

*“So Philip ... explained the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to a place where there was some water. The official said, ‘Look! Here’s some water. Why can’t I be baptised?’ He ordered the **BAPTISM** chariot to stop. Then they both went down into the water, and Philip baptised him. After they had come out of the water, the Lord’s Spirit took Philip away. The official never saw him again, but was very happy as he went on his way.” Acts 8:35–39 CEV*



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Editorial

Celebrating Baptism

DON SMITH

Controversy and debate were often central to our presentation of baptism of believers by immersion in our earlier history. Today we are far less polemic on this issue. We have been joined by new and fast-growing groups who share with us our advocacy about what we believe was the New Testament practice of baptism of believers by immersion. * It is important that we uphold the significance of the experience of baptism and its fundamental contribution to a regenerate church membership. Baptism must continue to be celebrated in our midst.



In 1964 I heard the late Lesslie Newbigin, who had spent much of his life as a missionary in India, reflect on the church of the 60s. Here were the beginnings of a period when the church was entering a time of uncertainty about its priorities and the very nature of the Gospel. * Newbigin, as a world mission administrator and strategist, observed that many mission societies were happy to count everything except baptisms. Medical treatments, school enrolments, agricultural projects and the like could all be counted and joyfully reported. But all was silence about baptisms and conversions! * The celebration of baptisms must be at the heart of our life. The latest Federal Aborigines Board's newsletter reports 85 baptisms in the Pilbara region. Avon Moyle, the Executive Director, describes how school teachers with a Christian background working in the area had to sign an agreement that they would not teach Christianity, such was the antipathy to the Gospel. * Now the agreement has been rewritten. New converts are eager for teaching. We celebrate with our indigenous people in their baptism and new life in Christ. * Each time I add a name to the list in this paper reporting on baptisms from among churches throughout our nation, I am quietly thankful and reflective about a new believer setting out on a journey. * I hope we shall continue to count our baptisms and rejoice in them. Where there are none we mostly have a problem! Take a moment now to recall your own baptism and the good people around you at that time. Give thanks for that experience. Reaffirm your baptismal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and pledge your years ahead to him. *

Baptism

Baptism is one of the key symbols of the faith. Our writers provide comment and personal reflection.

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The Australian Christian welcomes letters from its readers. Short letters up to 175 words stand the best chance of publication. All letters may be edited. We reserve the right to omit letters altogether.

Reconciliation—Our Purpose

To the Editor,
Those attending Vic-Tas Conference on 1 May heard Gordon Stirling's challenge "Churches of Christ: Where to now?" For those not so fortunate, I mention some salient points. Gordon reminded us that over 120 years Churches of Christ in Australia became a significant movement because we were relevant and we had a single purpose. After elaborating, he made the statement, "Churches of Christ will find direction for the future when we (1) become relevant in our world culture and (2) when we find a dynamic singleness of purpose."
Gordon went on to say there are three New Testament values which are of importance as we move into that future. They are: being living witnesses to a God who is like Jesus; practising the real meaning of *koinonia* (Christian fellowship); and believing that the Christ life style makes sense as nothing else does.

Without wishing to detract from Gordon's challenge, I would like to suggest reconciliation as being the New Testament concept which can give us our dynamic singleness of purpose. Living in Australia at this time, the evidences of polarisation in many aspects of community and personal life show the urgent need for building bridges and reconciling disparate parties. Aboriginal concerns, racist attitudes, indus-

trial disputation have all made headlines in our newspapers this year. Suicide, divorce and violence indicate divisions in personal relationships. Increasing secularisation with pursuit of hedonistic pleasures and the rising interest in "other religions" indicate a lack of meaningful relationship with God. And despite 100 years of ecumenism (and 50 years of the World Council of Churches) Christians too often fail to show Christian love to those who worship in a different manner and, unfortunately, disputation in local congregations still frequently leads to division.

"God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to himself." Such reconciliation presupposes the action of the Spirit in reconciling us to each other. That reconciliation will result in the *koinonia* of which Gordon spoke, which in turn can lead to healing the wounds of broken personal relationships and addressing the social ills around us.


Reconciliation is a word we can use in dealing with the needs of individuals. We can also use it in trying to bring about structural change in society. And it is a great religious word for it tells us of God's love for us.

—Trevor Banks
(Belmont, Vic)

Questioning Communion Practice

To the Editor,
I waited eagerly for Biblical answers to Jack Goldsworthy's ("AC" 29.4.98) questioning of collection bowls at the Lord's Table. Graeme Ellingsen's reply ("AC" 27.5.98) furthered my understanding of the Lord's Supper. Graeme used an OT reference, Num 9:7.

An OT passage I was taught about communion by a friend from a strong Churches of Christ family

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Letters to the Editor

background is where Melchizedek, Priest of the Lord Most High, (an OT type of Jesus) gave Abraham bread and wine, and Abraham gave Melchizedek, tithes (Gen 14:18-20). I have since heard this passage used during a communion service in another Christian church, where offerings are given at the Lord's table. In this Genesis passage, bread, wine and giving are linked. From it we learn an act of reverence in our giving to Jesus, the Priest of the Most High God (Heb 5:6-7).

Therefore, consider, is there any place more suitable to bring ourselves with our offerings to Jesus our Lord and Priest, than to this table?

Thanks Ed and staff for an informative and well-balanced paper.

—Myrtle I. Coghlan
(Melton, Vic)

Dancing Down the Aisles

To the Editor,

While my copy of *The Australian Christian* of 10 June was still in its wrapper, deep in the vaults of Australia Post, coincidentally, at Thornbury, we were "dancing the offering".

Our guest speaker, Pastor Peter Ringwell Joe-Andah has recently commenced a new All-African Christian Fellowship in the Preston area and we wanted to meet him and support his new outreach. Peter is from Ghana and is a student at the Bible College of Victoria.

Dressed in traditional Ghanaian robes, Peter and wife Cathy and their family showed us how to dance the offering. I was watching one of our older members and was pleased that she participated! She did tell my wife Maureen later that she forgot to put her offering in, so great was the excitement!

The treasurer reported that we were only a little bit above the giving for a normal Sunday on a long weekend, but we were greatly blessed.

—Barry Jenkins
(Caulfield, Vic)

Historical Digest

To the Editor,

Over recent years the Australian Churches of Christ *Historical Society Digest* has been published in *The Australian Christian*. In the early years the Literature Department helped finance the venture. Throughout, the Historical Society has enjoyed the assistance and encouragement of the editorial staff of the "AC".

However, at a recent meeting of the Society it was decided to revert to our older policy of disseminating the Digest to subscribers. We are also hoping to provide access to the latest Digest via e-mail and through the Web. We therefore need to rebuild our subscription list. The cost of a subscription will be \$5 per year.

If you, or your church, would like to receive copies of the Digest, please write to Bob Clymer, our secretary, at CCTC, PO Box 629, Mulgrave North Vic 3170. When writing, remember to include your name, postal and e-mail address (if you have one).

—Graeme Chapman,
Chairperson
(Mulgrave, Vic)

Update

Dear Readers,

Since the mailing of our last issue on "Stewardship" we have received a number of positive comments from readers. One reader especially commented on the cover and the photo. The photo was taken by Ralph Petty of the Doncaster, Vic, church who enthusiastically contributes to our covers with his ideas and photographs. Additional copies of the paper are available for special use or promotion. We will gladly supply these to you. One church requested copies of the "Stewardship" issue to assist discussions on this theme.

Another reader wrote and paid a subscription which went back several years. Drought in a rural area had created financial pressures. The paper's policy over the 100 years has been to continue to send copies unless we are notified regarding a cancellation. I believe that our previous Editors have seen the paper as a ministry to members and tried to be understanding about personal difficulties which may occur from time to time. Naturally it helps our cash flow if readers pay subscriptions promptly. Some readers choose to make several part payments

during the year.

Readers will note a reference to a new contact we have established with Churches of Christ congregations in Indonesia (refer page 9). We would like to be able to send a complimentary copy to Paulus Wibowo who is the chairman of the group. The cost for the rest of this year is \$25.00. A reader may be open to donating this subscription.

In this issue we appreciate the contribution from John Bond of South Perth church, WA. John is the author of *Truth for Living*, which contains a section on baptism. He also has a new believer study "Welcome into the Church Family". For details contact Sonlife Ministries Inc, PO Box 1075, Bentley DC WA 6983.

This issue is normally 20 pages. A large number of advertisements (for which we are grateful) and other copy has meant that the issue has become a 24-page issue. It is good to be under such pressure! We commend our advertisers to you. They are also an important part of our budget.

Don Clark

Pontius' Puddle



God's Grace

Grace church excited about future developments

Grace Church of Christ, Vic, celebrated sixteen years of God's guidance and provision in March. In 1982 the church was launched with the purpose of meeting the spiritual needs of Chinese migrants from south-east Asia. Over the years, the congregation has moved from churches to schools for worship. Currently meetings are held at Essex Heights Primary School in Mt Waverley. God willing, by March 1999 the congregation hopes to worship at the new sanctuary on the seven-acre property at Koomba Road, Wantirna.

Grace Church has a congregation of about 320, comprising adults, children and youths. As a step of

faith, on 11 May 1996 phase one of a building project master plan was launched with a ground breaking ceremony. Estimated cost is \$2.36 million. The initial building comprises a chapel with seating capacity of 500 communicants, a multi-purpose hall which can seat 300 people, offices, kitchen, library, store rooms and car park.

Peter Heng, an elder of the church who is currently performing a ministry role, says that the church is praising God for his perfect timing. There is a sense of unity and excitement about what God is doing with the church as it faces great opportunities for the future. There is a prospect of a



New worship centre under construction

great harvest as the church finds itself in the midst of new housing developments and medical facilities.

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Three Conferences and a Funeral

Reminders of mission in Churches of Christ



made the church increasingly peripheral and have caused considerable struggle for us as we try to grapple with mission issues.

The highlights, for me, were: the emergence of the ethnic congregations, new churches and "frontier" urban missions in the Vic-Tas Conference; the deliberate and well-thought-out strategy of the state ministry team in SA to help congregations that are serious about mission, and the growing network of grass-roots, community-caring ministries being facilitated by

It just so happened that the Victorian-Tasmanian Conference, the South Australian Conference and the NSW Conference followed hard on each other's heels. I have to say that I came away quite encouraged.

We are all aware of the enormous changes within society that have

the NSW Community Care-Wellfare Ministry Team.

Mission is high on our list of priorities.

Part of the pleasure for me was that I particularly wanted to speak about our forthcoming International Summit on Mission, sponsored by National Council. Next October a group of our best thinkers, practitioners and emerging leaders in the various aspects of mission will come together. Men and women will come from each of the states and from the British and New Zealand Churches of Christ. They will grapple with the question of what it is that God is saying to us about mission as we enter the new millennium.

Halfway through my Conference-hopping the reality of life in pastoral ministry caught up with me (my other half-time job is on the ministry staff of the Northside Church in Sydney). I conducted the funeral of Ron, who had died from cancer. He was a man who had recently reconnected with the

faith and whose wife had become a regular attender at church through the faithful visitation of two of our women from Northside. More than a hundred people attended the funeral, most of them, I suspect, people with no real connection to the church. Annie, one of the two faithful visitors, spoke movingly of the faith Ron had come to embrace. Katie, our resident jazz singer, sang "Amazing Grace" as I have never heard it sung before. There was no one who was not deeply moved. After the service a lady I had never seen before said to me, "I want you to do a funeral for me, just like that."

It reminded me that mission is not just the inspiring stuff we talk about at conferences; it is what we do in the daily routine of life in the church.

—Bob Smith

(National Coordinator)

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Footscray Faces Up to Child Poverty

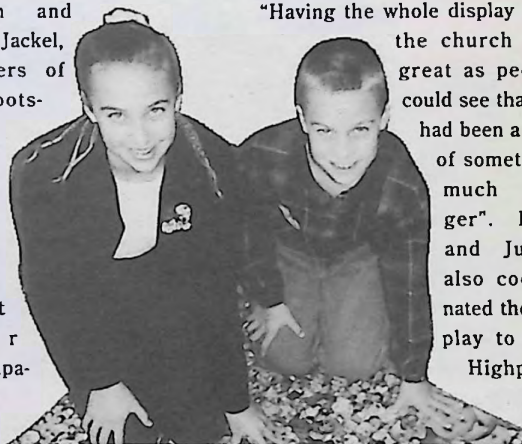
Church participates in project to give reality to sad statistics

Last year Footscray, Vic Church of Christ got involved in the 40,000 Faces Project, organised by TEAR Australia. The 40,000 Faces display was devised by Kylie Tomalaris in response to the staggering number of children who die each day from preventable diseases such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections. Judith Myers and Rose Gow, TEAR representatives at the

church, encouraged both children and adults to create a panel of 400 faces for the display. "Statistics can leave us cold," Rose said. "This project helps people visualise what 40,000 children looks like. It makes the statistic a reality." The appeal of the 40,000 Faces project is such that more than 200 churches, schools and community groups from Moonee Ponds, Vic,

to Mt Isa School of the Air, Qld, have got involved. Nathah and Jessica Jackel, members of the Footscray Sunday school, spoke of the impact of their participation

In June the 40,000 Faces display visited the church. Rose said, "Having the whole display visit the church was great as people could see that we had been a part of something much bigger". Rose and Judith also coordinated the display to visit Highpoint, the



Jessica and Nathan Jackel among some of the 40,000 faces

has had on them: "We didn't realise so many children die unnecessarily, but now that we know, we want to learn about other ways that we can help them. We learnt that each one dollar on its own cannot help very much, but 40,000 one dollars can make a big difference to the lives of children." As well as raising awareness of the causes of child deaths the display provides people with ways to respond to this silent catastrophe. One response is to financially support TEAR's partners who work with poor communities to provide the basics for children to survive and develop. For just \$10.00 a child can be immunised against six killer diseases: polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles and tuberculosis. Other responses include joining one of the campaigns that work for the rights of children such as the Infant Formula Campaign or the movement to address issues around child labour.

local shopping centre which is a major hub in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Judith commented that, "Having the display at Highpoint saw a major example of western lifestyle come face to face with the needs of the world. A lot of people didn't seem prepared to be challenged by it, while some were." Rose believes that because many of the faces on the display were of white, healthy kids it brought the problem closer to people. Twenty volunteers from the church manned the display over two days. One of the highlights for Judith was speaking with a Vietnamese man who was deeply moved by the display. He spoke about his experience of being a refugee and how he feels privileged to live in Australia where he has seen his children grow up with good health. For more information on the 40,000 Faces display, or the work of TEAR Australia call the TEAR office on 1800 224 986.

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- ✓ **Introduction to the Hebrew Bible** with Merryl Blair at CCTC, Mulgrave, Tuesday afternoons, 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm
- ✓ **Youth Ministry 2: Context & Culture— Youth Work & the Postmodern Environment** with Tim Corney at CCTC, Mulgrave, Thursday evenings 7.00 pm – 10.00 pm

For further details ring (03) 9790 1000
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Four Milestones

FAB staff record significant anniversaries in ministry

This year, four couples in ministry with the Churches of Christ Federal Aborigines Board (FAB) celebrate significant milestones in their service.

Don & Claire Stephens (Perth, WA) and Ken & Shirley Birch



The Birchs have served FAB for 25 years

(Carnarvon, WA,

pictured here with their children Mike and Di) have now served with the FAB for 25 years. At the same time, Cec & Laurel Grant (Albury, NSW) and Max & Naomi Wright (Adelaide, SA) have completed 20 years of service.

The Stephens came first to Norseman, WA, to cook for the children in care. They later went to Carnarvon, Roelands and finally to the office in Perth, where their computer and accounting expertise have been a great asset to the work.

The Birches first went to Norseman, then to Roelands, back to Norseman, to Busselton and are now at Carnarvon, where they continue to make a valuable con-

tribution in church, aged care, Christian School and outreach.

The Grants have spent their 20 years in Albury, where they have contributed to the life of the Koori church and the local community in countless ways. Recently, Cec received a glowing acknowledgment of his contribution to the teaching of culture to the students at the James Cook University in Albury.

Max & Naomi Wright have served at Mooroopna, Vic, on secondment to Bimbadeen Bible College, Port Lincoln, SA, and now in Adelaide, SA. Max is chairman of the FAB and a valued member of the SA Conference Executive.

—A.W. Moyle

Ansvar Merger

Australian church insurer joins UK giant

After 37 years in business and a past decade of sound growth and profits, Ansvar Australia Insurance Limited is destined to become part of the United Kingdom-based Ecclesiastical Insurance Group PLC. An agreement for the purchase of Ansvar Australia and its New Zealand subsidiary has been reached subject to contract and board approval.

Founded in 1887, Ecclesiastical is the market leader in the insurance of churches, care homes, charities and independent schools. "Extensive research confirmed Ansvar as a company well known and respected by the Christian community," Ecclesiastical's Managing Director, Mr Graham Doswell said.

"Ansvar's reputation in the Australian insurance market parallels our own in the United Kingdom where Ecclesiastical has lived up to its slogan of 'Insurance you can believe in'," Mr Doswell said. Ansvar was founded in Sweden and opened in Australia in 1961. It established subsidiaries in thirteen countries and accumulated worldwide assets of \$700 million.

"Ansvar in Australia has been the most successful of these subsidiaries and has been regarded as the jewel in the Ansvar crown," Managing Director Ian Williams said. "We are accepted as a leading insurer by the Protestant churches in Australia as is Ecclesiastical in the United Kingdom." Ansvar holds more than 80,000 household, motor and church

policies in Australia and last year contributed more than \$250,000 towards lifestyle education for Australia's youth community. Ansvar's head office is in Melbourne with branches in Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, with agents in country areas and Tasmania.

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Canberra Gathering

Prayer and mission in nation's capital

Between 25,000 and 30,000 people participated in the march around Parliament House held on 30 May. The march marked the tenth anniversary of the National Gathering in Canberra held at the opening of the new Parliament building. Christians from all states and the territories were present.

Anne Nanscawen, an organiser and participant in the event, said that she along with so many others experienced a huge sense of joy, unity and empowerment from the experience.

The Parliament buildings were encircled by Christians praying for Australia as a nation. Prayer vigils through the night were another significant part of the experience.

Highlight of a worship service was the sharing of drinking water, representing the source of life, by Aboriginal elder Pastor Tim Edwards with church representatives and politicians. First to be served was the Hon John Anderson MP, Deputy Leader of the National Party. This ceremony

was followed by the hymn "Father make us One".

Thousands of balloons were released bearing the words "Jesus is Lord", followed by the landing of three sky divers bearing the Aboriginal and Australian flags.

In the week prior to the gathering a conference on mission in Australia was held in Canberra. Highlights included the commitment of participants to networking in local areas to advance the whole cause of the Gospel in Australian society.

Speakers included Father Tom Torrent of the Roman Catholic Church, who spoke on the importance of unity and forgiveness among Christians; and Michael Frost and Mal Garvin, who developed the networking concept in local areas. Among other contributors was Paulus Wibowo of Indonesian Churches of Christ. Paulus is the chairman of the 75 cooperating congregations scattered throughout the various Indonesian islands.



Photograph: Michael P. Sullivan

Crowds gather for Land Bridge Celebration between old and new Houses of Parliament

Asian Ministry Council



Members of the Asian Ministry Council of the Victorian-Tasmanian Division of Mission and Revitalisation meet regularly for reports, planning and prayer. They are pictured with Chek Chia, Conference President, Conference staff members Lynette Leach and John Gilmore and Jeff Weston of the Overseas Mission Board. Some 15% of the overall Victorian membership are people of Asian background.

Sunbury Community Church, Vic, is Moving Again!

We are moving to new leased factory premises which we are fitting out as a 600-seat worship and ministry centre. This is a huge but exciting undertaking.

As a relatively new church, our budget can only go so far—we are stretched just covering the ministry demand! We are appealing for help from our sister churches to assist us to finish equipping our new centre. We are asking for donations, gifts and/or the loan of equipment to finish our project in time for launch day in August.

We Need Your Help

Could you or your church help in lending or donating the following items:

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| White boards (4) | Bookshelves (as many as we can get) |
| Lockable steel cabinets | Lockable filing cabinets |
| Sound equipment | Stackable chairs |
| VCRs & Television sets (3 each) | Tables (as many as we can get) |
| Children's chairs (130) | Lecturns (4) |
| Kitchen equipment (oven/stove) | Data projector |
| Computer/Printers | |

If you can help us with our new project, please call Ian Huke (Administrator) at the office on (03) 9740 8799. We would appreciate your call.

The Long and the Short of It

Gert Scott makes her mark in Launceston

The congregation at Launceston, Tas, ranged in age on Mother's Day from a nine-day-old baby to several seniors in their nineties, one of whom was Gertrude Scott. Aged 94 years, Gert has been a member for countless years. She proudly shows a certificate presented to her in 1991 for never missing a Sunday morning service.

She now qualifies for another certificate for the same reason!

Gert played the piano in the kinder department of the Sunday School for many years, and helped deliver Meals on Wheels until nearing her eighties, only handing in her driver's licence a few years ago.

She goes to town by bus at least once a week, where she lunches at a small takeaway shop, where she's considered their number one customer. They presented her with a cake on her last birthday. A cottage at the Prospect Court



Gert Scott chatting with youth minister Steve Fitzallen

Retirement Homes has been her home for thirty years. She collects stamps from the other residents for missions and visits "the elderly" there! Gert says she can't do much now, but she can, and does pray for all the church activities.

UCA Evangelism Conference

Leaders reminded of Jesus as the heart and soul of evangelism

One hundred and twenty Uniting Church participants attending the World Methodist Evangelism Institute conference held in Adelaide last month heard Dr Eddie Fox, World Director of the Institute, comment, "We've found that where Christology is strong, where the focus is clear and centred on Christ, those churches are growing. Where it isn't, there is a definite fall away and decline in the membership of those churches."

In a further comment Dr Fox said that the church in the western world had lost some of its evangelical fervour. "The church no longer seems clear about its own passion to spread the Gospel. That passion needs to be rekindled."

He noted the decline in missionaries sent by his own church, the United Methodist Church in the US, observing that "he was not sure the leadership was con-



Photo: Ian Eldridge, o' reesy New Times

Dr Eddie Fox

vinced the whole world should know about Jesus".

Dr Fox called for a renewal of the missionary movement, saying "This is no time to pull back from the missionary movement". Theme of the conference was "Jesus Christ: the heart and soul of evangelism".

(New Times)

Kalgoorlie Church of Christ, WA Centenary Celebrations

7-9 August 1998

Guest Preacher: Pastor Glen Rogers

Saturday, 8 August Churches of Christ Council Centenary Banquet
Cost \$35.00 per person.
Tickets available from Mrs E. Kinney, PO Box 10146, Kalgoorlie WA 6430.

Sunday, 9 August am Thanksgiving Service
pm Celebration Service (Combined Churches)

All inquiries, please contact church office on (08) 9021 2296, PO Box 10146, Kalgoorlie WA 6430.

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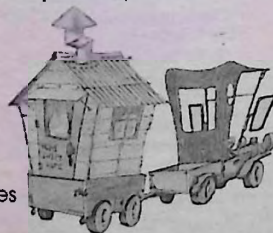


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Baptism

A Point of No Return

ISAAC KHAN

Growing up as a Muslim I was well aware of the importance of religious rituals and the power of symbolisms. I first became aware of the ritual of baptism when I was in primary school. My brothers and I attended a Catholic primary school. Somehow a rumour was floating around in the Muslim community in our neighbourhood that our mum had converted us to Christianity. Not only had she had us converted, but to the dismay of the Muslim community, we were also to be baptised. The reality was that my mum practiced Islam diligently and encouraged us to do the same.

So, what did baptism mean to me when I eventually did become a Christian? In order to tell you this, I must tell you

I believe that baptism is the most powerful symbol or ritual we have in our faith.

my conversion experience. My family migrated to Australia in 1987. I was nineteen years old. I believe it was then that the Holy Spirit started to move in me, compelling me to go to church. I was too shy and could not muster up the courage to go to church. Coincidentally, two Mormons came and knocked on my door one day. They wanted to share their message with me, so I invited them in, thinking they were Christians. They gave me a Bible to read and there I began a love affair with this great book. Every word seemed to leap out and cut to my heart. As a result of this, I decided to go to church with them.

Their love for their religious books and their fellowship appealed to me. I

thought that they must be right in their claim that they have a special revelation from God, so I became one of them and got baptised.

However, after about six months with them I learned about a few of their doctrines that I had a great deal of difficulty with, particularly as I had come from a staunchly monotheistic background. So I decided to take a break from them. The head elder of the church told me that I would be eternally cursed if I walked out of the faith. I left the Mormon church, but I did not lose my love for the Bible because it was still having an impact on me.

In 1988 I started a university course at Wollongong, NSW. I was still reading my Bible and thinking a lot about religious things.

One day I was sitting near the chemistry lab, waiting to have lunch with a friend, when a Christian walked up to me and asked me if I would like to talk about Christianity. His name was Neil. Neil and I spent almost every day of the week talking about Christianity and looking at the life of Jesus from the Bible.

About a month after meeting Neil I prayed a prayer in my bedroom that went something like this: "Jesus, if you are who you claim to be then I am going to give you a go." Since that prayer I have never had reason to look elsewhere.

However, I often questioned the validity of my original baptism, so, for the sake of my own conscience, I was re-baptised. This got me into trouble with Muslims. The Muslims on campus disliked me immensely and said that I had lost my mind.

They would often try to single me out and debate with me. I found first-hand why many people from non-Christian



faiths have a problem with baptism. I believe that baptism is the most powerful symbol or ritual we have in our faith.

Spiritually, it is very significant for the individual's pilgrimage. It also tells the rest of the world that we now have a new motivation and reason for living. People from non-Christian backgrounds are very familiar with religious rituals and the significance of symbols. Many of the world's religions have rituals, initiations and rites of passage, such as circumcision for Muslim and Jewish males.

Perhaps the reason that many from non-Christian backgrounds struggle with baptism is the powerful symbolism attached to it. Baptism could be seen as the ultimate or final stage of conversion where one has gone beyond the point of no return.

Isaac is Minister to Families at our Ballarat Family Church, Vic, and in recent days became the father of a baby daughter.

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Please contact: Robert Warwick, Rural Operations Director, Churches of Christ Care, PO Box 98, Boonah Qld 4310, or telephone (07) 5463 1355 for your formal application, which will need to be completed and lodged with your resume before 1 July 1998.

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Applications to Dale White, Minister,
PO Box 7564, Toowoomba MC Qld 4352.
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Baptism

Reflections on Your Baptism

BRIAN WHITE

David Ratten welcomed Max into the membership of the Blackburn, Vic, church following his baptism. "Max," he said, "Brian White, the guy who baptised me, and who wrote the little booklet that you studied in preparation for your baptism, is in our service this morning. Be sure to meet him after the service." Max later shared with me how the booklet had helped his understanding of Christian baptism and had encouraged him to obey the Lord this way. On a number of occasions when I've visited our churches around Australia I have been asked "Are you the Brian

I have been greatly encouraged to know that this little booklet has been so widely used, and has helped so many

White who wrote the little booklet on baptism?" When I've answered "Yes" they have shared how it assisted them to understand baptism better and helped them in their decision to proceed.

I have been greatly encouraged to know that this little booklet has been so widely used, and has helped so many decide that they will obey Jesus in this important matter.

Teaching on baptism should be a normal part of the discipling or nurture program of a church. New Christians need to be instructed on how to be sure they are a child of God, how to know that they are forgiven of their rebellion and indifference towards God, how to be sure that God answers prayer, how

to get God's guidance, where they fit into Christ's church and how to make Christ Lord of their lives. Baptism fits into this teaching program. It is a significant part of the beginnings of true discipleship.

In the booklet I commented on the common practice in Churches of Christ to almost immediately receive into the membership of the church those just baptised. This practice may change.

Sociologists say that the younger generation are not strongly committed to belonging to institutions. Being a part of the Kingdom is far more important to them than being members of a local church or denomination. It is essential that we see baptism through "kingdom eyes" rather than just as a prerequisite to being added to a church roll.

Desire for membership must never be the motivation for baptism. We are baptised to express our faith in Jesus Christ, to be obedient to him as Lord and to symbolise what God has done in our lives.

We may see a separation of baptism from membership. This is not to say that church membership is not important. It is. However, it is not associated with becoming a part of God's Kingdom.

We may see the next generation choose to be identified with worldwide church of Jesus Christ through baptism and, though they continue involvement with a local church, evidence little urgency about taking up membership.

I sometimes wonder if in the booklet I should have made more of the promise that Peter affirms in Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Repentance and obedience in baptism are an ex-



pression of the faith that "relies upon" the name of Jesus. The result, according to Peter, is both forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I have heard some moving stories of people being raised from the water in baptism to quite overwhelming experiences of the Holy Spirit. For some it has been quite a "baptism of the Holy Spirit". Others have been filled with an incredible sense of peace, which after all is one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If we expect more we will receive more. As Jesus said: "According to your faith will it be done to you." (Matt 9:29.) In other words, what we believe of him will come to pass. Maybe we should teach candidates for baptism to expect more.

Finally, I would certainly like baptism to be seen as much more than a legalistic fulfilment of a biblical command. It needs to be seen in a relational context. "Jesus, I do this to obey you. May it draw me closer to you. May it enrich my relationship with you. For that is the desire of my heart."

Brian White is currently minister at Dandenong Church of Christ in Melbourne, Victoria.

Baptism

My Baptism

DAPHNE ROBERTS

Love, joy, peace, gratitude, hope, a sure knowledge that I was pleasing God, and thoughts about the unfolding chapters of my new life in Christ were some of the feelings I experienced following my baptism almost forty years ago. I could identify with the Ethiopian mentioned in Acts 8:39 who "went on his way rejoicing". For many years I had a knowledge of God. I remember a moving revelation from God while watching an Easter movie as a young child. I realised then that God loved me and gave his only Son to die for me. Years later as a teenager I felt an emptiness and I gathered some information about God and Jesus

My own personal agenda and my comfort zone were still among my considerations, but God was still at work

and eternal life through talking with Christian friends at work. The turning point came when I attended a Billy Graham Crusade Land Line and responded to Christ's invitation. That night I acknowledged my belief in God and his Word, I confessed that I was a sinner, I began to work through the process of repentance and by faith I received Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord. I wasn't baptised to make myself a Christian as at my baptism I was already a Christian.

When I became a Christian I wanted to learn more from the Bible, wanted to be with other Christians and find a place of belonging. On the invitation of a friend I attended a Churches of Christ

congregation and learned that they practised believers' baptism. With my limited knowledge of the Bible, my first reactions were: "I have already been christened"; "I will find another church"; "I would rather be a secret believer"; "It can't be that important"; "I am just too shy and reserved to be baptised by immersion in front of other people".

I am so glad that God didn't listen to all my excuses and I found myself considering baptism, or maybe it was initially a matter of trying to prove that for me it was not necessary. It seemed important to base my considerations on what the Bible taught and not only on what the churches of the day taught. I knew I had to do some serious reading and thinking. I will always be thankful for the friend who lovingly and gently guided me through relevant Scriptures in the New Testament.

Over many weeks I read and asked many questions. As I read the Bible I noted the inclusion of baptism in the great commission (Matt 28:19) and in what Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2:38-41). I also highlighted the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13-17) as well as the baptism of Paul (Acts 9:18), the Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:30-34) and the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:36-38). It was obvious to me that for the early Christians the practice of baptism was an expression of faith and obedience. My own personal agenda and my comfort zone were still among my considerations, but God was still at work in my life. As I read and asked questions I began to pray. Praying was a new experience, but I talked to God about my need for understanding and direction. At this stage I could see good reasoning in linking my new relationship in



Christ with a public event in a particular church. This would be an outward sign of my inner experience. I now had a desire to be obedient to God in baptism and to identify with other Christians in membership and ministry. I understood that I would be lowered into the water symbolising my desire to bury my sinful life; realising that I had already received God's forgiveness. I understood that I would then be raised from the water symbolising my new life in Christ. God was patient with me and the moment of decision arrived. I had personally confronted God's Word and there was a conscious desire on my part to be baptised by immersion. I believed that my baptism would have an impact on my life, and it did. My baptism was a significant part of the beginning of my new life in Christ, leading to a whole life of trusting and desiring to obey God in all things.

Daphne Roberts is the Care Coordinator at the Sunshine Central Church of Christ, Nambour, Qld, where she has been a member for 22 years. Daphne was baptised at the church in Margaret Street, Toowoomba, Qld.

Baptism

Presenting Baptism

JOHN BOND

Baptism is not an option for the new believer. It sets the pattern for the rest of our Christian experience. I have found the most effective way to present this is for people to study the Scriptures and have a question that simply asks, "When would they like to be baptised?"

Why be Baptised?

The authority for baptism comes from the life of Christ himself.

As an adult at the outset of his earthly ministry Jesus walked some 100 km to be baptised in the Jordan. "Then Jesus

Encourage such people to search through the Scriptures to see what they think for themselves.

came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now, it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.' Then John consented." After Jesus was obedient to the Father in his baptism and as he came up out of the water, the Spirit came upon him and the Father said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased." It was then that Jesus' earthly ministry began. (See Matt 3:13-17.)

Later he commanded the apostles to baptise (Matt 28:19). Throughout the book of Acts whenever people came to faith they were always baptised.

Who Should be Baptised?

All believers are to be baptised. Christ said, "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not

believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16) No person is commanded to be baptised unless they are capable of being taught. The nature of baptism makes it impossible for it to apply to infants. Peter affirms this when he declares in 1 Peter 3:21 that our baptism is the "answer of a good conscience toward God". We know that an infant has no conscience or awareness in the act of obedience.

"But I was Baptised as a Child!"

Sometimes we encounter those who have come from a paedobaptism background. There is the need to be sensitive to the differing situations that result. I suggest a number of things.

Encourage such people to search through the Scriptures to see what they think for themselves. There are eleven key passages to study. We also provide appropriate literature for background reading.

We encourage children and young people to be obedient to parents in this issue, if that is a problem, until they are 18 years of age. I encourage people to help their families to see that this is an adult affirmation of what their parents desired when they were infants. Also, to see that this is a personal confirmation of that desire and is an affirmation by which one can remember a commitment to Christ. It is important to do all of this with sensitivity.

How Should I be Baptised?

The meaning of the word translated "baptism", along with all its derivatives, helps us in the determining of the mode of baptism, or how we should be baptised.

The Greeks had, and still have, a word for "immerse", one for "sprinkle" and one for "pour". *Baptizo* means dip or immerse, *rantizo* means to sprinkle, and *cheo* means to pour. This is the cur-



rent meaning of these words in Greek, and was also the meaning when Christ was on earth. Paul said that we are buried with Christ by baptism (Rom 6:4, Col 2:12).

The Meaning of Baptism for the Believer

Baptism is the fulfilment of Jesus' command and it follows his example of fulfilling all righteousness (Matt 3:15).

It is a test of obedience. Believers are told to "repent and be baptised". Jesus said, "if you love me, keep my commandments", and Peter comments that baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (Acts 2:38, John 15:10, 1 Peter 3:21).

It is symbolic of the burial and resurrection of Christ, our birth into God's family, our joining God's worldwide family, our putting on Jesus and our forgiveness and washing away of our sin (Rom 6:3-5, John 3:5, 1 Cor 12:13, Gal 3:26-28, Acts 2:38, 22:16).

John Bond is Senior Minister of our South Perth, WA, church.

Baptism

No Regrets

KATE PALMER

My name is Kate Palmer and I am in year 12 at Blackwood High. I have attended Blackwood Church of Christ for all of my sixteen years. I have known of God all my life, thanks to a wonderful Christian family for whom I am most grateful. Ever since I knew what baptism was I just expected that it would happen to me. I didn't really understand what the full meaning was. When I was about thirteen I began to fear what would happen if I was to die, because I was afraid that I had not done enough to please God. I considered baptism because I thought that once you were baptised

The day I was baptised was the first day of my new life walking hand in hand with God

then you were set, but felt I was too young.

I was too scared to talk to anyone about my thoughts. Whenever an option came up to talk to someone I pushed the thought out of my mind and said to myself that maybe next time I would do something about it. Around the same time, I was hearing about making a decision. I did not understand what this meant and hoped that I had made my decision—whatever that meant. I heard that you had to pray and ask God to take control of your life and so I did this, but did not really mean it. I prayed this same prayer every month or so over a year. I did this because I did not feel any different and I was not sure whether God had understood what I meant. I did not feel comfortable with

giving my life away and so did not change the way I lived or the thoughts I had. The thing that scared me the most was the huge fear that "What if I do not go to heaven?" and "What if I have not done all that I can to have eternal life?"

When I was fifteen and a half Michael Frost came to church. Initially I thought "Oh no, not another guest speaker with a long sermon!" It wasn't until close to the end that I really started to listen and I remember him ending with the phrase, "Do you want God to take control of your life?" At this point I was screaming inside saying, "Yes, yes I do want that". It was as though all of the doubts and fear that I had previously been feeling were gone and I finally knew at that moment that God had come and taken over my life. Finally, I knew what it was to be a Christian who was absolutely positive they are going to heaven.

The following week I made an appointment to see my minister and I told him about my experience and that I felt that I was ready to be baptised. The reasons for my baptism were that I knew that I wanted to publicly declare my faith in

Someone gave me a card saying "You will never regret this huge step of faith". This is totally true.

God and I also wanted to be baptised because that is what Jesus had done. My baptism played a very significant part in my faith journey because it gave me a starting point for a new doubt-free life.



My experience that I had the night that I asked Christ to take over my life left me feeling confident and I have never feared death or God again. The day I was baptised was the first day of my new life walking hand in hand with God. It was as though the God that had always been a huge unknowable figure looking over me became my friend who was next to me every moment of every day.

At the time of my baptism I received many encouraging words and notes from my friends and church members. Someone gave me a card saying "You will never regret this huge step of faith". This is totally true. I have never regretted my baptism and know that I never will.

My baptism was the stepping stone for the strong Christian life that I now live. I have no more doubts or fears about the future because I know that I am going to heaven and I have an everlasting relationship with the creator of this world.

Kate is a member of the Blackwood, SA, church. She is involved in leading Girls' Brigade and plays in the basketball club.

Cultural Accommodation and the Christian

CHARLES R. GRESHAM

Peter L. Berger, outstanding Christian and sociologist, writes, "The wisdom of the world today always has a sociological address ... Christians, then, who set out to accommodate the faith to the modern world should ask themselves which sector of that world they seek to address."¹ Historical theology² clearly points to this truth. It was the

If you marry the spirit of your own generation, you will be a widow in the next.

culture of Nazi Germany that produced "German Christians", who saw German culture as more significant than Scripture (and to which Scripture and theology must be adapted, after all Jesus was not really a Jew!). It was against this parody of classical Christian faith that Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer and those German Christians who asserted the Barmen Dec-

laration, took their stand (and were often dismissed from academy and church).

Even today, radicals such as Bishop John Shelby Spong, do the same! So Paul becomes a "rigidly controlled gay male"³ and Mary, rather than being a virgin, was a rape victim. There is no evidence for either of these positions, but there is a homosexual, feminist culture to which New Testament truth must be accommodated.

Of course, most cultural accommodations are not as radical as the German situation of the 1930s, nor Spong's attempt in the 1990s; but the pattern is the same. The analysis of modern culture becomes the basis for such accommodation. When carefully analysed, this becomes ludicrous, for current cultural pundits are also given over to multiculturalism and pluralism.

Which culture of many should be the accommodating basis? Why is modern "Western culture" (if that can be identified) superior to African or Asian culture? Berger's assertion becomes more apparent—"the wisdom of the world today always has a sociological address!" Or, as Alister McGrath phrases it, "The spirit of the age

turns out to be remarkably ephemeral, leading to a correspondingly brief window of credibility for theologies which ground themselves in contemporary social mores."⁴

It is quite easy (and satisfying) to point out how liberal theology has been adapted to the culture of the day; but it is more difficult (and more anxiety-producing) to consider how culture has affected conservative theology. Certain cultural trends, such as Common Sense Scottish theology (with a Lockean foundation), male chauvinism, etc., have affected how conservatives approach the Word and interpret it "objectively" (as many assert). But other cultural patterns have also been influential.

Is the church understood in "democratic" terms, even though the church came into existence long before "democracy" as a political or social entity became significant? Do we understand leadership in the church in terms of county-seat political reality, or in terms of General Motors corporationism? These are the kinds of questions that must be raised to show that those of us who take the Bible seriously must always be aware of the cultural bag-

gage that we carry with us, both in the interpretation and application of that Word of truth. So, whether liberal or conservative, there is always the danger of accommodating trans-cultural truth to a culture that is always changing. We must remember the words of the late Dean William Inge of St. Paul's Cathedral, London: "If you marry the spirit of your own generation, you will be a widow in the next."⁵

Charles R. Gresham is a member of the faculty at Kentucky Christian College, Grayson, Kentucky, USA. This article is copyrighted by the *Christian Standard* and is reprinted with permission.

¹ *A Far Glory: The Quest for Faith in an Age of Credulity* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 12 (emphasis in original).

² A brief overview of this position is found in Alister McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), pp. 62ff.

³ *Rescuing the Bible From Fundamentalism* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), pp. 108-125.

⁴ Op. cit., p. 70.

⁵ *Diary of A. Dean* (London: Hutchinson 1949), p. 12. Quoted by McGrath, *Ibid.*, p. 70.

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A World View Canada

KEITH RIDGE

“Australia! That is one place I would just love to visit, eh?” This is a common response Keith and Wendy Ridge, formerly of Adelaide, SA, now in Canada, receive when they identify themselves as being Australian. Canadians are fascinated with the country “down-under”, and our historic and common ties with the United Kingdom reinforce this attitude.

Canadians are quick to remind newcomers to their country, “We are not Americans, we are different!”

Canada shares similar political and social issues with Australia, so there is an ongoing interest in Australian affairs. It was noted recently in the press that the public apology offered by the Canadian Government to Aboriginal people for the past treatment received in residential schools had created some unease in Australia regarding the possibility of a similar apology being extended by the Australian Government to Aboriginal Australians.

Currently there is interest in whether or not Australia will be “saying so long to the Queen”, to quote a recent headline in *The Mail-Star*.

While geographically close to the United States of America, Canada has maintained strong ties with the United Kingdom. It is not uncommon to see at entry points from the USA, the Union Jack flying alongside the

Canadian Maple-leaf flag as a reminder that one of the historic defining differences between the two countries is Canada’s loyalist links with the United Kingdom.

Canadians are quick to remind newcomers to their country, “We are not Americans, we are different!”

While polls indicate that 40% of the population would like to see Crown abolished in Canada, interest in becoming a republic is not high on the political agenda. The continuing concern for Canada is national unity and dealing with the unresolved tensions with French-speaking Quebec.

Despite the apparent divisions that exist between the English-speaking and French communities, there is a deep sense of loyalty and pride in being united as a nation under the maple-leaf flag.

Canada’s uniqueness lies within its diversity geographically, as one of the largest countries in area in the world, and as a people of diverse cultures. This diversity is affirmed within a continuing plea for unity, based upon a desire for peace, justice and equity.

Australian ties are also evident within the history of the Campbell-Stone movement in Canada. Since 1880, when a Thomas H. Capp of Melbourne served as a minister at Summerside, Prince Edward Island, and later at Coburg St, St John, New Brunswick, Australian ministers have served Canadian churches at various times over the years. Since the 1960s, this has included Bruce Marriott (SA) at Hillcrest Christian Church, Toronto, and the late Norma Hall (Vic) in Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Today, Keith and Wendy Ridge

are serving in a two-year ministry with the Wyndholme Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The invitation to minister there arose after a holiday visit in 1995. Canadian Disciples churches represent the smallest region numerically within the Disciples of Christ in USA and Canada, and finding a minister, particularly when it means bringing a family across the border from the USA, has been difficult for the Wyndholme Church. As the church had been without a full-time minister for three years, there was an urgent need of leadership. Keith and Wendy saw this as an opportunity to serve the Lord, and receive some overseas experience with our Disciples cousins. Located on the Atlantic seaboard. Dartmouth is part of the City of Halifax, the Provincial capital of Nova Scotia. Rich in English, Scottish, Black, Acadian (French) and Mic Mac



Indian traditions and culture, Nova Scotia is part of the unique flavour of the Maritime region. With the Olympic Games and the World Convention of our Churches taking place in Australia in the year 2000, Keith and Wendy find many opportunities to promote Australia to Nova Scotians, reminding them of the warm climate down under, and that it is just a half a world (or 30 hours by plane) away! Keith and Wendy are planning to return to Australia in the latter part of this year.

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Media Matters Saints and Angels

VINEY LONGTHORP

Many years ago I had a close encounter with an angel. I was looking through the shop window of the late Rita Roberts's florist establishment in Abbotsford, Vic, when she pointed out the figure of an elderly woman pushing an old pram on the other side of the road. It was then that I first heard of the remarkable Margaret Oats,

The mission forged a partnership with a Colorado firm to help recovering drug-addicts gain work experience.

known as "The Angel of Collingwood".

For more than fifty years she helped an enormous number of needy people with all kinds of problem, including the spiritual. She died last Anzac Day in her ninetieth year and the media paid her a most generous tribute, rightly emphasising her deep Christian faith.

Such saints and angels are always to be found in all parts of the world. They never cease in their work for the faith that is within them. And their stories never cease to inspire. Thus in

the November 1997 issue of the American magazine, *Christianity Today*, there was featured an article, "100 Things the Church is doing right". It consisted of brief anecdotes of individual and church ministries to a wide spectrum of human needs. As I read, I was frankly inspired by evidence of the creativity, initiative, compassion, and the sheer exuberance of the work of so many Christian people. I hope these few examples make you feel the same.

The **Immanuel Presbyterian Church** in McLean, Virginia, joined the national "I have a dream program" and adopted a class of 65 inner-city, sixth-grade students to whom they guaranteed college tuition at high school level. "Last year (1996), over half the class graduated." The success was due to a combination of educational, emotional and financial support.

After discovering the spiritual needs of some drivers on a racing circuit, Pastor Max Helton founded **Motor Racing Outreach**.

Almost a decade later seventeen chaplains minister during 300 racing events annually to 16,000 people—mostly drivers, crew members, vehicle owners and their families.

More than 165 teenagers and adults in Montgomery, Alabama, crime proof 33 homes—mostly of elderly or disabled people, by trimming hedges, vines, and tree limbs that might conceal lurking burglars or van-

dals. They are members of a Christian group, "**Neighbours Who Care**".

The **Mennonite Central Committee** shipped over 90 tonnes of canned beef and wheat valued at \$US 3.2 million to famine-stricken North Korea last year. The shipments arrived just as the government's rations ran out.

Peacemaker Ministries in Montana involved some 400 Christian groups in signing a pledge to help people handle conflict in a Biblical way, outside the courtroom.

Every Home for Christ is taking up the challenge of Chief Pilane of the 250,000-member Bakgatla tribe in South Africa to deliver gospel booklets to the homes of every one of his people.

Marriage Savers in Bethesda, Maryland, has helped more than 65 cities to reduce their divorce rates through clergy networking and commitment, as well as to extensive premarital counselling.

The **Denver Rescue Mission** was the brain-child of Del Maxfield. The mission forged a partnership with a Colorado firm to help recovering drug-addicts gain work experience. Pauline Hord has been described as a **Prison Angel**. Now 90, this former school teacher instructs prisoners how to read and write. Hundreds of inmates have gained literacy skills due to her efforts—and spiritual understanding too. She says: "When a man goes to prison, his one hope is God. When he learns to read, he wants to read the Bible."

Hotel rooms on the upper east side of Manhattan are too expensive for many who travel there for chemotherapy treatment at the Kettering Cancer



Centre. The **Bethany Memorial Reformed Church** which is just across the street, converted six of its rooms into lodgings for patients and their families. They are available for very low rentals.

Buses International turns old, yellow school buses into medical and dental clinics on wheels. Eight have been sent to Mexico and two to Honduras. One went to southern Illinois. The buses are supervised by missionaries who recruit volunteer doctors and nurses to undertake tours in destitute areas.

Heifer Project International is an ecumenical organisation which provides breeding stock to farmers in many parts of the world, together with instruction in animal husbandry. The offspring of these animals are shared with others who are in need. The animals include pigs, goats, cattle, llamas, water buffalo, and rabbits. Bees were also included.

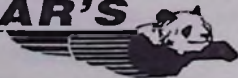
The article listed another 88 examples.

The scope and variety is amazing and adds something to our own awareness of similar works. These examples represent the tips of entire flotillas of icebergs!

No wonder the great Dean Inge said that, "The true Apostolic succession lies in the lives of the saints".

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Classifieds

IN MEMORIAM

HARTNEY, Jim (22.6.87) There's a place in my heart that is yours alone. A piece of my life no other can own. Your wife Betty.

JONES Dr Lloyd In loving memory of the passing of our dear husband, father and Grandy (24.6.86). So many precious memories and reminders of his life and ministry. Still very much a part of our lives and missed, but with gratitude to our Heavenly Father. Isabella, David and Wendy, and families.

HOLIDAYS

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Coffee Break Mates Matter

CAROL PRESTON

Mateship has been an Australianism for friendship, understood as a fundamental relationship for a good life, especially among men. Many women would also attest to the significance of special friendships which have contributed to their health and well being. Poets describe friends as those "with whom you dare to be your-



Friendship is often sacrificed for little more than occasional promises "to catch up soon".

self, with whom you do not have to be on your guard, but can say what you think and do not have to be careful, with whom you can just be quiet, with whom you can weep, sing, laugh and pray". This surely touches in most of us a deep need. But with the almost obsessive focus on sexual relationships in our society, along with the extreme busyness that crowds out so many relationships, friendship is often sacrificed for little more than occasional promises "to catch up soon".

It's not uncommon to be a little suspicious of friendship these days. We can be afraid that friendships will be misinterpreted. Sometimes husbands and wives are wary or jealous of their spouse's friendships, feeling family relationships ought to be sufficient. But while friendship can be part of family relationships, family are usually more focussed on other expectations. The focus of friendship is more often on something out-

side the relationship, on some common interest, common journey, where two people care about the same values and ideas, not necessarily agreeing about answers to questions, but agreeing that the same questions are important.

These relationships are important because they affirm who we are, and what we are about. They test out our dreams and give us a safe place to express our ideas and grow, to be challenged without fear of consequences often present in family relationships.

The power of friendship is that when we can simply be ourselves, then we are clearly faced with who we really are and must appraise our own identity. The beauty of friendship is that when we decide we need to grow we have an ally, one who does not envy our achievements, but encourages us and rejoices with us.

Building deep friendships is a great investment in our own and others' lives. Take a moment to think about the quality of your friendships. Does busyness, suspicion, fear of being known, of not being accepted, or perhaps loss of interest in your own growth keep you from developing these rich relationships? Friends are special, invaluable parts of our lives. I pray you'll not deny yourself.



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Saturday 2.30 pm Commencement
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Sunday 10.30 am Thanksgiving service
1.00 pm Lunch

All past campers and interested people are invited.

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BAPTISMS

•Ursulla Lehmann, Knoxfield, Vic •Tim Arnold, Short St, Bendigo, Vic •Vicki Carroll, Lorraine Goodall, Tweed Heads-Coolangatta, NSW •Louise Kilgour, Chase Morilly, Bonnie Nebauer, Croydon, Vic •Karen James, Cathy Fissioli, Jackie Thompson, Northam, WA

MARRIAGES

•Carolyn Dyson and Brendan Lane, Northam, WA

DEATHS

•Brian Donnellan, Short St, Bendigo, Vic •Joan Whittaker, Chadstone, Vic •Edna Fawaz, Ken Brown, Springvale, Vic •Roy Boucher, Boronia, Vic •Desmond Dodd, Carnarvon, WA

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
BOUCHER, Roy Mansfield

For most of his life Roy Boucher was a faithful member of Churches of Christ, working mainly in the background as a teacher, morning reader, helper and a friend in need. For 42 years he worked for Telecom, latterly as a lecturer in their training program, and finally as the Finance Supervisor for the School. As an amateur watchmaker Roy helped to keep the Boronia, Vic, congregation on time. Roy mar-

ried Lorna 43 years ago in the Ascot Vale church. From there they served Ringwood and later at Boronia. Roy succumbed to a long illness which he bore with Christian fortitude, waiting patiently for his home call. He is survived by Lorna, and Graeme and Debra (with Terry) and grandson Delwyn.

—GRS

BRENS, Jean

(27.4.98) Jean was always a very private person. From their wedding day in 1938, she had a loving, committed relationship with her husband, Ken (dec. 1979), living in North Essendon, Vic. Jean was a part of our church family at North Essendon for over 40 years. Survived by five children: Valerie, Jennifer, Kenneth, Robert and Peter, and their families. She loved being part of our CWF, is remembered as a good family cook, interested in current affairs, loved her home and garden. Celebrated her 80th birthday three years ago and only her family knew! Jean didn't like to make a fuss. Greatly loved and missed.

—ME

JONES, Mary Louisa

(1910-1998) Mary grew up at Shays Flat, near Ararat, Vic, the 7th of eleven children. Her mother died when Mary was seven. She says that she brought herself up. At fourteen she "went into service". She came to Adelaide at age sixteen, married Syd Jones, and they had seven children. She was devoted to her family, but also housed one of her husband's widowed workers and

his two children, and four billets during the War. She nannied two children for a judge, cooked and cared for sick neighbours, and kept contact by phone with a host of people. She was a member of the Maylands, SA, church for 52 years.

MATTHEWS, Jean

Jean was described as a compulsive fund raiser. She organised fetes for Ashford House, a special school in Adelaide; helped provide an ambulance for transportation of Spastic Centre children and her cooking raised thousands of dollars for Heartbeat. She "stopped cooking only long enough to wash the dishes for the next lot". She had been secretary to the SA Public Service Board, helped in her husband's butcher shop, and was a tax consultant. She was an organist and Sunday school teacher at Semaphore, and later belonged to Albert Park and Maylands churches. She was married to Ken for 51 years. They had three children, Brenton, Bronwyn and David, and five grandchildren.

MUSGROVE, Alfred George

(1.4.98) Alf was born 7.11.07 and lived in Collingwood, Vic. He attended Collingwood church and as he grew older regularly conducted Sunday school anniversaries at various Churches of Christ and Baptist churches. As a plumber he often did repairs and helped build churches for both denominations. In October 1937 he married Daisy Grace Joyce and lived in Moonee Ponds. In the early fifties he became a member of the Essendon church where he played an

active role. He acted as convenor of the Friendship Group at Essendon. Alf had an acute sense of humour and a firm faith. He leaves three sons.

—KS

PARKER, Marjorie

Until well into her 80s, Marj Parker served on the Maylands, SA, church's ministry and pastoral committee. Despite health problems, she conscientiously visited and phoned people who were ill or frail. Marj, with her late husband Eric, transferred membership to Maylands from the former Norwood Church of Christ in 1935. They moved to Naracoorte, and later Colonel Light Gardens, but returned to Maylands church in 1952. She was, until recently, women's ministries coordinator at Maylands. We give thanks to God for her life and will remember her fondly.

WHITE, Gwendoline

(1910-1998) Gwen's mother lived in Adelaide. When the birth was imminent she simply walked around to Gwen's grandmother's home and gave birth to Gwen there. When Gwen married she and her husband moved to Beltana, in South Australia's outback, where he became station-master. They moved to Sydney and set up a shop in Clovelly. Widowed 50 years ago, Gwen came back to Adelaide and was a buyer for Myer. She helped found the Maylands Friendship Centre, and was secretary for its first seventeen years. She was baptised at age 81 and, when no longer able to attend worship or Friendship Centre, she had a prodigious phone network.

Red Hill Church of Christ Full-Time Minister

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Red Hill Church of Christ is a rural church on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, which has just celebrated its 113th year of ministry. It has average attendances of 60 at morning worship.

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Church News

QLD

ANN STREET, BRISBANE (W.J. Flett) Church hosted ecumenical service for Victims of Crime Association ... Jason Brown resumed second series for youth at gospel celebration under title "Jesus, the Great Deal", following return from Vanuatu where he assisted musically at mission ... Hayden, son of Tim & Kylie Vincent, dedicated at both services 21 May ... Church fortunate to escape damage following collapse of building in same block.

WA

CARNARVON (Gavin Law Davis) Rains washed out family beach camp but Ross Burton still presented series of studies over 3 days ... Inaugural family cricket match held at Ingada Village, followed by BBQ tea ... Following prayer, the Gascoyne River flowed & drought stricken stations have received rain ... Pastor Law Davis travelled 177 km east at invitation of Gascoyne Junction Shire to conduct Anzac memorial service.

NORTHAM (Jason Hemsley) 29 attended State Youth Games ... Alpha Celebration dinner attended by Alpha & Young Alpha. 5 conversions & 3 baptisms from this course ... OASIS kids' program going well. Celebration Day attended by many parents ... Kids' Way, His Way (children's church) led family service, including communion ... 40 copies of *Jesus* video given

away to visitors ... Visit from Coastal Christian Band.

VIC

KNOXFIELD (Malcolm Gray, Elaine McLeod, Rohan Waters) Good Friday service featured Maroondah Singers ... Fete raised \$1,600 for church & also provided fellowship & community outreach ... Church provided venue for Drug Arm conference ... Visiting speakers providing sermons on Jewish customs ... Looking forward to Charles Bayer, Merryl Blair & John Gilmore in lead up to stewardship program ... Youth will be strongly represented at State Youth Games.

SHORT ST, BENDIGO (Ross Barnes) Ladies camp at Hall's Gap organised

by church was a great success ... Church purchased new keyboard to enhance worship ... Visit by Grace & Jim Vine from Family Life Programs was helpful & encouraging ... Annual Mother's Day Fair held ... Craig Graham & Heather Holden announced their engagement ... Church saddened by death of Brian Donnellan.

BALLARAT CENTRAL (Jack White) Mother's Day service a great success, all ladies taking part in the special program ... Dedication of Dora & Blade Whittaker by minister 17 May ... Jack Edwards represented Overseas Mission Board 24 May ... Ministry of Jack & Ann White much appreciated ... A number of young people attending the services.

BLACKBURN (David Ratten, John Rowe, Russel Croxford, Anne Spoelder) 110 young people & support group to attend State Youth Games at Warragul 5-6 June ... Charles Bayer guest lecturer from USA at CCTC, Mulgrave; led discussion & study on "Taking a New Look at Christian Theology" ... A new MOPS group is to start meeting shortly.

CHADSTONE (Malcolm and Yvonne Lowe) Guest speaker Mother's Day, Betty Rachael Hampton, author of parenting program ... Over 180 attended funeral service of Joan Whittaker, conducted by Malcolm Lowe ... Friendship group with Chinese very successful ... Jon Lowe achieved (B) Pass for 4th Grade violin exam ... Church 43rd anniversary held

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Church News

31 May ... John & Edna Sutton back after 3-week holiday to Brisbane & Sydney.

HORSHAM (Steve Blacket, Julie Trinnick) New Community Counselling Service offices opened 18 May by Trevor Giles, Executive Director of Churches of Christ Community Care ... 2 successful day bus trips for 55s & over ... Dennis & Glenyce Tranter spoke on Aboriginal ministry at Borroloola, NT ... Ivan Sheriff leading new church choir.

KANIVA (Paul Bauer) Paul receiving congratulations on engagement to Tamara Brunotte of Boronia ... John Gilmore addressed members of Kaniva-Serviceton congregations on shared ministries in country towns ... Minister & Barry Williams attended State Conference ... Meaningful combined service in church hall for Pentecost Sunday. Youth band & older members participated in various items ... Rita Goldsworthy recuperating after hip replacement.

SPRINGVALE (John Carmichael) Alpha Course has 26 participating. Church/Alpha camp held at Camp Waterman ... Mark, Brenda & Daniel Hunting evacuated from Jakarta ... Visiting speakers Graham Rule, Drug Arm & Ralph Hewes, *Jesus* video ... Church mourns death of Ken Brown & Edna Fawaz who confessed her faith aged 91 ... Mother's Day posies to newest mum (2 weeks) & mother with most children (7).

BORONIA (Bruce Moore, Gordon Stirling) Bruce Moore accepted invitation to full-time ministry for two years from February 1999 ... Delegates & other members attended State Conference ... Church camp held at The Basin Centre, speaker Graeme Cann ... Appreciation expressed to Pearl Wallace for 20 years service as newsletter typist ... Members occupied one table at CCTC luncheon & concert ... Recent visiting speakers Charles Bayer, Simon Risson, John Gilmore.

CROYDON (Ben Richardson) Church planning 125th anniversary ... Growth in attendances at both services ... Re-

cent baptisms ... Planned forthcoming baptismal service ... Sale of unit in retirement village ... Successful participation in State Youth Games ... Repairs of recent fire damage completed.

THORNBURY (Barry Jenkins) Multicultural celebrations brought together Christians from Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan, Africa, Cook Islands, Vietnam, Cambodia, China, India, Fiji and Philippines ... Sunday evening outreaches attracting new group of

contacts ... Alpha group commences July ... Chek Chia spoke at church anniversary ... Church participated in combined Pentecost Service at Northcote. Over 150 present from Ivanhoe, Preston, West Preston, Northcote & Thornbury.

NSW

TWEED HEADS-COOLANGATTA (Bruce Warwick) Enthusiasm in co-

operation of distribution of *Jesus* video ... Bruce attended Ministers' Refresher ... 2 ladies baptised in river ... Church participated in Bill Newman Crusade & monthly combined churches rallies ... Our 2 college students took services recently ... Bruce preaching at Murwillumbah ... Church praises God for baby Nikita—born with heart defect, heart bypass at one week old—in church 10 days later.

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A.B. Maston's History

GORDON STIRLING

We have been looking at the ministry of A.B. Maston, first Editor of *The Australian Christian*.

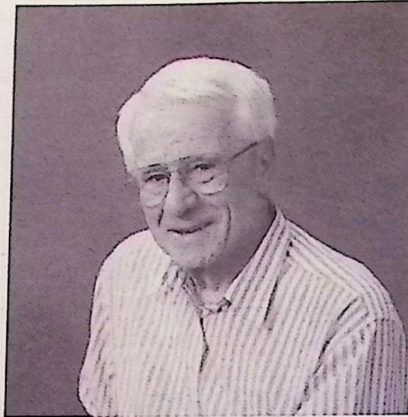
Here are a few snippets from his story.

In 1853 he was born in a log cabin in Ohio, USA. He was one of ten children. His higher education was at Northern Indiana Normal School with a leading Disciple as Principal, H.B. Brown. The fees were \$1.90 per week. As his BA was not recognised by the major universities he never used it.

To keep himself while studying he did some teaching in three different schools, the Honey Run School, the Railroad School and the Brick Yard School. In one of the schools the boys chewed tobacco constantly, spitting the juice onto the floor. So Maston drilled large holes in the wooden walls and insisted on the boys expectorating through them into space.

While a student he talked frequently to two friends about baptism, specially referring to the story in Acts 8 of the Ethiopian eunuch and quoting the eunuch's words. One day he was walking beside a lake with the friends when one of them suddenly quoted the eunuch's words. So without changing clothes Maston baptised his friends then and there.

When A.B. Maston left America the local paper offered sympathy "as Mr and Mrs Maston leave for the far distant island of New Zealand to go as missionaries to the half-enlightened people". They went on to say that they were "forsaking the comforts of a home among enlightened and intelli-



gent people in taking up the hazards of such a trip".

While at Wellington, Maston received a cablegram from Sydney which read, ACTS SIXTEEN NINE, LETTER FOLLOWING. THOMAS HAWKINS. The letter was an invitation to become state evangelist in New South Wales. It was declined. During his Wellington ministry membership grew from 24 to 217.

In the end the disease that had robbed him of an eye attacked his whole body. But he still attended all of the state conferences in the interests of "The Christian". He had to leave the Sydney conference early because of the pain. He returned home to bed. The last entry in his diary on 8 February 1907 reads, "At home most of the day. At the Austral for an hour or two this afternoon." From there he went home to die just before his 54th birthday.

The Last Word

Do not speak unless you can improve the silence.

Her Pa: "Do you realise you have been here to dinner every day this week?"

Lover: "That's OK. I have fixed up at my lodgings to have only bed and breakfast in future."

Diner: "I see that tips are forbidden here."

Waitress: "Bless your heart, sir, so was the apples in the Garden of Eden."

A good story is being told by a prominent Scot. It is a sly hit at his compatriots' careflessness in money matters. "Asked to explain the falling death rate in Scotland, an Aberdeen economist attributed it to the greatly increased cost of funerals."

Beech: "Why did you break your engagement with that school teacher?"

Ash: "If I failed to show up every night, she expected me to bring a written excuse signed by my mother."

"Do you think I'm conceited?" he asked his girlfriend.

"No, what makes you think that?" she asked.

"Well," he replied, "most blokes as handsome as me usually are."

*Where do you find elephants?
It depends on where you left them!*

The 90s Woman (2)



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