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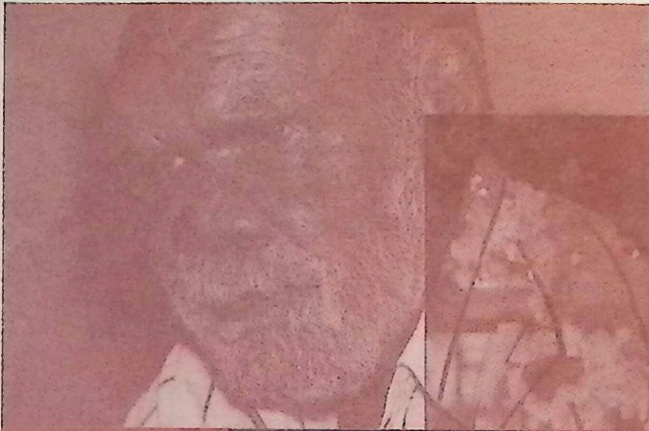


Christian

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Aboriginal Mission - Working together



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Editorial

A Difficult Task

DON SMITH

If we voted on who among our leaders in Churches of Christ has the most difficult task, I believe that Avon Moyle of our Federal Aborigines Board would be a high scorer. Never in Australia's recent history has there been a time when indigenous affairs have had such a high profile, with such potential for misunderstanding and division. * There is a need for support and understanding between local churches, Conferences and the Board. The contributions by Avon Moyle and Ross Norling in this issue are encouraging. Alongside these achievements we have the horrific picture described by Viney Longthorp in "Media Matters". * The December 1997 issue of "Walking Together" from the Council of Aboriginal reconciliation highlights the divergent views of white Australia on the "Native Title Amendment Bill" under consideration by the Federal Parliament. This year these issues will be played out in the political forum. Within our ranks there will be divergent views. * In the midst of this turmoil we have the continuing issue of ministry with indigenous people. Dr Michael Wooldridge, the Federal Minister for Health, said at a medical conference in 1997 that if he could get everything within his power right, eg medical services, adequate water supplies, basic housing infrastructure, this would fix about 20% of the problem, leaving 80% of health problems to be solved by the people themselves with government goodwill and assistance. He then noted the tremendous gains in life expectancy among New Zealand's indigenous population. Maori self-help and concern to take charge of their affairs has also been very significant in Christian mission. * These gains were evident in a recent planning conference held in Victoria last December ("AC" 11.2.98). This important event was linked to the Federal Aborigines Board. Here the impetus and impact of Maori leadership was significant. This was an initiative which also gave grounds for hope. * It is said of Tiger Woods, the prominent Afro-American golfer, that the best remedy for racism is black achievement. Woods speaks proudly of his heritage and speaks out about racial discrimination. The leadership for our indigenous ministry must come from within. Can we cope with that and all the implications? *





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Aboriginal mission still challenges the church, we look at some issues.
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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.

Help us to Think
 To the Editor,
 Two letters ("AC" 11.2.98) standing together (David Allison and A. Cant) appear to be making the same point—the need for growth in the congregation's understanding of the biblical record. For many years Harry Fosdick, outstanding author, preacher and scholar (Allison) achieved the preaching role A. Cant recommended, that today's preacher should "be stirring the congregation's brains and teasing them to grow up in all things".
 Sure, ministers need good management skills, but perhaps what is more important is that they need to be able to challenge their people to a better understanding of the biblical record. It is probably a truism that large numbers of preachers are afraid or reluctant to reveal their beliefs. This is either because of the power for disruption by entrenched "know it all" fundamentalist elements in the congregation, or fear of upsetting those faithful souls who have not advanced in their thinking beyond their Sunday School days. Yet there are significant numbers, young and old, who desire a "meat" diet rather than a continuing "milk" intake most are fed. To give a couple of examples—have you heard a preacher at least question taking at face value the Noah story? Housing and feeding all the worlds creatures, in the Ark, for 40 days plus 150 days, or that the Job story is a parable of

man's faithfulness to God, or do we still think that God does deals with the Devil?
 An educated and more aware congregation demands that issues be dealt with more openly by the preacher. As A. Cant suggested, the preacher should "help people to actually think and grow up in their understanding of the Bible and Christian faith". (With apologies to A. Cant if I have misinterpreted him.)

—Charles Kimber
 (Brisbane, Qld)

Sale of Banksia
 To the Editor,
 I am writing to call all Banksia campers, past and present, to express their abhorrence at the decision to sell the Banksia, Vic, campsite. With respect to those who gave made this decision, I do not believe it is in the interest of Churches of Christ, nor in fact, in the interest of the evangelistic framework in which Churches of Christ operate.
 A consortium made up of interested persons from various churches has been formed which is willing to raise the necessary money and to keep the camp site within Churches of Christ. I urge all those that can to either express their concern, or join us by buying a \$500 share.

—Pat Rivett
 (Knoxfield, Vic)

Biblical Understanding
 To the Editor,
 David Allison ("AC" 15.11.97) asks "What say you now?" to his challenge to my appeal for a right understanding of what the Bible says.
 At the risk of further misunderstanding, I draw attention to the "Archaeology" articles in the issue of 15 November—particularly Marie Bråten's where she highlights the misunderstanding

Letters to the Editor

which still persists in some sections of the community that Christians are cannibals because, taking the words of Jesus literally, we eat his body and drink (horror of horrors) his blood.

Do we denigrate the Bible (as I have been accused) when we interpret "This is my body ... this is my Blood" as symbolic rather than actual?

No, I feel that David Allison is confused even as Mr Luxton was over my previous letter in not realising that I am calling for an understanding of what the Bible really says to us, rather than what either the literal words or the doctrinal conclusions suggest. Most of us have to accept translations of the original text, some of which are influenced by doctrine rather than language accuracy. How many more "new" versions of the Bible are we to be introduced to on the grounds that they reflect a more accurate translation than the previous editions? The New English was supposed to be "perfect", but now we are encouraged to use the NIV as the most acceptable. By all means call upon the theologians to help us, but let them be honest to God as well as to us.

Finally, in response to David's letter ("AC" 11.2.98), I too have read and possess many good reference books. I have even attained an Associate Diploma of Theology (Australian College of Theology) in order to improve my understanding of what the Bible actually says.

—Geoff Keeler
(Palmwoods, Qld)

A Cappella Churches of Christ

To the Editor,
In my article ("AC" 29.11.97) on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) I made the statement that "a cappella Church of Christ

pastors will go it alone". An a cappella minister in Maryland, USA, has written to correct me on two counts. One, their preachers are called ministers or evangelists, not pastors. Of this I was not aware. Two, exclusivism is still alive, but there is a growing group of "progressive" congregations that reject this and are actively working together with other evangelical believers in ministerial associations, cooperative community ministries, etc. Of this I was

Here and There

Torres Strait Split

Of 33 clergy in the Anglican Church of Australia in the Torres Strait, 27 have resigned and joined the newly-formed Church of Torres Strait. The clergy have linked with a breakaway group from the worldwide Anglican Communion. Reasons for the split include disagreement over the appointment of a new regional bishop by the Diocese of North Queensland, dissatisfaction with Anglican dealings with the region and issues relating to the ordination of women.

NZ Minister's Work Honoured
Ron O'Grady a New Zealand Churches of Christ minister and founder and international coordinator of ECPAT, the worldwide campaign to end child prostitution, has received an award, from Save the Children Canada.

certainly aware, but space limitation resulted in my not qualifying my generalisation.

There is in fact considerable di-

versity in all three branches of the Campbell-Stone movement.

—Ronald Graham
(Johnston, Iowa, USA)

Update

Dear Readers,

This issue has a focus on ministry with Australia's indigenous population. Avon Moyle of the Federal Aborigines Board supplied photographs for the cover, the Board's promotional feature and the articles on pages 11 and 15. Other features relating to Normanton, Qld, and the Jilba in Victoria were supplied by state bodies. We are appreciative of the assistance offered by Avon Moyle in preparation of this and previous issues.

Readers will be interested to know that while we were finalising with Therese Sese some matters regarding the transmission of the text of the article about Normanton to our office, her husband Remy was somewhere between Cairns and Normanton, an eight-hour journey at best. He had reached Croydon with the remainder of the journey on a road without a bitumen surface. As the journey was taking place in the midst of the wet season and there had been

heavy rain, readers will appreciate the potential problems. However, he reached home safely.

On page 9 we carry a report on an article by John Rees in *Zadok Perspectives*. As noted a copy of the article is available from this office. The Summer 1998 edition (32 pages) of this magazine is available from Zadok Institute, PO Box 289, Hawthorn Vic 3122, at a cost of \$5.00. The edition includes additional papers on "The Republic of God" by Gordon Preece and "Towards an Australian Spirituality" by Veronica Brady. A new subscriber annual subscription costs \$30 for four issues a year. We still require voluntary help with proof reading for one half day each issue. Any enquires regarding assistance will be welcomed.

Pontius' Puddle



Where History is Being Made

Comments from a participant in Australia's Constitutional Convention

"How does it feel to be where history is being made?" I asked Adam Johnston after he had returned from his first day at the Constitutional Convention in Canberra. Adam (pictured right) gave his characteristic chuckle over the phone and said he would tell me in a few hours time, after he had given his maiden address to the delegates.

Adam, a 23-year-old law student and member of our Northside Church in Sydney, has had an awesome responsibility thrust upon him. He was one of only 112 Australians who were appointed as non-parliamentary delegates to the Constitutional Convention. He represented the youth of NSW

and says that his role was to express what young people are thinking.

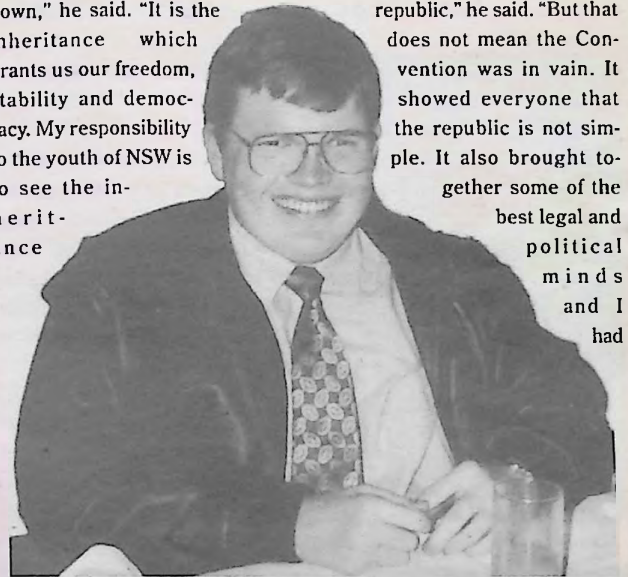
"The losers from a divided outcome will be my generation," Adam said. "The Convention will have ramifications for a long time. I wanted to try to ensure that whatever system we take on we make sure that we take the consensus of the Convention with us. We must maintain the basic principles of freedom and democracy and the separation of powers between the judiciary and the legislators. The head-of-state issue is secondary to maintaining basic freedoms and the rule of law."

Adam, who suffers from cerebral palsy, presented his maiden address to the Convention from his wheelchair. With the infectious humour that his friends always associate with him, he opened his remarks by saying, "Mr. Chairman, I cannot rise to address you, but rising to this occasion is my ambition."

Referring to the old Parliament House they were meeting in and the 1000 year old heritage from absolute monarchy to parliamentary sovereignty that it represents, Adam went on to present his own republican model. "This

is no ordinary hand-me-down," he said. "It is the inheritance which grants us our freedom, stability and democracy. My responsibility to the youth of NSW is to see the inheritance

of whether Australians want a republic," he said. "But that does not mean the Convention was in vain. It showed everyone that the republic is not simple. It also brought together some of the best legal and political minds and I had



preserved. Equally, accountability to the popular will means that I must consider republican alternatives ... if there is to be change let us accord our system of government the respect it deserves by using its history to build a secure future."

Adam was disappointed that his own republican model did not get an airing beyond his maiden speech. But he is glad that it stands as part of the official record.

"The Convention did not provide a decisive answer to the question

of whether Australians want a republic," he said. "But that does not mean the Convention was in vain. It showed everyone that the republic is not simple. It also brought together some of the best legal and political minds and I had the opportunity to learn from national leaders, past and present." How well Adam learned became clear to me as I learned that he had become quite adept at making the famous political one-liner sound bite. I asked him to sum up the experience in less than 30 words. He did it in 20. "This is the Convention we had to have, to come up with the republican model few want and no-one needs." Do I sense the beginning of a political career here?

—Bob Smith
National Coordinator

Making News

Vic-Tas Growth

Victorian-Tasmanian Conference Office reports continuing membership growth, with a combined 3.1% increase for 1996-1997.



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Banksia Bail-Out

Cooperative formed to purchase camp site

Supporters pledged over \$50,000 in five minutes at a 9 February meeting of Banksia campers. The meeting was a positive response to the Vic-Tas Churches of Christ Conference Board decision to sell the Camp Banksia site in East Gippsland. Chairman for the night, Neil Galbraith minister of the Belmont, Vic, church said concerning the purpose of the meeting, that "The decision to sell has been made in good faith, and we

are not here to force a reversal. We are here to form a cooperative to buy Banksia and preserve it for future generations of Churches of Christ and friends." Tribute was paid to the influence these camps have been on spiritual and personal development. The meeting unanimously voted to form a cooperative selling shares at \$500 each. Contact Margaret Goddard (03) 9874 8101 for information.

On the Move

Ministry changes in our Vic-Tas churches

Many Vic-Tas churches held special services for the commencement of these new ministries: Jack White, Ballarat Central, Peel Street; Tony Hooper, Berwick team; John Williamson, Box Hill; Martin Goldup, Chelsea; Martin Rees, Jack Edwards, Dandenong team; Cindy Waters, Doncaster team; David Hughes, Hurstbridge; Mavis Uldrich and Graham Lord, Ivanhoe and Northcote team; Rohan Waters, Knoxfield team; Steve Fitzallen, Launceston team; David McGrouther, Melbourne, Swanston Street; Simon Risson, Mildura; Martin Gillespie, Mitcham; David Moyes, Monash City; Mark Butler, Mulgrave; Rod Ratcliffe, Mt Clear; Cathy English, Ormond team; Bill Sharrock, Pyramid Hill and Boort; Mike Janssen, Preston; Albie Fitt, Parkdale; Ian Hunt, Red Cliffs; David Thompson, Richmond; Penny Galbraith, Ringwood team; Rod Brown,

Southern Community team; Andrew George, St. Arnaud; Barry Jenkins, Thornbury; Geoff Sprott, Traralgon; Larry Holt, Warrnambool. John Gilmore, Director of Ministry, arranged for these ministers to meet Conference Agency Directors on 4 March and to be introduced to the services available to churches. In the evening, the Ministers' Association hosted a dinner.

End of an Era

Keith Milne's ministry concludes



Presentation to Keith and Laurel Milne at the conclusion of a twelve-year ministry.

The longest term of ministry at Boronia Church of Christ, Vic, came to an end on 1 February, as Keith Milne was farewelled by over 200 at morning worship.

A capacity crowd overflowed the hall during lunch and then returned to the chapel as representatives from Conference, local ministers and the congregation paid fitting tributes to Keith for his ministry of 12 years. During this time he has served as Conference President and has seen the church through major developments, including rebuilding following a fire which razed the complex in 1991, and the leasing of the property next door that has allowed the church to extend its car park, commence a craft centre and look to offer counselling serv-

ices. Laurel's contribution and support during this time was also recognised as a presentation was made and the congregation wished them both God's blessing on their retirement.

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—Lindsay Mott, Treasurer

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Festival WA

Evangelistic Outreach with Franklin Graham

Franklin Graham sounded like a "cut down version" of his famous father Billy—same fundamental gospel message including a firm line on sin and hell, but the messages were shorter and the style more laid back. His preaching was very "black and white", but as promised by the team, young people responded in good numbers. The music was certainly not what older generations remember of past crusades, but was a relevant expression of youth culture today. The response figure was 6.7%, with 3.7% the figure for salvation. (Without the Kid's Fest figures the response was about 6%.) Of the 4,211 inquirers, 2,320 were for salvation.

Overall attendance in the Burswood Dome for the four meetings held 6-8 February was 62,700. Unfortunately, the finance raised has fallen short of the \$540,000 budget, and this burden will fall on the churches. A very effective advertising program on radio, TV and papers did arouse a lot of interest, but not as much media coverage as hoped.

A quick survey of five of our churches revealed an average of 25 inquirers, with about half being first time decisions. One country church has had a further three



Franklin Graham

adults accept Christ in the two weeks since the crusade. Past research has shown that following a major evangelistic mission the number of baptisms in our churches drops below average for the next two years. We trust that the training of the counsellors in the Christian Life and Witness classes and the School of Evangelism, that were run in conjunction with the Festival, will not result in this happening, but bring a surge of growth and enthusiasm.

The increased relationship across the denominations experienced in the preparation for the Festival will surely benefit evangelism initiatives across the churches in the future. Some 460 churches from sixteen denominations were involved.

Nursery Naturalists

Early childhood environment education resource centre

In the past, early childhood care has been considered to be preschool education filled with indoor activities and outdoor play-time. A new Environmental Education Centre on the Sunshine Coast is about to change all that! The philosophy will be mostly outdoor activities with the emphasis being on "about, for and in the environment".

The Churches of Christ in Nambour are developing the centre on church land beside Tuckers Creek National Park—a perfect setting for environmental education!

The centre will eventually be an outdoor complex where children can be immersed in themed educational activities. There will be environmental walks, fish and frog ponds, gardens (including a rainforest to complement the backdrop of the National Park) and a "Discovery Room". Although there is a long way to go before everything is up and running, the centre is about to start its first program. Everyone involved recognises that "baby steps" are the beginning of something wonderful.

Fae Barber, an educationalist based on the Sunshine Coast, has a strong background in early childhood environmental education and is the person responsible for the development of the Nursery Naturalists Program. After visiting some of the leading programs in the United States, she has returned full of enthusiasm and eager to start trialing her own program and adapting ideas to suit our Australian environment. The trialing of the ten-week Nurs-



Planting marigolds with the corn and lettuce

ery Naturalists Program, involving 12-15 children aged three to five years, began on 3 February and will start by focusing on seeds. The program will then move on to other topics such as leaves, fish, frogs and birds. The five sessions are run each fortnight for two hours and will all follow a similar format.

Parents will be provided with a take-home activity sheet! The sheets inform the parents concerning the activities in which their children have been involved. Other games, stories and activities are recommended to allow the parents to follow up at home (and maybe even learn something new themselves).

The whole program is put together to provide outdoor environmental experiences for young children, with the hope that the little will one day grow up to be big naturalists, with a caring attitude and a passion for our environment.

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Photographic Controversy

Comment available on recent conflict between church and culture

In late 1997 the National Gallery of Victoria was the scene of considerable controversy over a photograph exhibited by US photographer Andre Serrano. The controversy centred on a depiction of the crucified Jesus immersed in urine. The photo raised questions about blasphemy, religious censorship and morality. Melbourne's Roman Catholic Archbishop, George Pell, was unsuccessful in legal action in the Victorian Supreme Court aimed at forcing the Gallery to withdraw the offending photograph. He was backed in his objections by representatives of other Christian groups. The controversy was brought to a head by two young

men entering the exhibition, one of whom attacked the photograph with a hammer while his partner diverted the attention of Gallery security staff. Protests also took place outside the Gallery, mostly from religious objectors. The National Gallery reluctantly closed the exhibition, probably fearing potential damage to the multi-million dollar Rembrandt Exhibition running concurrently with the Serrano photographs. This drama was played out in Melbourne and possibly received little attention in other states. It was not mentioned in this paper because of its localised interest.

John Rees, a graduate of CCTC in New South Wales and a Churches

.... it has a dashboard magnet and when you plug it into the cigarette lighter the eyes glow and the liquid turns a beautiful golden color.



Leunig cartoon reprinted from *The Age*, 10.10.97.

of Christ minister, has recently had an analysis of the incident published in *Zadok Perspectives* a journal of the Zadok Institute for Christianity and Society. He examines the controversy, how it was handled by the Church and carefully compares this with the way Paul responded to the Athenians by using their own symbols as the foundation for his message. We have received permission from Zadok to reprint the article, but as it is longer than we would normally publish and is potentially of specialist interest, the article will be forwarded on request as a separate item. The content

will be of interest to readers concerned about how the church handles controversy over contemporary social and moral issues. It is also a comment on the Gospel and its relationship to contemporary culture and how the church can deal with such issues, especially when they incite strong feelings. Please specify whether you wish a printed version or a copy in Adobe Acrobat format, which can be e-mailed to you. John is a member of Marrickville, NSW, church and currently teaches at the School of Christian Studies, Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University.

Hear Don Carson

Don Carson is coming to Melbourne next August to speak at a preachers' workshop on *Preaching Christ from all the Scriptures—Insights from Biblical Theology*.

Don is a Research Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, USA. A Canadian by birth, he is a gripping speaker, prolific author, and clear herald of God's word.

This is a non-residential conference, especially for ministers and those in training for preaching the Bible.

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Evening of reminiscing—Saturday 28 March 1998.

Sunday Services—combining with eastern wheatbelt churches—Sunday 29 March 1998.

RSVP 13 March to PO Box 122, Merredin WA 6415.

Further inquiries (08) 9041 1741—Gloria Banks
 (08) 9041 1230—Rhonda Chapman
 or fax (08) 9041 2570.

LeRoy Lawson

Seminar leader has passion for evangelism

LeRoy Lawson of Mesa, Arizona, minister of the 4,500-member Central Christian Church and President of Hope International University, Fullerton, California has just completed a short visit to Australia, where he conducted a seminar series on the theme "Your Church-Beyond 2000" in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne. In an interview with the Editor he responded to a question about self-image by describing himself as a shepherd with a vital interest in the lambing season.



His passion for evangelism and church development comes through clearly in his public and private conversations. Dr Lawson manages to hold together a senior ministry role with a large church and the presidency of an expanding liberal arts tertiary institution with a theological training component. Hope University offers undergraduate and post-graduate studies.

During his short stay in Australia he also taught a course with students at CCTC, Carlingford, and warmly commended the students on their enthusiasm and the quality of the discussion. He says that he has greatly enjoyed the interaction with ministers and leaders who participated in the seminars at Northside, NSW, Marion, SA, and Doncaster, Vic, churches. He says he leaves Australia impressed by the quality, vigour and high morale of the leaders he met. His seminars sought to challenge leaders about adapting to change in a changing world. He sees the unchanging aspect of the Gospel

as faith in the triune God and the potential of the Gospel to transform lives. Dr Lawson believes the forgiveness of sin leads to hope, both at a personal and wider level.

LeRoy Lawson continues to learn. He describes a defining moment when he recently visited the Philippines and saw an urban renewal project on Smokey Mountain. This Manila project is the outcome of 20 years of work by a Roman Catholic priest who went to work in a community of some 25,000 people living on a city rubbish dump. He described the situation which confronted the priest as one of deprivation, squalor and hopelessness. The situation is now one of spiritual and economic renewal brought about by a practical theology and an incarnational faith.

LeRoy Lawson belongs to what we know as our Independent Churches in the USA. He sees this community as growing and optimistic. LeRoy was accompanied by his wife Joy.

Eusebius: Chronicler of a "Golden Age"

BILL TABBERNEE

Eusebius, a Christian scholar born c.260 AD, had almost finished his draft of the first church history ever written when he received word that all Christian books were to be burnt. The year was 303, the start of the so-called "Great Persecution". Eusebius resided at Caesarea Maritima, 60 miles from Jerusalem. He had chosen to live there because of the outstanding Christian library at Caesarea containing thousands of volumes. All of these, as well as precious ancient manuscripts of biblical books, were to be destroyed by imperial decree.

Fortunately, Eusebius, in writing his history, had quoted lengthy extracts from earlier works. These extracts in most cases, are now the only extant remnants of Christian writings which were destroyed during the persecution. Eusebius' *Church History*, which he revised and updated at least four times during the succeeding decades, was preserved and distributed widely, especially after he became bishop of Caesarea in c.313, soon after Constantine ended the persecution and became the first Christian emperor.

Although Eusebius later exaggerated somewhat his own relationship with Constantine, there is no doubt that there was some personal contact between them. On one occasion, the emperor gave Eusebius a substantial grant to enable the few copies of the scriptures which had survived the persecution to be copied, thus explaining why, al-



though there is a paucity of New Testament manuscripts older than c.330, quite a number exist today which were produced soon after that date.

Eusebius was a prolific writer. Apart from the *History*, which incorporated many of the events he had witnessed personally, he also wrote an eyewitness account titled *The Martyrs of Palestine*, panegyrics honoring Constantine, biblical commentaries, apologetic and doctrinal treatises, as well as substantial letters. Taken together, these writings provide a comprehensive, first-hand account of what it was like to be a Christian during the early decades of the fourth century when Christianity was transformed from being a persecuted minority religion into the official religion of the Roman Empire. No wonder that Eusebius believed that, through Constantine, the "Golden Age of Christianity" had finally dawned. Later historians, however, were to question whether this "triumph of Christianity" had been a victory after all. Perhaps "Church" and "State" are better off as separate entities, even if such separation results in occasional conflict.

Aborigines

Where to from Here?

AVON MOYLE

As a nation we have just come through a most significant year with respect to issues concerning indigenous Australia.

Two major events grabbed our attention. They were the report into the so-called "stolen children" as well as the matters concerning the Wik judgment, subsequent debate, and the attempts at enshrining a response in legislation.

We need to encourage and empower those Aboriginal people giving leadership and positive role models to their own people.

As I have talked to people inside our churches most have commended the Federal Aborigines Board for its submission and response to the stolen children inquiry, especially the initiatives now in place to assist those Aborigines seeking information about their past. The Board office now has a centralised data bank and the photographs of those who were cared for in the days of the children's homes conducted by Churches of Christ. Already there has been a steady stream of requests for information—which the office has been able to meet—to the great satisfaction of the people concerned.

Others in the churches—and I suppose the broader community—remain, unsure, uncertain and confused, even apprehensive. I do not blame them.

Early in 1997 the Federal Aborigines Board wrote to the Prime Minister and leaders of the other federal political parties urging that they commit themselves to seek out a just solution to the

Wik question—a solution that will lead to a just settlement and thus enhance reconciliation. Some in the churches said the Board had gone too far, others said we did not go far enough. The politicians responded with their particular party stance. Sadly, there did not appear to be any desire to put politics aside in order to work collectively and cooperatively to reach a just solution. Instead of unanimity, the legislation still lies on the Senates table with 600 amendments to be debated and the threat of a double dissolution of Federal Parliament hanging over our heads. The threat of an election based on racial issues is, sadly, very real. Whose interests are being served? Some key issues need to be carefully considered if we are to address our past and seek ways to respond to the present.

- We must understand that some events in our history have proved to be harmful and have left a terrible legacy. The church has been among the first to offer a genuine apology. Some find it hard to say "sorry" but it is the first step towards healing.
- We need to look beyond the stereotypes to see "real people". We need to take care lest we allow our opinions to be formed solely on the basis of the what the media portrays of Australia's indigenous people.
- We need to encourage and empower those Aboriginal people giving leadership and positive role models to their own people. We should stand with those Aboriginal pastors and their people who seek to express Christianity that is authentic and relevant to their culture.
- We should seek opportunities to personally befriend Aboriginal people, to walk with them, to get to know them.



Two suburban churches in WA. regularly meet with Aboriginal churches with which they have established a relationship, and the blessings have been mutual and quite profound.

- We must seek out the truth concerning the "conflict" between native title claims and our tenure on land. Are they mutually exclusive? Will we really lose our backyards or our farms? Will negotiations and compromise bring about a "win-win" situation? Will the exploration and exploitation of our mineral wealth be curtailed? These are the hard issues. The church should continue to give a lead in their resolution. We hear much about multiculturalism, tolerance, integration and reconciliation these days. The first three are legal concepts and ultimately can be resolved by legislation. Reconciliation on the other hand is a spiritual concept. It is about acceptance of each other on the basis that God first loved us and forgave us that we might be reconciled to him. Therefore, reconciliation is the perfect opportunity for evangelism. Where to from here? May the church continue in its God-given role in society, reflecting the love of God, in doing what is just, showing constant love and living in humble fellowship with our God. (Micah 6:8)
- Avon Moyle is Executive Director of the Churches of Christ Federal Aborigines Board.

Federal Aborigines Board

Practical Christian Service

Acts 3:6-7



Wayne and Mary Bell — Carnarvon, WA

administer the Frail Aged Hostel facilities that provide a high standard of personalised care to aged residents who require constant love and support. Such requires long hours of dedication and a willingness to reach out in service to those in need.

Wayne and Mary have been actively involved in Carnarvon since 1990 and are highly respected for their expertise and selfless service.

Very practical ministry.

Please support the annual offering
Sunday, 15 March 1998



Ross and Helen Norling live in Port Hedland, but their ministry extends far into the Pilbara region of WA. They give leadership to the local Aboriginal church, assist in several community development programs, Ross negotiates with mining companies on behalf of Aboriginal communities and regularly visits isolated communities. Helen is involved in ministry among the ladies — their clothing sales as well as in the regional hospital.

Very practical ministry.

The Federal Aborigines Board is
Reaching Out in Practical Ministry

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Acts 3:6-7 The message is backed up
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Craig and Tanya Wilson with their four young children live and work at Roelands, WA. They are fully involved in the work of the farm and the orchard, as well as progressively upgrading the old mission homes, the grounds and other facilities. Under their direction, Roelands continues as a popular venue for youth and church camps, a place where people can have "time out" and families can get away together. Roelands is the venue for Aboriginal conventions.

All funds generated at Roelands through their service assist in the overall work of the FAB around Australia.

Very practical ministry.



Max and Naomi Wright have just completed 12 months of service in Adelaide — in a new form of ministry. They encourage local Christian Aborigines and conduct an education program in the Churches of Christ in SA.

Max visits the little churches in Pt Lincoln and Ceduna and is looking to become involved in the Riverlands, Murray Bridge and other areas during 1998. Max is on the state board of Churches of Christ in SA and has given wise and disciplined leadership of the FAB for several years as its chairman.

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Aborigines

How Things Change

ROSS NORLING

A quick review of the last three years of ministry in Port Hedland, WA, reveal how much has changed.

We used to have four children, now we have five. Stephen was given to Helen to look after as a baby when we were in Marble Bar. Our eldest two found employment in Perth and have left us. Our ministry thrust has changed. No longer

I remember only too well fighting local government and begging mining companies for help—to no avail.

is the emphasis on outreach alone, but rather on teaching and equipping for ministry. We have had 80 baptisms in the last two years, with more seeking baptism. But we want disciples, not baptisms. I believe wholeheartedly that our mandate is to teach all people—make disciples—as commanded.

Our places of worship and residence have changed. Thanks to Churches of Christ in WA and the Viertel Foundation we now have church and manse properties suited to our needs, with excellent facilities for expansion.

Most exciting has been the way God has opened opportunities for Christian involvement in social and economic development issues in Aboriginal affairs. Native Title is an issue with far-reaching effects that will touch many areas of Australian life, some good and some not so good. There will be mixed reaction among Christians.

My comments are from working over a two-year period to now. I believe that

the church and mission departments, if invited, should support individuals and groups. This is a new exciting era in mission, as we watch the birth of the true indigenous church.

In September 1997 *The West Australian* newspaper headline read “\$700m Pilbara Iron Mine Gets Go Ahead” the third paragraph said that it was a “groundbreaking land use agreement with local Aboriginal groups. Hamersley

struck a deal with the Gumala Aboriginal Corporation and thirteen native title claimants in March, offering up to \$60 million in employment, training and business development over 20 years”. Not all land use agreements will be like that one, but the principles are the same: making sure that we can offer any help, the best advice, best resources and the freedom to make their own decisions.

The three tribes that make up the Gumala Aboriginal Corporation, the Innagonga, Bunjima and the Niapaili (which I belong to), of which 70% to 80% are welfare dependent, suddenly have to make corporate and business decisions about large amounts of money.

The ironic thing is that just twelve years ago I was helping the same people to obtain a small block of ground to live on so that they didn't have to live in car bodies out of town. I remember only too well fighting local government and begging mining companies for help—to no avail. Now the tables are turned and we have so many converted councillors and repentant mining companies that all want to suddenly mine and live harmoniously on Aboriginal land.



A moment of great significance. A knight of the realm, a lawyer and the Gumala people prepare to sign their agreement. Yandicoodgina (centre) directs proceedings.

Last week I was involved in selecting three independent directors to sit on a board with myself and three other Gumala members to form a company whose shareholders would be the Gumala Aboriginal Corporation. This company is negotiating to go into joint venture with three other large companies who will be contracting to Hamersley Iron on the Yandicoodgina Iron Ore project.

This year we hope to start negotiations with BHP and Robe River. Who knows what kind of deal will come off? Talking about deals, it all started when a hopeless alcoholic named Yandicoodgina made a deal with God on his life and asked Jesus Christ to be his manager fifteen years ago. Twelve years later a mining company came and wanted to do a deal on his land. The first deal he did with God was still the best deal ever done by far.

The changes have come quickly. There are opportunities for Christian ministry among Aboriginal people in ways I never dreamed about.

It is my prayer that God will help us seize the moment. Will you pray with me?

Aborigines

Normanton

HERESA AND REMY SESE

The Normanton fellowship was formed in 1978 under the Queensland Churches of Christ. The fellowship has had its difficult times and many had left the church. When we arrived almost two years ago, there was only a small group of believers. God is bringing the people back now.

Three priority areas for the church are spiritual growth, unity and leadership.

Spiritual Growth

There are many hurt people in Normanton.

Alcohol abuse is one of the problems that has caused broken relationships, broken homes and a feeling of rejection by kids who grew up without their parents. People need spiritual and physical healing.

There are others who reach out in a kindly way and take in children or help those hurting. In a small community like ours Christ is the only permanent hope.

Spiritual growth requires a commitment to obey and live according to God's word and to reject compromise to please family and friends. It is not easy for an aboriginal Christian to live among family members who are not Christians, but with God's help they strive to remain faithful.

We are praying for Christians who will be salt and light in our community.

Unity

Despite family and tribal differences, our members need to be bound together and encouraged from God's word to be one in Christ.

We need each other to build the body of Christ, even if there are problems between families outside of the church. Christians are instructed to strive to live in peace and unity and to bring these gifts to the community. We come

from cultures that have strong kinship ties, which have both their good and bad sides. With God's help we can overcome, believing that through Christ barriers can be broken down and people reconciled with each other.

Leadership

The leaders we have today have a vital role in the church and community. Last year the church appointed people to leadership. There is a need for guidance and direction from people who can help and contribute to the needs of the wider community as people struggle with many issues.

The majority of the indigenous population is not involved with the church. However, godly leaders can have an influence in different sectors of the community as they uphold God's word in their own lives. The cultural values of the community encourage respect for leaders. This is a good starting point from which ministry can begin.



The church needs the prayers of our wider fellowship of churches as we work amid the complexities and challenges of the Normanton situation.

Theresa and Remy Sese are from Vanuatu where Remy was Executive Director for Churches of Christ. They have three children: Nathan, Narelle and George. Normanton has a population of 1,500 of whom 80% are aboriginal. Unemployment is high. This work is under the sponsorship of the Queensland Churches of Christ Aboriginal and Islander Fellowship.



Aborigines

Jilba

GEOFF ALVES

The Sunday evening service at the Mooroopna, Vic, church was special. There were Aboriginal people, Maori, Burmese, Pakistanis, a Japanese girl, a Fijian man and white Australians. Mooroopna had become a church of all nations, and the little church was filled with people and songs, and was overflowing with tears of love and laughter.

We were on a reconciliation journey, organised by Reg and Marceil Law-

Yet, forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. For reconciliation to truly occur, wrongs must be righted and injustice reversed.

rence, now coordinating the Indigenous Ministries Unit of Vic-Tas Conference. We were visiting places in northern Victoria of importance in our churches' work among indigenous people—Shepparton, Mooroopna, Cumeragunga, and Albury-Wodonga. Reg explained to us that he had titled the reconciliation journey a *jilba* (in English, "walkabout") because a *jilba* is a highly-regarded religious practice with great meaning attached to it. He said, "It is an important and significant event, a practice that meant survival of the families.

"The *jilba* was not a wander off into the bush. Indigenous families, clans and nations went to perform their physical and spiritual acts of worship and praise. This was done according to their custom, handed down from generation to

generation. The people went to significant and sacred sites to perform ceremonies long practised by their ancestors. Without this practice the people believed that the Great Spirit (*Ngalli Gooda* in our language—and there are many different names among the peoples on this continent) would not bless them and their land.

"A *jilba* was for a purpose, going to a significant place, at a particular time of the season, for the different types of ceremonies that determine men's/women's business or young men's/women's initiation and indigenous life styles."

So our *jilba*, too, was for a purpose—to learn about, understand and be reconciled to the original inhabitants of this land, to significant places, at this particular time in our nation's history as we now seek to do something about the relationship between and understand the history of the different peoples of Australia.

Visiting the grave of Pastor Sir Douglas and Lady Nichols at Cumeragunga reminded us of the work of the past among indigenous people. At the Mooroopna church and the Albury Koorie Church, speaking to people such as Cec Grant, we saw and heard of the work today. But we also heard much of the terrible things done to our indigenous people. Thus the *jilba* had a profound effect on the participants. Ashley Barker, from the Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope, who helped organise the journey, said, "So much about this trip was unexpected. Where bitterness for horrendous atrocities could have been justified, a graciousness and concern toward us was shown. The indigenous people we listened to and learnt so much from have broken the cycle of revenge by being willing to for-



give. Yet, forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. For reconciliation to truly occur, wrongs must be righted and injustice reversed.

"Surely there can be no reconciliation until the self-interests of the dominant culture and our organisations can be put aside. We must be willing to grasp the barbed wire so that those who have been treated unjustly can climb over the fence of injustice to freedom, for the health and well-being of our indigenous people and therefore of our society as a whole must cost us something. Returning what has been profitable for the dominant culture makes the stakes higher.

"While we went on a physical journey, it was also a spiritual one," says Elvira Taal, another participant. "It revealed the condition of our hearts: mine, others, the heart of our country and the heart of our God. The stories and the pain of the people we met could not be ignored. I had to ask the question: 'What price am I willing to pay in order to see that justice is done?'"

So Marceil's aims in organising the journey are starting, even if in a small way, to being realised. It is her prayer that we who believe we are reconciled to God because of his love for us, should now take on and wear the mantle of grace lovingly and faithfully and consider the ministry call for reconciliation. Amen to that.

Geoff Alves is a member of Footscray, Vic, church.

Lesslie Newbigin

MARTIN ROBINSON

Imagine for a moment that you have just completed a lifetime of missionary service. You are ready to return home from the mission field. How you would choose to travel? When Lesslie and Helen Newbigin faced that choice, they decided to use a series of local buses to take them from India to England. Why did they make such a choice? Partly they wanted to travel light, just as they had done for most of their lives. Partly they wanted to make the transition from East to

While at Selly Oak he began to reflect on the missionary task facing the church in the west

West gradually. Partly they just wanted the adventure of it all. This one episode was typical of a remarkable missionary. Lesslie Newbigin seems to have lived at least three lives in one. A brilliant theological student and missionary, an ecumenical statesman and writer, and lastly a teacher of mission studies and founder of a whole new ap-

proach to mission in the western world. Born in 1909 into a well off shipping family in Newcastle, England, Lesslie went to Cambridge University expecting to equip himself to share in the family enterprise. While at Cambridge he became involved in student Christian matters and a gradual but profound conversion experience unfolded. He volunteered for the mission field as a Presbyterian missionary in South India. During his time on the mission field he was known as a gifted Tamil linguist and was most at home preaching and living rough in the villages of South India. His gifts drew him into the process that led to the formation of the Church of South India, where he was to be the first Presbyterian appointed as a bishop. His academic brilliance was displayed in his frequent writings. For example, his book *The Household of God* was written as a response to Karl Barth's lectures at the 1948 World Council of Churches conference at Amsterdam. In 1959 he became Secretary of the International Missionary Council and played a critical part in merging the IMC with the WCC in the early 1960s. After a distinguished career in Geneva he returned to Madras to serve there as a missionary until his retirement in 1974. Then his real work began!

He retired in Birmingham, taking up a teaching position in the Selly Oak Colleges. While there he was approached to become the assistant Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, an astonishing honour for a member of the Presbyterian family. He declined the offer, choosing instead to serve as part-time minister of a small inner city congregation in Birmingham. While at Selly Oak he began to reflect on the missionary task facing the church in the west and began to write a series of vastly influential books, *The Other Side of 1984*, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* and *Proper Confidence*. These four important books acted as a foundation for a whole new movement which was launched as "The Gospel and Our Culture", an attempt to develop a missiology for the western world.

A few months before he died, Lesslie Newbigin gave the keynote address at a national gathering of Churches of Christ ministers. His survey of the last

2,000 years of Christian theology and mission left us all gasping. It was a tour de force. At 88 years of age, his lively response in the question and answer session was a stimulating and unforgettable time. One aside revealed that his first task on retiring was to read the whole of Karl Barth's voluminous tomes on dogmatics.

Lesslie was a man of small stature. Those who knew him personally saw a man who was gracious and humble. Indeed, one of his close friends said that his humility was one of his greatest faults. It tended to hide his greatness. Others knew him as a passionate and committed fighter for the Christian cause. He spent his whole life debating and working for the gospel. Many have concluded that Lesslie Newbigin stands as one of the outstanding shapers and shakers of the Christian church in the twentieth century.

Dr Martin Robinson is a UK Churches of Christ minister and Director—Mission and Theology with the British and Foreign Bible Society.

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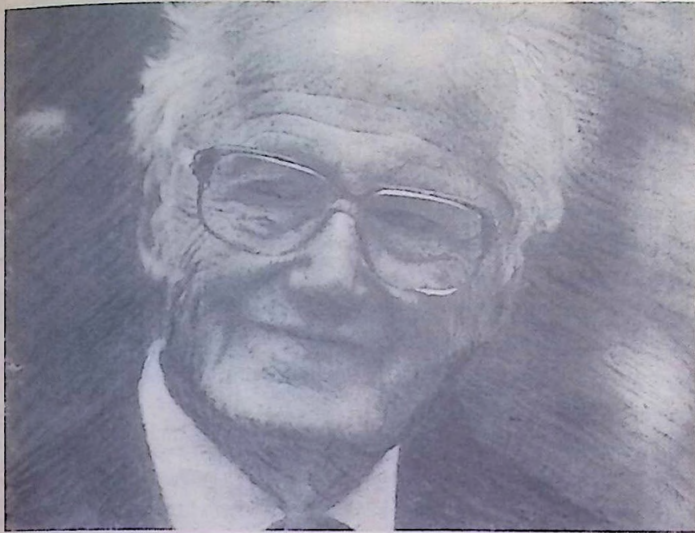
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Two Kinds of Pluralism

LESSLIE NEWBIGIN



Pluralism is a good word among political commentators. It signifies freedom of thought and expression, and is contrasted with totalitarianism. It denotes freedom—the most highly-prized mark of those societies which now control the world's economic life. But on the lips of Christians, pluralism has less benign overtones. It suggests a society which has lost the sense for truth. It is equated with "relativism" and "subjectivism". For those concerned with evangelism, it conjures up the picture of a kind of soft tolerance, which accepts everything and is incapable of recognising the difference between the truth and the lie, between reality and mere feeling.

I think this dual perception points to the fact that the term "pluralism" is, in fact, used in two different ways. I like to distinguish these as "agnostic pluralism" and "committed pluralism". By the former I mean the belief (perhaps better described as an attitude of mind, because it hardly deserves the name of belief) that there is no such thing as truth, in the sense of a reality independent of our thinking about it, or that, if there is

such a reality, it is unknowable. In its most respectable form this has been formulated by Kant in the proposition that while we may know the appearance which things present to us (the phenomena), it is in principle impossible for us to know the reality which lies behind these appearances (the noumenon). This has had enormous influence on all subsequent philosophy and has become an almost unquestioned assumption in most popular thought. The effect of this is to make rational discussion almost impossible, since all discussion is brought to a full stop with the words: "That's just what you think".

But, as Michael Polanyi has shown, there is another kind of pluralism of which science is the prime example. Here there is no attempt to exercise control over research. Scientists are free to choose their own fields of work and their own lines of research. But it is assumed in all this that there is truth to be known and that this truth must in some sense be coherent. Scientists do not settle their disagreements with the words, "That's just what you think". On the contrary, they argue with passion for the truth of their

conclusions, but, at the same time, are (usually) ready to be convinced by the arguments of their colleagues.

This committed pluralism has two implications. One is that there is reality to be known and that we are called upon to be patient and persistent in seeking to know it better. Science cannot accept the existence of an invisible barrier erected by the philosophers fencing off an area that can never be known, the unknowable noumenon. And, secondly, scientists regard their discoveries as always, in principle, revisable. Indeed the token of truth in a scientific discovery will not be that it draws a final line beyond which no further questions are to be asked, but that it opens the way for further discoveries.

This committed pluralism is, I believe, the model for a Christian. The scientist, with his long training and apprenticeship, is committed to the scientific method and is confident that it will continue to lead him into ever new discoveries. The Christian is confident that in Jesus he has the one true clue, the true and living way by following which (not merely in thought but in the whole of life) one will be led on to ever new discoveries of God's glory and fullness.

For the other kind of pluralism I have used the word "agnostic". But in truth the agnostic pluralist's disavowal of certain knowledge often conceals a very great claim. One of the favourite parables of the agnostic pluralists is that of the many roads leading to the top of one mountain. This is presented as a recipe for mutual tolerance. It is put forward with an air of humility, contrasting with the arrogant claims of religious believers. However, it

is obvious that the pluralist claim is supremely arrogant. It is the claim to know that which was hidden from Moses, the Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed. One has to ask, what are the grounds for making such a tremendous claim?

Agnostic pluralism is attractive because it seems to offer an escape from the responsibility of making exclusive truth-claims. But there is no such escape. There is no neutral place where we can be free from conflict about truth. The belief that

But on the lips of Christians, pluralism has less benign overtones. It suggests a society which has lost the sense for truth.

there is such a place is the illusion shared by the agnostic pluralist and the person who things that there is a position rationally impregnable to all attack. By making his truth known in the "foolishness and weakness" of the cross, God has established a space where truth can be known—not by irresistible coercion, but by vulnerable love. The Gospel thus endorses the plurality which this freedom entails. And at the same time it commits the believer to a discipleship of the one whose claim on us is non-negotiable, but who leads us into ever-new discoveries of truth. Our discoveries are corrigible and revisable, our commitment to Jesus is not.

WAYNE BETTS

BIRTHS

HANNEMANN (NEE BURGAN) Bev and Graham Burgan of Hampstead Gardens, SA, and Mr and Mrs F.W. Green of Henley Beach South, SA, proudly announce the arrival of their grandson and great-grandson Jacob Stephen on 29 January. A son for Jodi and Stephen Hannemann of Cleve, SA.

ENGAGEMENTS

CLARE-STEELE Val and Bob, together with Pam and Eric, are delighted to announce the engagement of Jenni and Rod.

WEDDINGS

PERRIN-STEPHENS Families of Belinda and Scott take pleasure in announcing their wedding at Berwick Church of Christ, 28 February 1998.

DEATHS

SHANNON Gertrude E.M. (Harris) Passed away peacefully in WA on 7.1.98. Loved Mother & MIL of Peter & Olwyn. Loved Nana of Judith, Andrew, Dianne, Tim and Greg. Great Nana of Ashlee and Rebecca. A great sense of family importance. A keen Biblical scholar with a strong faith expressed in practical ways.

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How good are you at keeping the Ten Commandments? "Terrific!?" ... "OK, I think?" ... "Is 6 out of 10 a pass?" What about number four: "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8)? This commandment is concerned with deeper issues than Sunday trading, going to both morning and evening church services, or not turning on the TV on Sundays.



Think carefully about that—God wasn't tired out after creation, yet he rested!

The Hebrew word that "Sabbath" comes from, means simply to "stop, cease". Sabbath, therefore, is a day of stopping. "Time out!" from our normal routine.

Lately, I've been wondering why God felt it necessary to **command** people to rest. Couldn't he just encourage us to take it easy now and then? Why a commandment?

I've found that God's assessment of human characteristics tends to be pretty accurate, and I think he knew that unless rest was **commanded**, many people just wouldn't consider stopping. Isn't it ironic that while we don't condone adultery, we stand by while many of our friends and colleagues work themselves into the ground, in direct defiance of the fourth commandment?

There are two citations of the Ten Commandments which

give reasons for this commandment.

In Exodus 20:8, the rationale is that God himself rested—he set us an example to follow. Think carefully about that—God wasn't tired out after creation, yet he rested! In Deuteronomy 6:12 the Sabbath is a celebration of the release from slavery which God has achieved for his people. Only free people can rest!

Jesus came into conflict with the religious leaders of his day precisely because he had the audacity to treat the Sabbath as a day which was for the benefit, rather than the burden, of humanity (Mark 2:27).

He was impudent enough to actually enjoy the Sabbath, to help people on it, to allow his disciples to help themselves on it! (See Mark 2:23-28.) There were times when he withdrew from public ministry and encouraged his disciples to do the same (Mark 6:31).

The fourth commandment reminds God's people of the need for regular rest and "re-creation"—whether that is Sunday, Saturday, Thursday or whenever!

Believe it or not, the world will keep on turning without you for one day a week. Try it and see!

Media Matters

Dying Shame

VINEY LONGTHORP

SBS TV recently presented the documentary "Dying Shame", which is another in its "Cutting Edge" series of examinations into aspects of the Australian way of life. Readers of this issue will receive this information too late to view the program. However, SBS is very cooperative in supplying tapes and other information. Those who wish to follow this program up could con-

It is hard for parents to feed their children healthy meals because of excessive prices for fresh goods.

tact Wendy Odlum on (02) 9430 3792.

This documentary examines the plight of Aboriginal health in Australia. Through the personal stories of families and individuals within the Aboriginal community of Borroloola in the Northern Territory over a ten month period, producer/director Paul Roy reveals the human tragedy behind bald statistics of

aboriginal health—said to be the most "inequitable health service in the Western World". For example, aboriginal life expectancy is 16–20 years less than the rest of the Australian population; the incidence of diabetes is 15 times higher; death from infectious diseases is 15–18 times higher.

"The grog is killing our people," says Thelma Douglas, who takes care of eight grandchildren in a two-room shack with inadequate water supply, no furniture and flooding sewage. "Stupid people—blackfellas—stone age!" explains Roy Hammer, Borroloola elder who rounds up the alcoholics on a night patrol, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and almost single-handed holds his community together.

Barbara McCarthy, who has returned to her home town to help her people after working in ABC Radio and Television, explains: "What you see here in Borroloola is really the rawness of human emotions ... it's about anger ... it's about shame ... it's about sadness ... it's about joy and life, and about death and they're all the things that happen everywhere and we are dealing with it in the best way we know how."

Borroloola is a remote community of almost one thousand people, about 800 km from Katherine. The people lack strength and direction. There is an urgent need to improve the standard of living, decrease unemployment (at present 90%) and improve literacy and numeracy skills.

Peter Fitzpatrick is a doctor who has spent seven years tending the people in this community. There are at least two deaths every month. Many are from alcohol-related problems such

as kidney failure. He says that the sickness and deaths demoralise the community. Because they can't see a way out, this results in endemic depression. Due to the isolation, they don't realise that others do not live with the same problems. They accept the premature deaths as "normal".

There are two liquor outlets—the pub and the Bulk Discounts. They operate seven days a week with no restrictions on beer take-aways. Dr Fitzpatrick estimates that at least 1400 cartons of beer are consumed a week, resulting not only in health problems, but domestic violence, suicide and at least one murder in recent times.

The diet of aborigines in the region was once very healthy, relying on bush tucker, a tradition still sustained by some of the elders. But the vast majority of the community now eat very much what they were taught to eat on mission and cattle stations—tea, sugar, tinned meat and white bread, supplemented these days with fried foods and soft drinks. Part of the problem lies in the lack of community-owned chain stores. It is hard for parents to feed their children healthy meals because of excessive prices for fresh goods. This often results in cases of malnutrition.

The program highlights the story of a youth, much-loved and respected in Borroloola, who was killed in a drink-driving accident after the driver had been on a 24 hour binge. The police rarely intervene. They are reluctant to make arrests due to the high incidence of prison suicides.

In the meantime, there is Gavin Hogan. Although he appears, during the filming to have the normal teen interests of sport



and mateship, he is emotionally fragile. Four weeks after filming commenced, Gavin attempted suicide. His brother dies from a heart attack at the age of 20 during a football game. A week later his father also has a heart attack. To say the least, Gavin's future is uncertain.

On a positive note, Barbara McCarthy has initiated the Lijakarda Festival, designed to celebrate the community's pride in their culture and language. She hopes that by strengthening her people's knowledge of traditional history, songs and stories, the festival will offer an alternative to the grim picture the future seems to hold.

The Borroloola community have seen this program, and though saddened and moved when they saw themselves objectively for the first time, they recognised the truth of the documentary and are keen to have their story told.

The Australian poet, Les Murray, may have had a place such as Borroloola in mind when he wrote with supreme irony: "It has always been an insult to us white Australians that the aborigines can be so destitute and so much kings of infinite space". These words and this program should serve to quicken our nation's conscience, that a people should live in these conditions.

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CHANGES

AINSLIE, ACT—Minister Paul Douglas, 88 Limestone Ave, Ainslie ACT 2602. Phone (02) 6247 3670.

WEST LAKES UNITED PARISH, SA—Minister Robyn Walsh, PO Box 6086, West Lakes Shore SA 5020.

WEST PRESTON, VIC—Secretary Bob Robb, 48 May St, West Preston Vic 3072. Phone (03) 9478 1531.

BAPTISMS

•Z. Szczepitko, L. Donnelly, J. Tadman, David Pearsall, Hobart City, Tas
 •Vivienne Pitman, West Lakes United, SA
 •Elizabeth Phillips, Mildura, Vic
 •Laura Erikson, Matt Douglas, Frankston, Vic
 •Toni Wright, Wendy Brady, Kathy Vella, Castlemaine, Vic
 •Hayley Moore, Chinchilla, Qld
 •Ron Stibbs, Pine Rivers, Qld
 •Luke Box, Brad Rankin, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld
 •Marge Clift, Sonya Davis, Liz Evans, Beryl Sanders, Salisbury East, SA
 •Gabrielle Vandenburg, Jacob Baggs, Victor Harbor, SA

MARRIAGES

•Kelli Fisher and Mark Cameron, West Lakes United, SA
 •Alison Munro and Brad Greenwood, Mildura, Vic
 •Marie Cutts and Kim Gane, Carnarvon, WA
 •Leonie Cripps and Stuart Priest, Launceston, Tas
 •Elaine Swain and Bruce Thompson, Emma Dalgliesh and Jason Higglett, Rachel Thurrowgood and Adrian Mayers, Hume St, Toowoomba, Qld

DEATHS

•Blanche Seymour, Hobart City, Tas
 •Lyn Gray, Doris Billington, Fred Whitford, Gwen Kinleyside, Mildura, Vic
 •Ann Langford, West Preston, Vic
 •Benny Chavarria, Knoxfield, Vic
 •Robert Scott, Carnarvon, WA
 •Bill Harvey, Grote St, Adelaide, SA
 •Izzy Brandsma, Tootgarook, Vic
 •Ruth Ashenden, Salisbury East, SA
 •Fern Filmer, Victor Harbor, SA
 •Lorraine Gundry, Les Faragher, Ormond, Vic

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are limited to 100 words
HARVEY, Arthur William (Bill)

Born 22.12.10. Left school at an early age and joined the MTT, working there for almost 50 years. Very clever with his hands. Firm convictions. Married Bonnie at Mile End Church of Christ, SA, in 1933. They had two daughters, Lorraine and Rosalie. Five years ago Bill responded to an invitation for anyone desiring to make a commitment to Christ. He had been ill for a long time and finally passed on. Always remembered by Bonnie, family and friends.

SHANNON Gertrude E.M. (nee Harris)
 (22.11.1896 – 7.1.1998) The family

arrived in WA from England in 1903 and began association with Lake St, Perth, church. She joined Maylands church in 1909. Before her marriage in 1927 she trained as a teacher and a nurse. Many years were spent in country areas, where she was known for her help to needy people. She was a keen correspondent, keeping in touch with family & friends. Her social concern was expressed about many issues by writing to papers. When she returned to the city she renewed fellowship with City Church, attending there until moving to a nursing home. She attended Dalkeith Rd, until passing peacefully from this life in her 102nd year.

—Dalkeith Road church, WA

WA

CARNARVON (Gavin Law Davis) Group led by pastor well received at the Gascoyne Junction Shire Christmas social, 177 km east of Carnarvon. Group led carol singing & presented short message & children's segment ... Following pregnancy complications, Wendy Law Davis flown to King Edward Hospital in Perth. Wendy & husband Darren now rejoice in a tiny son Tom.

ALBANY (John Spencer) John Timms from Indian Village Evangelism spoke about IVE at house meeting & gave message at morning service 2 November ... Pat Willard welcomed into fellowship ... Children gave presentation to church on 14 December ... Chaplain from North Albany High School concluded term & replaced by Brent Findlay ... Dedication of SRE teachers & leaders of Friendship Group, Play Group, Fun Club, Sunday School & Youth Group.

DIANELLA (Tony Armstrong) Church supported Franklin Graham Festival ... Currently seeking services of Children's Ministry Coordinator ... Garage sale to support CCTC ... Dedication of Leaders service 1 March ... Covenant Players appearing ... First of series of short courses commencing 18 March. Introduction to "Death & Resurrection".

QLD

CHINCHILLA (Rod Feldhahn) Church joined in combined churches "Carols by Candlelight" led by Roslyn Holt... Programs & activities recommenced for new year ... Church saddened by passing of Sylvia Kingston. Sympathy goes to husband Stan & family ... *That the World May Know* video, set in Israel, screened in evening services ... Child care centre resumed for year, with 2 new staff: Tarsha Nunn, director & Diane Moore, assistant.

PINE RIVERS (N. Proellocks, M. Cross, D. Van Lean) Members participating in "Distribution of Jesus video

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- be willing and able to give direction in the consideration of the relocation and development of the church's plant and exercise leadership in undertaking any such relocation and development.

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 Church of Christ Hurstville
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 Hurstville NSW 2220

by 17 April 1998.

Church News

to the Nation" ... Baptismal service 15 February ... Church Anniversary 22 February. Guest speaker Randy Edwards of Kenmore College. Theme: "Building a Christian Community" ... Training session 28 February for all worship leaders, support singers, those involved in communion focus & PA technicians ... Child dedication service 1 March ... Church encouraged by new families visiting & joining us.

TOOWOOMBA (Dale White, Ross Savill) Christmas Day service 492 people in worship. Offerings of \$1,577 for COCOA and \$ 415 to Christmas Bowl ... 200 attended farewell dinner for Garry, Tamara & Christopher Hills concluding 10 years' ministry. Garry & Tamara will remain in membership while serving with Kenmore College ... Dale & Wendy White and family welcomed into ministry 8 February. Randy Edwards speaker. Nearly 450 attended induction.

SA

WEST LAKES UNITED (Robyn Walsh) Following the conclusion of Graham Pittman's 10-year ministry, Anthony Boucher engaged for two-month part-time ministry ... Parish eagerly awaiting commencement of Robyn Walsh's call in March ... Parish concentrating on special 3-year goals covering spirituality, young families, small groups, worship & leadership ... Terry George recently elected as parish chairperson ... A number of references from recent Franklin Graham Festival.

PROSPECT (Ruth May) New year began with successful dinner to launch 1998 happenings ... Play group established. Closer relationships with parents planned ... Gathering 3rd Sunday of month commenced, featuring coffee & tea, singers & a time to explore our faith & share communion together ... Ian Corlett to spend some weeks with church beginning February ... Young musicians continue to be a feature of Sunday morning services each month.

VICTOR HARBOR (Graham Rogerson) Suzanne Turner appointed part-time youth pastor, commenced January, studying certificate course, Adelaide College of Divinity ... Board restructured 1998. Key area leaders ... Dedication services held for board & Sunday school teachers ... Exciting times in youth groups ... Discipleship classes being conducted, 10+ attending ... Jeff Weston guest speaker, overseas mission focus ... AGM held ... Building extensions in architect's hands ... New attenders welcomed at church lunch.

DÜLWICH-ROSE PARK UNITED PARISH (Garry Harris, Tricia Spargo) Brenton Rawlings from Blackwood Church of Christ welcomed as new youth worker. Previously involved in youth ministry as leader of teens' youth camps, has worked with junior youth in USA & is an accomplished musician, currently playing in three bands.

VIC

MILDURA (Simon Risson) Simon Risson inducted 8 February. Service led by Dr Greg Elsdon. Sermon preached by Roger Risson, Simon's father. 240 in attendance ... Church hall platform remodelled into a modern kitchen facility. Opened 8 February ... Interim ministry of Tom & Ruth Edge (19 months) concluded 7 December. Holiday services led by lay personnel ... Christmas message focus presented by external shopfront nativity scenes.

FRANKSTON (Tom Ede, Jason Potter) A number of interim elders & deacons appointed ... Win Chatley, Alan & Margaret Fletcher, Mandy Hume & Laura Eriks welcomed into membership ... Jason Potter & Rachelle Timmerye engaged ... Tom Ede spoke at Australia Day ecumenical service ... Walking group, drop in, bowls, Exercise for Health, prayer & bible study groups have commenced.

WEST PRESTON (Keith & Shirley Ludgater) CWF started off 1998 with

24 ladies enjoying a progressive supper. Group will be joined by Preston next meeting, when CWF President Liz Tilson will visit ... Shirley & Keith Ludgater back, refreshed after a short break ... Gloria Archer & family have relocated to Queensland ... Phyllis Delzoppo & Alma & Norm Hart on sick list ... Church saddened at loss of Ann Langford.

KNOXFIELD (Malcolm Gray, Elaine McLeod, Rohan Waters) Malcolm Gray asked members to consider their personal talents by use of questionnaire ... Elaine McLeod organised a lunch for pastoral carers to plan year, but unfortunately had to recuperate for a few weeks following hospital treatment ... Jason McCheyne was farewelled as youth minister & will study in the USA ... Rohan Waters inducted by Malcolm Gray as new youth minister.

CASTLEMAINE (Ross Bourdon) *Jesus* video ministry progressing well ... Ten-week marriage enrichment seminar under way & well attended ... First men's breakfast for year held, with Ross Barnes, Bendigo minister, as speaker ... Another wall banner made for worship centre ... Preliminary quotes being sought for stage 2 of worship centre.

HORSHAM (Steve Blacket, Julie Trinnick) Working bees have made new set of pews ... Pamphlet of church activities posted to all households in city ... Julie Edmonds appointed to staff church's community counselling service. Counselling rooms being constructed ... New Wednesday craft group attracting newcomers ... Ministry to & by seniors being established ... Craft shop gave \$10,600 from 1997 profits to Christian & community causes.

LATROBE TCE, GEELONG (David Jones) Young people commencing university studies & work ... Dom & Kim Taipodi moving to Albury ... Clock & vases now in use in memory of Val Barnes ... \$105 received at CWF for tracts for Baxter House bootie ministry ... CWF held musical afternoon at

Rosalie House ... Judy Munster, from Trading Partners, guest speaker at World Day of Prayer Service in our chapel.

TOOTGAROOK (M. Giezendanner) Minister accepted further term of 4 years from January 1999. 94% in favour of Mal's ministry. Mal & Eleanor much appreciated in church & community ... All auxiliaries commencing for 1998 ... CWF welcomed new president & officers. 51 ladies present. President's theme "Go tell about Jesus" encouraging. Largest CWF in state. Most members active in interchurch & community activities.

ORMOND COMMUNITY (A.H. Thistlethwaite, Cathy English) Induction service for associate minister Cathy English preceded luncheon shared by gathering of 70 ... "Drop In" had 74 people enjoying an afternoon of fellowship ... Hymn services continuing this year, evenings of last Sunday each month ... Coffee morning held to welcome Bentleigh members to Ormond ... Joy Sadal celebrated special birthday.

TAS

HOBART CITY (Clinton Wardle, Andrew Tonkin) Celebrated Christmas with 240 attending a "Night At The Inn" re-enactment ... Christmas Eve & Day services also well attended ... New Year ushered in with 3 baptisms at Blackman's Bay at midnight ... New youth groups commencing ... Home groups coordinated by Brett Nichols ... Year's theme centred on maturity—"Reaching our full Potential in Christ" ... Series on "Signs of the Times" in pm services using road signs.

LAUNGESTON (C. Spaulding, W. Kerrison, T. Gray, S. Fitzallen) Dedication service for children's church leaders on 15 February ... Senior classes now able to meet in new Canning St premises ... Mrs Gert Scott celebrated her 94th birthday on 18 February ... Periodic leisure outings being planned for 50 and overs.

One Step Closer

JANET THOMPSON

The man walking down the driveway had a prominent identity badge, and a clipboard.

My guess was that he was checking the electoral roll ... and I was right.

When I opened the front door, he had moved to the far corner of the porch.

I suppose this is recommended procedure—so nervous people won't be alarmed. (It could also be for his own protection, but I didn't think of that until later!)

Talking across that distance was a bit strained—it felt like an overseas phone call—so I smiled, and moved out of the doorway. He responded by moving towards me, just a little. I moved again, a little closer, and so did he.

By the time he was halfway through the questions we were standing at a normal conversational distance in the middle of the porch, and he was smiling.

He commented on the music which was playing in my lounge room. "Lovely music! Elgar's great, isn't he?" I agreed (of course), and he was gone.

It was interesting.

It rarely occurs to me to worry about who I will find on my doorstep, unless it is late at night, but many people are uneasy about visitors. They shout, "Who is it?" before opening the door, then peer out over security chains.

There is a security light on my house, and the people next door have one of those piercing alarms which shatter the peace of the afternoon.



My new neighbour scuttled away when I said, "Hello!" Do I look dangerous? Apprehension is everywhere.

It is understandable. I have nervous moments, especially after a grisly news story. But the lack of warmth in everyday interaction—with official callers, supermarket staff, delivery drivers, etc—is a trend which worries me. People are feeling isolated. If the caller at my door is the only person I see in the course of a day, it is important that it should be a friendly meeting. This is a community, and if a brief official visit can be turned into a pleasant moment, everyone benefits.

It is a matter of taking the first step. The response is usually a warm one. Important things, such as love and outreach, have small beginnings.

The Last Word

Until you come to that fleeting moment when you, too, doubt the meaning of anything, you may not yet have come to the fullest meaning of faith.

—William Banowsky, *Wineskins*

Hysterical Headlines

- Enfields Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide.*
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges.*
- Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead.*
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash.*
- Expert Says Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers.*
- Experts Say School Bus Passengers Should Be Belted.*
- Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case.*
- Survivor of Siamese Twins Joins Parents.*
- Iraqi Head Seeks Arms.*
- Prostitutes Appeal to Pope.*
- British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands.*
- Lung Cancer in Women Mushrooms.*
- Include Your Children when Baking Cookies.*
- Eye Drops Off Shelf.*
- Teacher Strikes Idle Kids.*
- Clinton Wins on Budget, But More Lies Ahead.*
- Enraged Cow Injures Farmer With Ax.*
- Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told.*

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