyond any material gift. Our times together are treasures much greater than anything we could buy. The greatest gift we can give to those we love is to continue to

invest in our relationship with time, care, support and genuine interest. Sometimes this costs us more than material gifts, demands more of us, requires more thought and sacrifice, but ultimately is worth whatever it cost, just as is our relationship with Jesus Christ. Isn't this a true image of love come to earth? Isn't this the best way to celebrate Christmas? *

It may be that there is someone near you who will struggle through Christmas feeling lonely, hurt, or grieved. I pray that those of us who are blessed will notice these people and invite them into our places of love and joy, to share with them our gifts of love, and perhaps give them understanding and hope for what is possible, even in the midst of a world where pain and suffering is very present. *

As we move into the new year, let us think about the relationships that are part of our lives. How do we nurture them? How do we mend the broken ones? How do we invest in them so that they become fully the gifts of love that we all need? This will be my focus for 1998. For this time of Christmas I pray the love of God will be born again in your relationships and that you will be able to truly give thanks.. *

Toowoomba's Quietest caravan park—(076) 35 1747

GARDEN CITY CARAVAN PARK

Elser St, Toowoomba

- En suite cabins
- Overnight vans
- Powered & en suite powered sites
- Swimming pool & free BBQs



DIAL FOR NEW HOPE
(03) 9877 9191

The Church, Churchmen and CDs

VINEY LONGTHORP

There are always many parts of the media which can be relied upon to contribute significantly to our enjoyment of reflection and music. The following "consumer durables" will enhance the wider dimensions of the spirit of Christmas. *

On the occasion of the launch of the biography, *Alan Walker—Conscience of the Nation*, Mr Bill

It contains just about everything you need to know about the church

Hayden, a former Governor General and a self-confessed atheist, "dipped his lid" to the subject of the book, Sir Alan Walker. Mr Hayden went on to refer to him as a "living national treasure". Dr Don Wright of Newcastle University has written this book. He has done a sterling job recording the life of a sterling subject. *

Alan Walker has contributed mightily to our nation's welfare in so many ways. A Methodist minister (now the Uniting Church of Australia) he was for twenty years (1958–1978) superintendent of the Sydney Central Methodist Mission. In those years he also became well known as the leader of the "Mission to the Nation". He combined a passion for evangelism with a keen sense of social justice. He was, for instance, a founder of Lifeline. He opposed the White Australia Policy in 1938. During the Second World War he showed great courage as an outspoken pacifist. He re-

sisted steadfastly the cold-war intimidation of the 1950s. Later he defended young Australians against conscription in the Vietnam War. *

The book is not only an inspiring read, it is also a most interesting overview of the relationships between the churches and the state during the past sixty years. It will give many fresh heart in these days when the churches are called upon to give leadership to the community in the face of those economic and social policies which are causing so much alienation, need and widespread distress in our communities. *

The third edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* has just been published. It contains just about everything you need to know about the church—its life, faith, doctrines, personages, its turbulent history and its many changes during the two millennia of its existence. *

I can do no better than to quote from James Murray of *The Australian*: "The editors ... do not view the Christian church as of purely antique interest. They have insisted that its contemporary self, though under siege, side-lined and fragile in many places, is still an institution to be reckoned with. But they have avoided partisanship—they inform without dic-

tating attitudes, and report without interpretation." Thus many movements and issues which now enliven Christian traditions are explored: feminist theology, homosexuality, the upheavals following Vatican 2, abortion—these and many others are among the entries. *

Thanks to my indulgent bookseller, I spent a couple of hours examining this vast tome, sampling many entries in its 1700 pages. So when James Murray called it "an invaluable book" and that it will "prove a saviour from contemporary ignorance", I felt I knew what he meant. The price? At RRP \$180 it may make some sell their Telstra shares, but it is worth it. Of course, our theological colleges will own a copy, but could not budgets or benefactors in our local churches make a copy available in the church library or in the minister's study? *

And now, anyone for music? A mail order service Classics Direct (fax (02) 9905 9470 or phone (02) 9905 9546) has on offer a large number of titles of top quality CDs from some mainline companies. Many would also be available from select music stores. Here are a few highly recommended. *

Noel: Christmas At Kings (Decca 2 CD set: 444 848). Sir David Willcocks conducts the Choir of King's College Cambridge. The



set contains thirty-six favourites including, "Away in a Manger," "O Come all ye Faithful", "In the Bleak Midwinter". *

Bryn Terfel Sings Handel Arias (Deutsche Grammophon CD 453 480). Here is the glorious voice of the Welsh bass-baritone singing with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra: "The Dettingen Te Deum", "Alexander's Feast", "Judas Maccabaeus" and nine others. *

Creator of the Stars (Archiv Produktion CD 449 819). This is Christmas music from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. These are the beautiful vocal sounds of faith from the "Ages of Faith." Music by Praetorius, Orlando de Lassus, William Byrd, and others. Take your musical courage in both hands and enjoy a whole new experience in sound. *

Then, to relax in another mode (or should that be mood?) consider *Viennese Night* (Dutton CD SJB 1010) Sir John Barbirolli conducts the Halle Orchestra in performances of among other gems, "Die Fledermaus Overture", "Tales from the Vienna Woods", "The Radetzky March" and "Pizzicato Polka". *

So, for all of us, we would hope, that the many gifts we receive at this Season, are both a symbol and a reminder of God's one, supreme gift. *

Bethel Funerals

The Caring Australian Alternative



A unique Christian funeral company supporting the work of missions

24-hour, 7-day service

Pre-arranged and pre-paid funerals

(03) 9877 9900 (all hours) fax (03) 9877 0544

107 Koonung Road, Blackburn Vic 3130

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words **BLACKEBY, W.E. (Bill)**

(Aged 87 years) Following schooling in Adelaide, Bill joined his father's confectionary business in the Market, succeeding him in the 1930s until he retired in the 1970s. He served the Grote St church in the offices of deacon, elder, board chairman and superintendent of Bible School. In addition, served in positions of civic responsibility suited to his leadership gifts. His generosity and sense of humour were proverbial. Married in 1935 to Eileen (nee Downs) they celebrated their Silver, Golden and Diamond Wedding Anniversaries. The church commends their six children, sixteen grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren in their loss. H. Long and J. Main led a service 14.11.97. —H. Long

GILMORE, Joy

(22.11.97) A lifetime of love of family, interest in people and commitment in ministry came to an end when Joy died unexpectedly. Joy and Neil formed a strong and loving partnership. She loved her children John, Kate, David, Elizabeth and Andrew, their spouses and her grandchildren. Over a period

of 43 years she and Neil served churches in Victoria, Queensland and the ACT. Her gifts were with people, hospitality, creativity and prayer. At the thanksgiving services, family and friends expressed their appreciation for her love, compassion, energy and strength. She will be greatly missed and died a woman of faith and courage. This was highlighted in her final words to her family when she interrupted a prayer to affirm "I am confident".

SAVILL, Betty

(13.11.97) Born Elizabeth Coulter, Glasgow, Scotland, third of five children. Pursued nursing career and migrated to Australia, through Victorian Nursing Council. While nursing in Winton, Qld, Betty met and married Bob Savill. Family has lived in Tullamarine, Vic, since mid 1960s. Betty had career in nursing and midwifery, was highly active in school Mothers' Club and serving Meals on Wheels. Loved people, reading, spoke up for various issues when required. Highly active in North Essendon church, in catering, CWF, Board and other areas. Survived by Bob, and children: Mary, Jenny and Paul, and grandchildren: Erin, David, Molly, Annika, Callum, Laura, Megan and Nathan. —ME

BAPTISMS

•Kathryn Anderson, Alison Herd, Knoxfield, Vic •Frank Rade Macher, Kay Rade Macher, Bundamba, Qld •Bruce Stocks, Jared Stocks, David Cox, Stephen and Michelle King, Launceston, Tas •Narelle Williams, Red Cliffs, Vic

MARRIAGES

•Lisa Westrup and Warren Jackson, Knoxfield, Vic

DEATHS

•Neil Gilbert, Knoxfield, Vic •Sylvia Bytheway, Tweed Heads-Coolangatta, NSW •Betty Savill, North Essendon, Vic •Margaret Hensgen, May Williams, Red Cliffs, Vic.

VIC

KNOXFIELD (Malcolm Gray, Elaine McLeod, Jason McCheyne) Following on from our theme "Let us go on", our medium-term goal is to obtain a full-time youth minister when resources become available ... Elaine McLeod has accepted a further one-year term as pastoral minister & is busy expanding carer's network ... Shane Anderson reported on his missionary journey to India ... Jill & Malcolm Gray to lead camp at Banksia during January.

BORONIA (Keith Milne, Simon Risson, Bruce Moore) Annual meeting received reports from ministers, secretary & auxiliaries, which show work is continu-

ing well. Elections resulted in new elder Adrian Wilson & new deacon Helen Fife ... Simon Risson graduated from CCTC & ordained at ordination service. Simon & family move to Mildura ... Keith Milne rejoined ministry Division of Vic-Tas Conference ... Board members attended "Unleashing the Church" seminar.

KANIVA (Paul Bauer) Children gave excellent performance on theme, "Come out, dance & shout" at combined Sunday School anniversary ... Rex & Lois Williams regretfully farewelled prior to their move to Aldinga Beach, SA ... CWF staged concert on "Christmas in other lands" ... Combined Sunday School children helped in Tidy Towns rubbish clearance ... 3 members spoke at special testimony service ... Several members recently hospitalised for major surgery.

NORTHCOTE (Rod Brown) Church has appreciated interim ministry of Rod & Lois Brown this year. They have been helpful as church looked for a new minister ... Meetings have been held with representatives of Ivanhoe church, commencing early 1998 Mavis Ulrich will minister with both churches.

NORTH ESSENDON (Mike Esbensen) Visits from Keilor Road & Mount Road Uniting Churches followed by morning tea ... Church saddened by death of Betty Savill on 13 November after long illness ... "Jellybugs" came to playgroup. Successful evening with over 80 families attending ... Social afternoon & meal for showbag packers from various churches on 23 November.

MAIDSTONE (A. McMillan) Congratulations Roll Colwell 80 & Cheryl McMillan 21 ... Another garage sale. Proceeds towards fencing ... Thank offering to be used to re-cement front of church ... Ross Freiberg visited. Told of African visit. David Vinicombe of Bible League also visited ... Andrew involved in Melbourne Gospel Radio as presenter. Also on committee of management.

RED CLIFFS Church looking forward to part-time ministry with Ian & Cynthia Hunt in 1998 ... AGM held.

Mornington Church of Christ

Christmas Church Services

Come and join us for our special Christmas services on 14, 21 and 25 December.

We meet in the Mornington Secondary College, Nepean Hwy, near Bungower Rd.

All services commence 10.00 am, except Christmas day, which commences at 9.30 am.

Preacher at all services Allan Avery.

Congregational Christmas Dinner

Sunday 21 December, 12.00 noon.

Cost \$5.00. Family \$15.00.

Opportunity Shop

Visit our op-shop at 90 Wilsons Rd for Christmas specials.

Christmas Cards

Hand made Christmas cards from Lianne Avery, 1 Smeaton Court, Frankston Vic 3199. Phone (03) 5971 1786.

Farewell to Keith Milne

10.00 am

Sunday 1 February 1998.

Boronia Church of Christ
(59 Boronia Rd)

followed by a

Luncheon (\$5.00 per head)

RSVP—L. Wardle

(03) 9723 8861

Church News

Secretary Christine Cook. Newly-elected to Board are Arthur & Mark McWilliams, Dale Stewart & Elizabeth Milne. Lindsay Chislett retired after serving many years. Jack Cook elder emeritus ... Care & Share preparing Christmas hampers for residents of Sunraysia Hostel for the Elderly at their Christmas meeting.

QLD

BUNDAMBA (Rod Foster) Church has called first full-time minister, David Horne to commence in January ... Harvest Festival held. Produce given to Kenmore students ... Thanksgiving offering raised nearly \$3,000 ... Babies Jarrod Christian & Timothy Rademacher dedicated recently ... Young people went on weekend camp.

SA

DULWICH-ROSE PARK UNITED PARISH (Garry Harris, Tricia Spargo) Recent visitors were Ian Corlett, Associate State Minister, Dr Don Hoggood, former MP & now SA Moderator of Uniting Church ... In an early pre-Christmas carols night our adult & youth choirs were joined by those of St Peter Claver (Catholic) & St Theodore (Anglican) churches

STRATHALBYN (Paul Smalley) Kid's Club Wednesdays after school well attended ... Robert Patterson elected elder ... Cottage night service, Simon Patterson played guitar ... Sick people, Pam Garwood, Alec Keast, Isobel Marwick. Esther Lewis (nine months) had operation ... Family video *Matilda* raised \$65 for Bible society ... Circuit working well. Milang 9.39 am, Strathalbyn 11.00 am ... Combined CWF Christmas lunch at Edwards' in 40° heat.

TAS

CAVESIDE (John & Colleen Harrison) Members involved in Deloraine Impact World Tour events ... Church formulating mission statement & seeking direction for the future ... Members

joined in annual "Blessing of the Plough" ... Caveside hosted combined churches evening worship. Rev N. Grandin of UCA speaker .. Young adults bonfire held 7 November ... Keith How home after 10 weeks in hospital following stroke ... J. & C. Harrison concluding 9½ year part-time ministry in April 1998.

LAUNCESTON (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison, T. Gray) Emily O'Keefe appointed evening radio host on 7LA with

her own program ... 3 baptisms on 23 November & on 30 November a married couple were baptised & their baby Ashlin Elizabeth was dedicated ... Auxiliaries holding break-ups for the year ... 3 Pioneers of Girls Brigade received their Pioneer pins.

NSW

TWEED HEADS-COOLANGATTA (Bruce Warwick) Randy Edwards

visiting speaker ... John Dean home from Vietnam ... "Taking the fright out of Sharing Jesus", special seminar with Wes Fittell ... George Mathieson visited ... \$4,000 sent to OMB, \$2,500 for "Church on the Rocks" in India, \$1,000 support for orphans in deaf ministries in Philippines & \$500 to OMB ... Sylvia Bytheway passed away ... Church praises God for ministry of Bruce & Cheryl & elders & wives.

COCOA brings HOPE



to young children just like these at Shrigonda Girls Home, INDIA.

Some of these girls are orphans with no one to care for them or to love them.

We believe God loves them, so we help to provide a loving home where they can experience God's love.

**Will you become a partner in this vital work?
Help spread HOPE though a gift to COCOA.**

Name:

Address:

.....Postcode

Amount: \$

Please charge my: Bankcard Visa MasterCard

Expiry Date:

Signature

Post to: Churches of Christ Overseas Aid
180a Gray St, ADELAIDE SA 5000.

Snippets from History Stephen Cheek

GORDON STIRLING

Stephen Cheek is one of our heroes. Although dead from typhoid at 31 he had already been a successful evangelist in Tasmania and Victoria and had launched Churches of Christ in Queensland. *

A Mr F.W. Troy had travelled from Toowoomba to the 1882 Victorian Conference to request an evangelist for Queensland, but without success. However at the meetings he met Stephen Cheek and prevailed on him to go to Queensland, arriving in July of that year. *

A few German Baptists and a few English Baptists had commenced an undenominational church at Zillmere. Stephen Cheek was invited to address them on 1 August 1882. This date is marked as the beginning of Queensland Churches of Christ because after that address the small group decided to conduct their church on New Testament principles and to meet weekly for the Lord's Supper. *

Stephen and F.W. Troy moved on to Rosewood, commencing a church there, and then on to Toowoomba, where he was invited to preach at the Baptist church. To support his message he produced a chart of the plan of salvation, but was not permitted to use it for such an innovation was considered to be a "golden calf". *

After Toowoomba they went to Warwick where Stephen's preaching brought great crowds, much to the chagrin of the local clergy. The Anglican priest published a lecture on baptism which Stephen replied to



publicly. The next day the priest accosted him in the street with a whip shouting for all to hear that he would have used it had he not been in "holy orders". *

Stephen Cheek wrote an article for the local paper entitled, "A Whip in Holy Orders", but withdrew it when the priest apologised. *

Within days, on 17 February 1883, typhoid fever had taken the young evangelist. In six and a half months he had established three churches and was working on a fourth. On the first anniversary of his death grateful friends erected an obelisk over his grave reading, "Erected in loving remembrance by Christian brethren in Australia". It carries a homespun poem:

*Away from his home and the friends of his youth,
He hasted; the herald of mercy and truth,
For the love of his Lord, and to seek for the lost;
And he fell like a soldier: he died at his post. **

Introduce Your Friends to an Australian Christian



We would be happy to send them three issues on a trial basis. Simply fill in their details below (with their permission) and send this form to, The Australian Christian, PO Box 101, North Essendon Vic 3041.

Name

Address

Postcode

The Last Word

I once saw an epigram which said, "Those who know the least, often assume the most."

—Philip Black, Wineskins

Merry Christmas, sir. I'm the one who empties your dustbin. Merry Christmas to you. I'm the one who fills it.

At Christmas I bought my son a train set for me to play with.

Christmas is the time when you buy this year's presents with next year's money.

A holiday is something that turns someone who's tired into someone who's exhausted.

Two little ants were racing as fast as they could across the top of a cornflake box.

"Hey!" puffed one ant. "What are we running so fast for?"

"Can't you read?" said the other, "It says right here: 'Tear across the dotted line!'"

In Ireland an institution of higher learning is any school with a second floor.

"Well, did they like your after dinner speech?"

"Rather! When I sat down, everybody said it was the best thing I'd ever done."

I went on holiday to forget everything. And when I opened my suitcase, I found I had.



"Hey Abdul! Mind if I have a quick peek at the map?!"