

Spiritual food for Hungary

Debrecen's long association with the Bible

(Debrecen, Hungary) Boys and girls regularly use the Bible as a textbook in their religion classes at the Reformed Church's school in Debrecen, Hungary. The school takes up to 400 pupils at secondary education level and offers a normal education with the addition of religion and church hymn singing. Some parents send their children to Debrecen from other parts of the country because they want them to have a Christian education, UBS reports.

Although the Debrecen school is not the only church school in Hungary (there are, for instance, six Roman Catholic schools) it is the only one belonging to the Reformed Church. Nor, of course, are the church schools the only ones where the Bible comes into the curriculum. Hungarian secondary schools nowadays include mention of the Bible in the study of history and literature. The church schools are, however, the only schools where the Bible is studied from a Christian point of view.

The Reformed Church's school in Debrecen is attached to the church's own college which provides study facilities and training for up to 150 theological students (full-time and part-time) and about 60 to 80 diaconal workers.

Debrecen itself is situated in the eastern part of Hungary, near the border with Rumania, and has long been a centre of activity of the Reformed Church and its Calvinist tradition. Indeed the role of the church has been — and still is — so important in Debrecen that one

guidebook, using somewhat contradictory terminology, describes the city as "the Calvinist Rome."

The first book published in Debrecen was a hymnbook (1561) and work on a number of different Bible translations has taken place in the city. Even the ecumenical translation of the modern language Hungarian Bible (published 1975) was coordinated in Debrecen.

The Reformed College library has a large collection of historical books including about 4,000 different Bible editions. The bookshelves and showcases display Scripture editions from the past five centuries, as well as fragments from even earlier times. The oldest item in the library is a fragment of the book of Job dating from 1050. Past and present are juxtaposed, as in the display case where a first edition of the original Karoli Bible of 1590 is found right next to a copy of Matthew's Gospel published by the American Bible Society.

In November 1984 the Hungarian Bible Council — with help from the United Bible Societies — opened a bookshop in Debrecen for the sale of Scriptures and Christian literature to the general public. There is no doubt that the shop will have plenty of customers, not only among local people but also among the many tourists who come to Debrecen all year round. The new shop is just the latest aspect of a long association between the church, the Bible and the city of Debrecen.

(Rex News Exchange)

Camp Howard on video

New programmes opened

Rex Harris reported to the recent biennial conference of Camp Howard directors that several new possibilities had recently opened up for young people's camps run by Sydney Anglican Diocese.

New camps include a computer camp in the August holidays and an Arts camp at Springwood. A new style camp in May for young people in the eastern suburbs proved very successful.

Possible new camps include a trip to Norfolk Island at the invitation of the local minister, touring camps, more regional camps and an additional study camp.

Junior high camps are the most popular. Young people wanted help to form honest and open relationships. Camps allowed young people to open up to the possibilities of genuine friendships and trust, and acceptance of a relationship with Jesus.

Meeting at the renovated Deer Park camp site, Rex told directors that camper numbers are on the increase. However, the proportion of campers coming from an Anglican church background is decreasing, while that being referred from Careforce and Youth and Community Services is increasing markedly.

Camp Howard is the biggest evangelistic tool the diocese has, Rex said.

A promotional video has been prepared, and a dozen copies are now available for use in churches, Sunday schools and scripture classes. Camp Howard is aiming for a 25% increase in camper numbers. On average, camps are 90% full, and many are booked out with long waiting lists. To increase camper numbers and place those on waiting lists in camps, more camps should be held. The main thing preventing this is the lack of directors.

MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE

DIOCESE OF GIPPSLAND

Rev. N. T. Richards, Rector of Bass/Phillip Island has been elected as Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Deacons Owen Buckton of Wandal Parish, David Curtis of Clermont, John Quail of Park Avenue, Phillip Ward of Keppel and Rod Wood of Callide Valley were ordained to the Diaconate in St. Paul's Cathedral on June 9th. They will exercise their ministry as Deacons and continue in their normal employment.

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

Rev. George Parker was commissioned as the new Rector at St. Andrews Mayfield in May by Bishop Holland.

DIOCESE OF TASMANIA

Rev. Keith Pritchard was ordained into the ministry at Devonport in May. Rev. Dr. Bob Rayner was commissioned as Co-ordinator of Anglican Family Care Staff by the Bishop in St. David's Cathedral, Hobart, on 10th May.

Can you find hope in Soweto?

Yes 'in Christ' Scripture Union worker declares

Frank Shayi is a Scripture Union staff worker in the schools of Soweto which, in his deep resonant voice, he describes as 'one of the undeclared cities of South Africa'.

Two million people live in Soweto, all of course are blacks. The average Soweto house is a matchbox house with four rooms and an outside toilet and bathroom. There are more prosperous sections of the undeclared city where, as Frank says, 'the elite of Soweto live', but on the other hand there are many two-roomed houses where there is grim overcrowding and families of up to ten people or more are living in these two rooms.

There are active Scripture Union groups in sixty of Soweto's three hundred primary schools. And group meetings are attended not just by a handful but usually by between sixty and a hundred children. Moreover, Frank is able to lead missions in many primary schools, taking the morning assembly every day from Monday to Friday and Scripture Union meetings in the afternoon. He calls on school Principals and also visits Christian teachers, who are running the groups.

What does it feel like to be a Christian

in Soweto? Frank confesses "You tend to sit down and not know what to do. Young folk say 'We must speak up for our rights and ask the Government to recognise us and accept us as human beings'. And as a Christian you're not sure whether to go or not, and you ask yourself 'If I don't go and things change for the better for the black man, am I as a Christian going to be relevant? Am I relevant now?'"

Frank looks forward to seeing more people 'take up the ownership of Scripture Union in South Africa'. Since 1977 Scripture Union in South Africa has been a non-racial movement committed to helping South Africa change to a non-racist country.

Frank believes that Scripture Union has a role in reconciliation between the races and that Scripture Union's multi-racial camps will have a long-term impact. "When white people who have been to these camps grow up, they'll say 'I camped with a black kid and they're just as human as we are."

"We must preach a relevant Gospel that is addressing the issues at stake at the present time", stresses Frank.

Plain English worship cont

Who is the liturgy for?

The Anglican Church has taken steps to bring its forms of service into today's language: it has dropped the 'thee' and 'thou', but kept words and language patterns no longer used in our society. It has a long way to go in its efforts to communicate to the average person.

Professor Eagleson asks that plain English be used in all parts of the service, particularly in preaching. "Much of the church's language is in forms no longer recognised by its members. Its messages can be obscured, not by difficulties in the subject matter, but differences in language forms. Words used have changed meanings. Three problems can result: firstly, the congregation doesn't understand, and realise that. Secondly, it may misinterpret the message, without realising it has done so. Thirdly, it recognises that the language has a message, and strives to give it what it thinks it means.

"It is a fallacy that language needs to be complex because the ideas it seeks to convey are complex. The issue is control of language, not of concepts. Calvin, Luther, John Murray all wrote deep theology in simple language. Material must be presented so every one can get something out of it whatever their capacity and spiritual depth."

Miss White questions the need for a written liturgy at all. She sees the Prayer Book as being a handbook for the person conducting the service. Other church members will take part in leading prayers etc., as previously arranged, using either the standard forms or their own written or extempore materials. "People respond to the immediacy and vocabulary of fellow Christians. If the whole service is in set written forms, there is no contact with others in the congregation: no sense of shared pilgrimage," she said.

(Next issue we will pass on the practical advice offered by Prof. Eagleson and Kath White)

Christian values continued

needed to avoid selfishness if capitalism was to survive. He said that Western capitalism had a poor image. Yet in a city such as New York it was that things worked — a miracle of cooperation. Almost 92% of the workforce is meaningfully employed, whereas in the Third World only about 20% had jobs.

Business overcoming inefficiency

Business that aimed to serve others overcame inefficiency and unproductive trends that were the result of workers and executives losing the sense of worth and value of their jobs. Most today worked to enjoy their weekends, to provide food and shelter and to be able to have the freedom to do what they really wanted to do. Most fail to see that their jobs are valuable in themselves. The Bible's view is that work glorified God.

As service of their fellow workers the christian business person needed to understand that work exists for the person. It was important the fellow

workers should be treated with dignity and respect. The same principles applied to the Public Service and churches.

As servant of the local church the christian business person needed to be more involved and supported. Dr. Gasque referred to William Deal's *Christianity and Real Life*. Deal had been the sales manager of the large Bethlehem Steel Corporation for many years. Yet he says that his local church had never affirmed him in his calling nor ever called him to account. So business persons needed to be affirmed in their call to the world. Also they needed to help ministers, church workers by bringing management skills to church business and teaching church readers management skills. Dr. Gasque pointed out that theological colleges offered no help to ministers in the area of management. He said that Regent College gave some help, but in his view it was insufficient.

As Jesus came to serve, so should business persons of today.

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Josh McDowell at Sydney University

'The Great Resurrection — Hoax?' and "Maximum Sex".

Josh McDowell can now add 2,000 students and one more university to the impressive statistics of his involvement in student missions.

In the last twenty years Josh has been engaged in apologetic debate and speaking at 600 universities in 62 countries.

At Sydney University, Josh McDowell is the first speaker in living memory to have filled three lecture theatres for his lunchtime address "Maximum Sex".

It is no surprise then that his coming to the Sydney campus was announced with an unprecedented flurry of advance advertising. The beautiful photograph quality coloured posters and the "Josh" badges were imported direct from the U.S.A., making photocopied advertising look out of date. The stickers, leaflets and orange balloons have a distinctive impact — they were everywhere!

People certainly knew that something was happening. Not everyone knew what it was. Reactions varied from "Gee, I hate Josh!" to "What's this Josh business?" and "Isn't Josh another name for Jesus?"

The balloons were a first — a thousand helium filled balloons in lectures, carried by students, tied to trees, some even being sniffed, do funny things to the voice box! The loudspeaker on the back of the ute had not been done much before either. At least this brought some reaction, generally negative responses.

Some non-christians thought all the advertising was desperate, pushy, irritating and overpublicised. None of the people from this group intended going. One non-christian responded: "Christians have a much better way of doing things than other groups. I am going along to see what he is like."

Student life

Josh McDowell is doing this visit as part of a tour of 17 countries organised by



Campus Crusade in U.S.A. At Sydney Uni the mission was organised by the Student Life group. From their point of view the publicity needed to be extensive because he was only speaking on four occasions over two days. There was no chance for momentum to build up.

In terms of finance, Josh came to campus at his own expense and received no financial help from the students. He will be taking none of our valuable Australian dollars back to America. Student Life had only to foot the bill for publicity.

Resurrection and sex

"Entertaining" would be the overall reaction to Josh. Even if one disagreed with what he said one enjoyed listening to him speak. Each talk began with a drawn out joke and ended with his wide smile beaming.

The first talk gave the evidence for the resurrection, in the context of Josh's personal quest for meaning and direction. His presentation was a subtle mixture of humour, pathos and challenge to look at the evidence on either side,

with humorous anecdotes and touches of sarcasm.

The material about the resurrection must have spoken for itself. It seemed to be obvious that the evidence changes lives; it changed Josh's life, his father's life and the lives of many others.

The listeners were asked to make a similar response and become Christians, or enquire further, or find joy in their Christian lives.

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Ridley not complacent

75 years celebration in full swing

75 years ago Ridley College opened its doors to the first six students.

Today there are more than 300 full and part time students both men and women. Faith, vision and hard work under God have made Ridley what it is today. That's a cause for celebration! The Anniversary activities began with the College Graduation in March. B.Theology, Th.L. Th.Dip. were conferred on those who had earned them, while others took out the Ridley College diplomas in Bible and Mission, or Biblical Studies or the Associate of Ridley.

A festival of music on Low Sunday, the Sunday after Easter, was an enjoyable time. Another major feature of the 75th Anniversary have been the seminars which have contributed to the life of the wider church. Archdeacon Ray Smith of Tamworth, together with Peter Burke of Melbourne conducted a two day seminar on equipping the parish for pastoral care. The enthusiasm and testimony to the helpfulness of this was reflected also in the seminar by Dr. Robert & Julia Banks in June. Robert & Julia focused on the home church, regrouping for community and mission. Participants in the seminar were drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, both ordained & lay. Later in July the Rev. Roger Simpson from All Souls', Langham Place, the Director of Evangelism, will visit Ridley to lead a

seminar on "Evangelism in the Urban Context".

"Ministry in the Multicultural Society" will be the focus for the next set of seminars while the year will conclude with a series by Dr. Buchanan on "Christianity and psychiatry".

The climax of the years' celebrations will be in October when a 75 hour praise and prayer vigil will be held. This will culminate with Ridley's Commemoration Service on Sunday afternoon. It is hoped that many past students will join with them on this occasion. The main address will be given by Bishop John Stewart, an ex-student of Ridley.

The College is aware of its continuing dependence on God for provision of both staff and students as well as the financial needs of this independent college. Particularly Ridley's looking to God for His help in filling the position left vacant by Dr. John Wilson, Senior Lecturer in Old Testament, who was elected Bishop of one of Melbourne regions.

The students and staff of Ridley College have made it clear although 75 years is a great occasion for celebration and thanksgiving, it is not a cause for complacency.

Landmark Decision in favour of Anglican Church

Use of Sydney Square

The N.S.W. Equal Opportunity Tribunal has upheld the right of the Anglican Church of the Diocese of Sydney to withhold permission for the use of Sydney Square by homosexual organisations.

This is the first decision of its kind taken by the Tribunal. In this sense it is a landmark decision.

Two separate organisations which permit homosexual behaviour for the promotion of their activities had applied for permission to use Sydney Square for meetings or rallies. One group was the Sydney Gay Mardi Gras, the second a lesser known organisation.

In each case the Anglican Church declined to give permission for the purpose intended.

Sydney Square is 80% owned by the Anglican Church and the remaining 20% by the Sydney City Council.

This is an agreement between these two parties which says that either body can veto applications for the use of the Square.

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MARANATHA

What does it mean to be saved?

"You shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

There is something embarrassing about asking people if they are saved — it's even more so if one is asked and one is not saved. Yet saved we must be if we are not to be lost now and for all eternity.

Sin

Salvation reminds us that we need to be "rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13f).

Many are familiar with that wonderful verse, John 3:16, but how many are equally familiar with verse 36? It reads, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." In other words, we either have eternal life as a present possession, or we are at this moment under the wrath of God.

Many object to the doctrine of the Divine Wrath. It needs to be seen as the obverse side of God's love. The reason that His wrath is not fully exercised in judgment against sin at this time is that "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:8,9).

There is no such thing in God's sight as little sins, because it is a big God against whom we sin. For sin is rebellion against Him (Ps. 51:4); it is breaking His law (1 Jn. 3:4); man cannot have fellowship with God unless he is saved from his sin (Hab. 1:13; cf. Ro. 6:23).

A saviour

It is through Christ alone that salvation comes (Acts 4:12). Man cannot save himself — he is morally bankrupt (Is. 64:6; Ro. 3:23). A rebel against God, he is actually dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph. 2). He needs to have his record blotted out by an act of Divine amnesty and to know that he is accepted by God for no merit of his own. "Salvation is of the Lord!" (Jonah 2:9).

In the Old Testament, the term "saviour" is closely associated with deliverance from sin and death. This idea lies behind the statements about the appearance of the Saviour of His birth (Lk. 2:11), after His resurrection (2 Tim. 1:10), and at His still awaited coming in glory (Tit. 2:13f).

Christ is Saviour — the **only** Saviour — who saves us **from** and **to**.

We see this contrast in what we might term the negative and positive aspects of salvation.

Salvation

Negatively, man is rescued **from**:

- The guilt of sin (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).
- The slavery of sin (Ro. 7:24f; Gal. 5:1).

- The punishment for sin which consists of alienation from God (Eph. 2:12); the experiencing of His wrath (Eph.

2:3) and everlasting death (Eph. 2:5,6).

By contrast, on the positive side, man is brought **into**:

- The state of righteousness (Ro. 3:21-26; 5:1).
- Freedom (Gal. 5:1; 2 Cor. 3:17).
- Blessedness of fellowship with God (Eph. 2:13); the love of God (Ro. 5:5); everlasting life (Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 3:1-4).

Over against each evil stands a corresponding blessing. To be saved, then, means to be emancipated from the greatest evil and to be placed in possession of the greatest good. The state of salvation is opposed to the state of perishing or of being lost (Lk. 19:10; Jn. 3:16).

Salvation is not only total in effect, but in time. It has a **past** aspect — a decisive act of God has secured our status before Him (Ro. 5:1f; 2 Tim. 1:9); a **present** aspect (1 Cor. 15:2); and a **future** — there is a day coming when we shall be finally and completely saved (Ro. 5:9) with a salvation of cosmic dimension (Ro. 8:19ff.).

Such a salvation is costly: Christ is set before us in the Gospel as the One who by His self-sacrifice and death has made full reparation for man's sin (Is. 53:4 ff.; Eph. 1:7).

This is why we speak of "redemption". Redemption means to free by payment of a ransom. To refer to Jesus as "redeemer" reminds us that our salvation has been purchased at great personal cost (Ro. 3:25); it points us to the cross.

serving faith

How does this salvation become ours? When we trust Jesus as King, or Lord. This is the content of the gospel, as we saw in the last study.

Using Ro. 10:9f. as a guide, the content of our faith is being confident of the Lordship of Christ and accepting the fact of the resurrection. It is this event that attested Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 15:11; Ro. 1:1-4).

Faith has no virtue in itself: it is the object of our faith that is important. The Bible never says that we are justified on account of or because of our faith; it always says through or by faith.

This saving faith is God's gift (1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 1:29); yet faith is an act of man. God cannot do the believing for the sinner. We ought always note the strong link between faith and obedience which is its result. See Ro. 1:5; 10:4-9, 16.

The New Testament never calls on any man to repent on the ground that Christ died specifically and particularly for him. The basis on which it invites sinners to put faith in Christ is simply that they need Him, and that He offers Himself to them, and that those who receive Him are promised all the benefits that His death secured for His people.

So we must "implore men on Christ's behalf; be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:19f.). Christ has made perfect provision for the sinner; we offer salvation full and perfect. "Whosoever will may come" (cf. Rev. 22:17; Ro. 10:11,13).

Donald Howard

Evangelism and cultural blinkers

English churchmen challenged to 'set the gospel free'

"Set my Gospel free!" could well become the theme song for evangelism in our generation. This is the conviction of Clive Calver, General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance and others who met for a four day workshop last month under the theme, "Freeing Evangelism from Cultural Blinkers."

Sponsored by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity in association with the Evangelical Alliance, it drew evangelists, church leaders and mission teachers from all denominations throughout Britain. Its overall aim was to explore the impact of culture on the

strategy and meaning of evangelism and to find ways of helping evangelists and churches to fulfil their ministries more effectively.

Those taking part included the evangelist Eric Delves; the Rev. J. R. W. Stott; Rob Frost, of the Methodist Home Mission, who "led a particularly down to earth presentation of the Gospel with drama and music"; and the E. A. evangelism secretary V. Thomson who said "Most people left with new ideas, challenged traditions, altered agendas and rethought goals."

(ENGLISH CHURCHMAN)

Monuments as important as documents

Laurel Gasque invites Christians to place pictures beside words in teaching the bible

"Looking at monuments is as important as looking at documents to learn about Christianity. Moreover, works of art are open to the many, while documents are open only to the few. For some, works of art are the only contact they have with historical Christianity."

"Is there Christian art or Christian artists? Some say no, there is only good art and bad art; good artists and bad artists."

"For the artist who is a Christian, the important thing is serving God, the world and the church through his art."

Laurel Gasque introduced her first talk in Sydney on 'Christianity and Art' with these ideas. She then showed slides of works of art from the first century catacombs in Rome to today, both on Christian subjects and by Christians. She was speaking at the monthly meeting of Cara, the centre of Christians in the arts at S.U. House.

She touched on the difficulty of whether visual images are against God's command. She showed slides of Jewish works depicting Moses, early Christian works depicting Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and other images of redemption, eg Jonah, Noah, Moses, Sampson, Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego. She quoted Erasmus as being tolerant of didactic and devotional use of works of art, and Luther as defending art for those purposes.

Luther questioned the authority of the Church, though he upheld Scripture. This led to the questioning of all authority, including that of Scripture. Later art work shows this crisis: what replaces that authority? Nature? Reason? Despair? Can anything from the past be authority for us today? How can artists today convey spiritual reality?

In her second talk at St. Barnabas' Church Broadway, Laurel spoke on 'Loving your neighbour through art', a continuation of her first talk. In an age of piety, artists were able to produce pious art: the viewers understood the imagery

and Biblical allusions. Today, the deeply pious artist is unable to produce pious art. Also, the Church is not interested in art, it doesn't see the apologetic or liturgical value of beauty. Thus today's Christian artists have difficulty reclaiming our Christian heritage. Modern art forms are often hard to understand, and the viewer needs a knowledge of the artist's life to comprehend his work.

"Christians need to work in the framework of service, their works should be useful, accessible, understandable, imaginative."

To illustrate this, she showed slides of some Christian artists' work.

Eric Gill, a 20th century Englishman, designed clear but elegant typefaces. He also worked in low relief on ordinary objects like bedsteads. "Art is making things well whether draughtspins or grand symphonies", he said. "I deliberately chose not to pursue Art with a capital 'A'." He printed visual interpretations of Scripture passages — a theologian as well as an artist.

In her third talk at the Eremos Institute, Laurel spoke on 'Art: propaganda or parable?'

She described propaganda as being prosaic not poetic, explicit not subtle, memorable, on one level only, distorting the truth because oversimplifying it or focussing on only one part of it. A statement for the viewer to observe.

A parable is often the opposite to propaganda because it engages the imagination, stimulated curiosity and participation through identifying with a character. It is implicit, the message betrayed rather than bashed out. It is surprising, memorable.

The danger for Christians is to use propaganda — to simplify the gospel and thus distort it, rather than to use parables. While saying this, Laurel showed examples of both art forms — propaganda posters, and illustrations of parables such as the Prodigal Son, David and Nathan.

Loan buys Rolls for Rajneesh

Ex follower awarded damages

PORTLAND, Ore (EP) — A federal court jury here awarded \$1.7 million to a former Rajneesh who said she was deceived into loaning nearly \$310,000 to the religious group.

The jury deliberated slightly more than two hours before deciding that Helen C. Byron of Santa Fe, New Mexico, has been deliberately deceived by Anand Sheela, president of Rajneesh Foundation International and spokeswoman for the cult group guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.

The award included \$1.25 million for punitive damages.

Sheela, who testified that the money from Byron was an irrevocable contribution, said the suit was part of a government plan to "destroy the Rajneeshes" with "poison" from former Rajneesh followers. She said her group will appeal the verdict.

Byron, 65, said Sheela asked for money to purchase land in 1980. Byron has

multiple sclerosis and said she was keeping \$309,990 for potential medical expenses and could not donate it to the group. Byron said Sheela proposed that the money be a loan, to be repayed on request. Byron also testified that she asked for no written loan agreement because she trusted Sheela "completely".

Byron learned later that the money had been used to buy an armored Rolls-Royce for Rajneesh.

Jurors apparently did not believe Sheela's claim that the money was a gift, even though two receipts were entered into evidence showing that Byron contributed that amount in 1980. Rajneesh attorney Prartho Subhan claimed in his closing argument that Byron had contributed the money, but changed her mind about the gift after leaving the group.

(EPNS)

Darwin Crusade

The Bill Newman organisation conducted a Crusade in Darwin in the first weeks of June. People from over 20 churches worked together to prepare for the Crusade which saw an average of about 800 people attending each night.

Many commitments were recorded,

Bill Newman in the north

although a high proportion were rededications. This concerned some of the clergy who feel that the church in Darwin does not have good contacts with non-church people. Nevertheless many did come to Christ for the first time and Christians did have a go at contacting non-church people.

Challenge to the comfortable Churches

Vision for Growth Edging westward — Doonside and Cranebrook

In many mission fields of the world, church planting is a major goal. Both expatriate and indigenous Christians work together to build from scratch a viable congregation, through visiting, evangelism and patient nurture, often with many disappointments. After years of slow growth, a congregation may be in a position to buy land and build itself a church, and to support its own pastor.

The process of planting Anglican churches on Sydney's growing edges is not very different. It has been receiving new emphasis and encouragement lately with the launching of the Vision for Growth programme. If this means that well-established churches in the older suburbs share more of their financial resources towards funding both personnel and buildings in the new areas, that would indeed be something. But an even more costly challenge would be for hundreds of laymen and women — singles, couples and families — to go out as "missionaries" from their warm, secure, well-taught fellowships in order to live and witness in areas where the church is struggling into being.

Where a new suburb consists largely of private housing, Christian couples may be among those who move in, and these may form the core of a new congregation. But where Housing Commission developments predominate, few families have any previous church link. The usual problem looms of working class estrangement from the church, generation after generation. To break down that alienation is a mammoth task. These are the areas most in need of resident missionaries, stable individuals and families sufficiently free of overwhelming problems of their own to be able to get alongside others, and show them that Christianity is indeed relevant — that Christ loves them, and so do his people.

As in an overseas mission field, this would be real cross-cultural evangelism — not just where migrants predominate, as with the Indo-Chinese influx into the Cabramatta area, but no less so in Housing Commission developments bringing together thousands of disadvantaged families, many of them fragmented by desertion or divorce. Life-styles and values are worlds away from those of typical middle-class Christians.

One example, mentioned to me by most of those I talked to who are working in these areas, is our Anglican assumption of ready literacy — that people will be able to read with ease whatever books and papers we thrust into their hands. In church services, hymn books, prayer books and Bibles may scare them stiff, so their first visit might be their last! Strict Anglican tradition may have to give way to flexible experimentation with styles of worship appropriate to the culture, while faithful to the Gospel.

Typically, Housing Commission families are concerned just with getting by from day to day. Many are one-parent families. Though unemployment is often part of the picture, basic material needs are met on the whole by social security and

voluntary agencies. But budgeting money sensibly is rarely a goal. Hire purchase is a way of getting what you want instantly, and even luxuries like video recorders are probably commoner than in middle-class families. But debts are ever-threatening, despite the low Housing Commission rent.

Families like these, though poor, are often just as materialistic as the well-off who see no need for God, though they are likely to be more impulsively generous. The church is remote from their lifestyle. In fact, when people from this culture are converted — it **does** happen — they tend to move away from its values towards 'middle-class' responsibility, and often literally to move to a home of their own in a middle-class area.

New areas are often devoid of the grandparent generation. Another challenge is for couples of "young retirement" age — fit, active and in their sixties — to consider renting their home for a few years, or letting a son or daughter live in it, and serving Christ in such an area. Now that's an alarming thought — in ten years' time or so it could apply to us!

I recently visited two Vision for Growth areas, Cambridge Park/Cranebrook near Penrith, and Doonside near Blacktown and talked to ministers and their wives. I also talked to Deaconess Erica Mathieson, now attached to St. Andrew's Wahroonga, after three years in Doonside/Quakers Hill. She was finding the contrasts staggering.

Doonside

"Most people think our church buildings are the toilet blocks of the Roman Catholic church next-door," commented Doonside rector Rev. Jerry Lowe. Looking at the two hut-like structures standing between the Anglican rectory and the brick buildings of the adjoining Catholic church, I could readily understand their mistake.

A church, of course, is people, not buildings. But the Anglican congregation at Doonside, serving a still-growing community largely of Housing Commission tenants, is handicapped by these inadequate and unattractive buildings. A new all-purpose church building, to be erected on the vacant block in front of the rectory, is one specific, much needed Vision for Growth project.

Jerry Lowe, with his wife Elizabeth, has been the resident minister of St. John's Doonside and St. Stephen's Quakers Hill New Housing District since its inception in 1979. Before that, Doonside was part of Blacktown parish. It has not been an easy time for the Lowes and their four children, aged four to fourteen. But though offers have come for better-established, middle-class parishes, they are keen to see Doonside through at least to the opening of the planned new church complex.

I asked if other denominations — such as, perhaps, pentecostal groups — were



Doonside Anglican church buildings, left and centre, with R. C. church on right.

finding a readier response to the gospel in this area. "No, none of them is making a noticeable impact. It's like sowing seeds on concrete" is the way a Roman Catholic parish sister expressed it. Mr. Lowe replied. His congregation averaged 45-60 on Sunday mornings (no evening services); the Sunday School with 55 on the roll, is declining if anything; at Quaker's Hill there is a Sunday School and a Family Service once a month. The youth group draws about 14-16 on a Friday night. Most of the Doonside families are from the small pockets of private housing.

Scripture classes in three out of the four primary schools in the district are an uphill battle for the rector, curate and two older ladies. Discipline is difficult, needless to say. "Sometimes I think we are kidding ourselves that we're getting anywhere. There's another generation growing up even more godless and ignorant than the last — and Doonside is just one of many such areas." Mr. Lowe commented. "All the things we might do, like play groups, after school clubs, more effective youth work, need a stable core group of reliable Christian lay people. Transfer growth is almost nil — I can only think of two Christian families moving in, and a girl teaching at Blacktown.

"Christian couples tend to seek geographically, culturally and sociologically more attractive communities to live in. And that applies to clergy, too. But Housing Commission areas need the pick of the clergy — our most able, committed and most adaptable couples. Ideally, if necessary, they must import a team of lay 'missionaries' with them."

CRANEBROOK

Rev. Chris Burgess, with his wife Cathy, is curate in Charge of the Provisional Parish of Cambridge Park, comprising St. Paul's Cambridge Park, St. Thomas' Cranebrook, and St. Aidan's Werrington. Curate Rev. Richard Nixey and wife Lyndell live in one of the pleasant streets of the recently developed private estate forming part of the suburb of Cranebrook. Nearby are hundreds of Housing Commission homes and town houses, quite attractively set in clusters on gentle hills rather than in straight rows. Lawns and trees break and bareness. Few in these areas are aware of the existence of the present Cranebrook church building. It dates from the thirties and looks like what it has been over the years — a small rural church, standing amid open paddocks. All the housing development is out of sight on the other side of a hill behind it, a kilometre or so away.

With the help of Vision for Growth funding, it is planned to sell this building and to build, on a block already bought by the Diocese in the developed area, a multi-purpose church building. This would be a sensible move. About 6000 people already live in Cranebrook, and the projected population is 10,000 to 12,000. The present church seats about 50.

There is a lively, warm congregation, however. About half of the families live in the more rural part of Cranebrook, on 5-acre lots. Others come from the private estate, and only two or three families from the Housing Commission estate. There is a core congregation of committed Christians, mainly because of the existence of two Christian schools nearby — St. Paul's Grammar, a secondary school, and Kinderlin Christian School, for infants and primary children. Some of the teaching staff attend St. Thomas' Cranebrook, with their families.

Baptism enquiries come from all parts of the parish even the Housing Commission area at times — and these are an encouraging means of ministry. There have been some conversions. The church and the schools reinforce each other's ministries. A CEBS group has been started recently.

The Burgesses in Cambridge Park are encouraged by the spiritual growth in their congregation of about 80. Many are willing to take up opportunities to learn and to take on extra ministries, and they are very supportive of each other. A team of about 14 tackle the Scripture teaching opportunities in the daunting total of seven State primary schools in the three areas, but not in the one high school. They feel they are barely scratching the surface in the two State primary schools in Cranebrook.

Youth work is a weakness. A specialist youth worker would be an asset, or at least training for people in the church already.

Cambridge Park, perhaps because it is not a Housing Commission area, is now almost self-supporting. A catechist is supported by St. Paul's Seaforth, a much-appreciated act of partnership. The ministry at Cranebrook is subsidised by HMS, but growth in giving is encouraging. Now, of course, they face the high costs of the proposed new church building, to which they will have to contribute their share as well as the Vision for Growth input. Of the estimated cost of \$250,000, the parish needs to raise \$100,000 \$50,000 in interest payments, and \$50,000 for furniture and equipment.

I was impressed by the Talents Day fund-raising idea the Nixeyes told me about — people met to work out what talents they had and could put to work towards the cost of their new church. They came up with the following list, which was circulated in a pamphlet round the whole community:

- Maths coaching
- Child minding
- Crafts
- Knitting
- Driving instruction
- Tax advice
- Birthday-cake making
- Dog obedience training!

I think we can rest assured that as in our long-established churches we give towards the great financial needs of the churches on Sydney's growing edges, their own people for their part will also be working hard and giving sacrificially.

(LESLEY HICKS)



The present St. Thomas' Church, Cranebrook.

Quick Cuts

Awe

(We suggest that you might like to use this article in your Parish Paper)

I like to feel secure; I hate losing control. I remember surfing once and so losing control completely that, for a few seconds that lasted for an apparent hour and a half, I was entirely a victim of the sea, helplessly pounded, pushed and pulled. Moments before, the ocean was friendly and inviting; now it was malignant, horrible and overwhelmingly strong. Yes, that was the greatest thing—it was so strong, and I was so puny.

For me it was a moment of awe before the forces of nature. Like many modern city-dwellers I had forgotten that emotion. If anything green grows I put concrete on top of it; for me bitumen is my mother-soil, and the storms and winds are simply a minor interference because they make the leaves drop on my bricked front yard. Even in the city, though, where man tries to tame nature, nature sometimes shows its power and reminds us of our frailty.

Why these strange thoughts? Because I was trying to think what God is like, and the word that came to mind was "awful". Oh, I don't mean awful like an

embarrassing relative; I mean awful in the sense of that which fills us with awe, even with dread. Were we even to touch the outskirts of his ways, we would be totally overwhelmed, swept off our feet, thunder-struck. We could not stand the brightness of his glory for a moment.

I'm not right, am I? I mean you can't compare being dumped by a Pacific roller with meeting God. The ocean itself is just a drop in the bucket to him.

How strange it is, then, that we take this God so lightly. How strange that, in the ordinary speech of men they use the name of God as a swear word and an acceptable ejaculation. "Oh God!", they say; as if he is the most familiar and powerless of objects. "Oh coffee table!", "Oh tree!", "Oh my!", "Oh God!" They do not trouble to think, these people; they assume that God is so remote, so harmless.

The Bible says this: "Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe; for our God is consuming fire."

Peter Jensen

WORLD

Cliff Richard takes a stand

Wins libel case

Cliff Richard, who brought and won a libel case against the New Musical Express last week, saw it as an opportunity to defend the faith and make a stand for Christ.

Mr. Bill Latham, who manages Cliff Richard's Christian singing and speaking engagements, says that magazines often make personal attacks on Cliff, but this was an exceptionally unpleasant piece of writing. The article in question purported to be a review of one of Cliff's gospel concerts, given at the Hammersmith Odeon last autumn but, Mr. Latham said, it used both foul and blasphemous language to attack and ridicule not only Cliff but his faith, his Christian work and Christ himself.

Although Cliff had not, as he remembered, ever sued for libel before he felt this was the time to stand up and say that Christians will not allow their faith to be mocked in this way.

The New Musical Express apologised, withdrew the allegations and sacked the writer of the article but Cliff Richard pressed on with the case. Last Wednesday (May 5) he won an undisclosed amount of libel damages.

The money will go to the Arts Centre Group, a charity in which Cliff is actively involved, where it will be used for various evangelistic outreach activities to people working in the arts and the media, including no doubt music reviewers.

(CEN)

Luis Palau in Geneva

Urges third millenium evangelism in World Council of Churches

Geneva, Switzerland — In an unexpected development during his spring tour of Europe, Luis Palau carried his burden for evangelism into the heart of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches (WCC). The evangelist was the principal speaker at an Ascension Day Rally organized by the Evangelical Alliance of Geneva.

The meeting was to be held in a local auditorium, but when the Evangelical Alliance realized how large the audience would be, they asked for the use of the WCC chapel.

In an opening expression of gratitude to Europeans who sent missionaries to Argentina, Palau, who was born and raised in Argentina, responded to the position of some WCC officials who decry the missionary enterprise.

Then he noted that Christianity's third millenium is almost upon us, if Jesus doesn't come first. Palau stressed that the same message of repentance and forgiveness of sins must continue to be preached to every nation, and strategies must be created to accomplish this.

Palau said that the acceptance of the Gospel by individuals will change those individuals, their families, their societies, and bring general improvement. He said that the Swiss people enjoy prosperity and freedom as fruits of the gospel.

"Converts to Christ become the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Society begins to change. It takes more time than we like, but then it takes time to change human nature. Society's problems are created by people. So we can change society by changing people's inner lives," the evangelist affirmed.

He concluded, "There is no more effective social action, no more effective political action for the good of individuals and nations, than to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrected and ascended power."

(EPNS)

English Bishop tells Catholics

"Stand fast do not be moved"

In an "emergency address" to the General Council of the Church Union the Bishop of Chichester, Dr. Eric Kemp, has called on Catholics in the Church of England to "stand fast" — as Pusey and Keble did when Newman led an exodus to Rome.

Dr. Kemp took the unprecedented step of delivering a presidential address to the Council's summer meeting last week because, according to a Church Union press-release, there is "clear and increasing evidence that many members of the Church of England are contemplating joining the Roman Catholic Church."

The Rev. Peter Geldard, the CU's general secretary, told the Council meeting that, since last November's decision by the General Synod to prepare legislation for the ordination of women to the priesthood, he had dealt with an individual a week — twenty-six so far, clergy and laity — who had decided to become Roman Catholics.

North Korean Christians

A delegation visits China

(Hong Kong) Chinese Church Research Centre reports that a delegation from the Christian Union of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea visited China at the invitation of the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) committee. The three-member delegation led by Priest Go Gi Zun, Secretary General of the Korea Christian Union, arrived in China on May 5. This is the first contact between Christians of China and those of North Korea. Besides representatives of the CCC and the TSPM, the delegation was met by Yang Jingren, the vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee and head of China's United Front Work Department.

(RES NEWS EXCHANGE)

REVIEW

Canadian Lutherans regroup

Now Evangelical Lutheran

Church in Canada

WINNEPEG, Manitoba (EP) — A new Lutheran church in Canada voted itself into existence May 16, as the Lutheran Church in America-Canada Section and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada closed union negotiations which officially began in 1978.

The new Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, with 209,000 members in 655 congregations, will be Canada's fourth largest Protestant denomination. The merger does not fully unite Canadian Lutherans; the 100,000-member Lutheran Church-Canada, affiliated with the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, is not a party to the union.

The 500 delegates to the convention approved a \$2,847,000 budget for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, after noting that it was an "extremely tight" budget that did not allow for filling all executive positions created by the new church's constitution. The new church approved membership in the Lutheran World Federation, the Lutheran Council in Canada, the World Council of Churches, and the Canadian Council of Churches.

The new Canadian church will begin operations Jan. 1, 1986. Bishop Donald Sjoberg of the LCA's Western Canada Synod was elected president of the new church.

(EPNS)

Klaas Runia reacts to pastoral letter

Becoming strangers to 'faith of our fathers'

(Amsterdam) In Centraal Weekblad (April 26), Dr. Klaas Runia reacts to a letter sent out by the general synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) to concerned consistories. The letter was framed by the moderamen of synod in response to the many questions it had received from local churches to allay their concern about the state of affairs in the denomination. The letter pleads for a course that steers between confusion (verwarring) and stagnation (verstarring).

It is a question whether the letter will really help those who are disturbed. According to Runia, the letter, instead of admitting that there is legitimate cause for concern, defends the developments in the churches and the course followed by recent synods.

Runia also considers it surprising that in a time in which the members of the church are increasingly becoming strangers to the faith of the fathers, the letter stresses the "time-boundness" of the confessions. Wouldn't it have been much more appropriate, he asks, if in this time of alienation the synod would again have stressed the great value of the Reformational understanding of the gospel?

Runia further points out that since the 1970's the synods no longer make doctrinal pronouncements, but instead, issue pastoral guidelines, entrusting local churches to use them as they see fit. These guidelines, however, are more than guidelines. Implicit in them are definite viewpoints and perspectives, such as, for example, in the booklet on marriage and other forms of intimate human relationships, *In liefde trouw zijn*. Implicitly these guidelines have often taken a stand for specific ethical standpoints, one that differs from the historic position of the church.

(RES NEWS EXCHANGE)

Parliament and Pope part

Roman Catholicism no longer Italy's 'state religion'

ROME, Italy — The Vatican and Italy ratified a pact June 3 ending Roman Catholicism as a state religion. The pact, first agreed to in February of 1984 and approved this year by the Italian Parliament, affirms the independence of Vatican City, but ends a number of privileges the Catholic Church had in Italy, including its status as the state church.

Pope John Paul II said the new church-state treaty, called a concordat, was a sign that Catholicism respected Italy's independence, but added that the church would still speak on political and moral issues. Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi said the new concordat "exalts religious freedom and the freedom of the church."

The new pact recognizes the increased secularization of Italian society. Although more than 90 percent of Italians are baptized Catholics, only 30 percent attend Sunday Mass. Voters there resisted Vatican power in two recent tests by approving divorce and abortion.

The new pact ends Rome's status as a "sacred city," which had allowed the Catholic church to object to pornography shops and strip-tease parlors. It also tightens rules on tax exemptions and gradually ends state subsidies for clergy. Compulsory Catholic instruction in public schools is ended under the pact, although it can continue voluntarily.

(EPNS)

Keeping a cool head

Orthodox Presbyterian Church calmly studies women deacons

(Philadelphia) The question of women in church office is not bypassing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The denomination, with administration building located here, is calmly studying the issue.

One aspect of the ordination of women which has received scrutiny is the way Scripture ought to be interpreted. The report of a study committee asked "to consider the hermeneutical aspects of the debate over the role of women in ordained office," opens with the words:

It has become clear that the question of women in ordained office cannot simply be reduced to a choice between believing and rejecting the message of Scriptures. . . Just because the meaning of a passage seems perfectly clear to us does not guarantee the reliability of our interpretation.

The 32-page report notes that committed Christians, who sincerely submit to the authority of Scripture, often arrive at antithetical interpretations when they read the Bible. This is due in part, says the report, to the quite different historical and cultural situation in which the Bible arose. The leaders of the Reformation were aware of this. While stressing the clarity of the Bible, they also wrote lengthy commentaries to explain that which they held to be conspicuous.

Prof. B. B. Warfield, who championed the infallibility of the Bible and is held in high esteem among Orthodox Presbyterians, saw no biblical objection to the ordination of women deacons.

The report not only notes that the New Testament transcends the Old, but also claims that the eschatologically new order transcends even the created order. The question must also be faced whether a given word in Scripture, which appears to be the last word the canon speaks on the subject, is possibly open in the future for further development in connection with the coming of God's kingdom.

(RES NEWS EXCHANGE)

"Protecting" children in "broken homes"



Alan Craddock

Parents generally want the best for their children, but there are times when this desire is either blocked-off or distorted by things that are happening at a personal level for the parent. I have encountered a large number of Christian parents who have become single parents and who now find their parenting rendered more complex by their own need to grapple with the impact of their separation, divorce or bereavement upon themselves. Their roles become tangled: Parental role entangled with angry, frustrated hurt or depressed personal roles.

For separated parents the entanglements are extremely complex. They both remain parents to their children and they want their children to grow up unaffected by the marital breakdown. However, the need to be able to continue to cooperate as parents, despite the marital breakdown, is often not recognized.

The process of cooperative parenting is often impaired by the way in which the parents fail to separate their spousal and parental roles. When one parent spends time with their child they might be tempted to use the child as a means of "getting back" at the other parent, the ex-spouse. Here we have competition between the parental role and the old spousal role. The unresolved bitterness and anger directed against the ex-partner are acting in such a way as to make it virtually impossible to be a useful and helpful parent to the child or for cooperative parenting to be made possible between both parents.

A person in this situation needs to take stock of what is happening. What is their primary role in the situation? Helpful caring parent or bitter and vindictive ex-spouse? When we fail to ask these questions what happens is a product of confused and competitive roles.

A further complication occurs when parents in this situation try to compensate for the suffering a child experiences when a marriage fails and parents separate. Two strategies involving discipline often appear attractive to such parents. One strategy involves very lax, almost non-existent discipline. The parents adopt this strategy because they do not want to be repressive and thus further damage what they regard as an already damaged child. The other strategy is the opposite. It involves very strict and harshly punitive forms of discipline designed to keep the child on the "right path" and prevent them "turning out like" the resented absent ex-partner. Separated Christian parents are highly vulnerable to this second strategy.

I would argue that either extreme is unhelpful, and that problems will emerge for both parent and child when discipline is either lacking or present in an unduly harsh form. Either extreme appears to be more an outcome of the parent's need to compensate by either over-protecting or over-controlling the child in the face of parental guilt, anger or anxiety. In fact, in extreme cases, there is an increased risk of child abuse despite the desire to act for the best of the child.

This point emerges in a recent review of factors associated with child abuse (Berger, A. M. "The child-abusing family" *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 1980, 8 (4), 52-68) in which the roles of certain varieties of disciplinary strategies are linked to parental anger and frustration combined with a fear that a child is likely to become an aggressive and uncontrollable child.

Psychological studies have shown that parents who are unwilling or unable to control their children adequately are highly likely to create circumstances in which their children become extremely

aggressive or irresponsible. The behaviour of such children may eventually become intolerable. Parents may then resort to serious physical violence in the face of their lack of disciplinary resources to provide more appropriate means of controlling such extreme behaviour. In this situation discipline is not the problem, it is lack of or ineffective discipline which is problematic.

However, there are situations where particular kinds of discipline lead to child abuse. Parents who make use of high levels of physical punishment, verbal threat and abuse are likely to extend this aggression to become abusing parents when the child becomes unresponsive and rebellious in the face of their harsh disciplinary techniques. This kind of discipline is based on fear rather than upon reason and love. Emotional reactions dominate the scene rather than co-operation and concern.

One study found that abusing families used physical punishment to excess and did so inconsistently and often inappropriately. In these cases the children were made fearful, angry and resentful. They were being accused of wrong when they behaved in ways that had not been punished before and now were being nagged, scolded and physically hurt. There is also evidence that at times such children were being disciplined inappropriately. They were being punished for not being able to control their behaviour (crying or urinating) when they were simply not old enough to do so.

In the case of harsh, inconsistent and inappropriate disciplines the child becomes angry and confused. In order to cope the child may act in a way that simply makes the parents angrier and more abusive and child battering may occur. In this situation discipline of a particular kind has become a problem, but the problem is not with discipline as such.

Christian parents, in both two and single parent families, have a twofold responsibility. First, they should be prepared to discipline their children. Second, they should do so in a way that is consistent with the loving concern shown to Christians by the way in which God, our Father, has dealt with them. We set limits on our children because we love them and care about the consequences for them if they go beyond those limits.

However, we need to be cautious about the form our discipline takes and the nature of the expectations and standards. We need to allow God and His Word to shape our values in both of these areas.

We need to be especially careful to avoid the kinds of dangers which emerge from our desire to compensate for the impact that troubled marital relationships might have on our children. Losing a sense of balance will only achieve the worst of fears rather than its avoidance.

FRANK AKEHURST

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LETTERS

Not being put down

Dear Editor,

After following the issues of women's ministry in the Church, i.e. Ordination, women's rights and equality of the sexes, for some time I would like to make a few comments of my understanding about it.

As a woman I am sick to death of women's lib and feminism in any shape or form and quite frankly the sight of it among so called Christian women worries me a great deal. I don't see men putting us down but our own sisters doing the damning work of convincing us we are stereotyped into domestic servility, and how hurt we have been by men in the past, and how we live in a terrible male dominated culture when we all know God created us all equal. What a load of bunk! All it seems is that a few women are suddenly determined to have their own way no matter the cost: not to themselves, their brethren but also to God's name. After all we are on view to the rest of the world and our first job is to glorify God through obedience and faith in Jesus Christ as we submit to Him as our Lord and Saviour. Dear ladies, are you not aware that the sin of Eve, from which we all suffer, was that she not only disobeyed God's direction but attempted to usurp her husband's authority over her — something we have been doing ever since.

I really don't see anything in Scripture about jumping up and down for our own rights, but I do see lots about humbling ourselves before God, being in union with each other, submitting to God and, to each other in love, and preferring the other person to ourselves.

To be honest I do not see or hear this in the MOW group or any feminist group today only a lot of "gobble, gobble".

Yours faithfully,
(Mrs.) Susan Karaberidis

A "real" preacher needed

Dear Sir,

I have been thinking on the subject of ordination of women. Why not? What we have now is ministers of the old women variety so what is the fuss about? I feel like making a search for a masculine minister just to find out if one exists. Diogenes through the Sydney diocese.

They wear woman-like clothes in Church. They are frightened to forcefully preach. They don't want to offend, not even the offence of the Gospel. They are neuter if not effeminate. Real nice religious politicians.

Oh for a Man of God

Yours faithfully,
F. J. Asprey

Women preachers

Dear Sir,

I agree with Phyllis Creasey that the bible clearly states that God sees women as an improvement to the human race. Having given the first man and the first woman dominion over the animal kingdom, God saw all that He had made, and it was "very good" (Gen 1:31). But, before Eve was created, God saw Adam's condition as "not good" (Gen 2:18).

It is what God wants that should motivate us. If God does not want women preachers in His church, why did He ordain that St. Anna, although very, very old, should be the first Christian preacher? (Luke 2:38). And why, having blocked St. Paul's going into Bithynia and Asia, did God direct him to an all women congregation in Philippi? (Acts 16:15,16). The first Christian workers would have to be women. Indeed, some were. They contended at St. Paul's side (Phil 4:5).

In Psalm 68, God says, "The Lord gave the word, great is the company of feminine preachers".

God does not want human pride, in men or women. It was male pride which our Lord so strongly rebuked on the way to Emmaus, on the first Easter evening. The two forlorn disciples could not believe the women's stories of the Resurrected Lord Jesus. They gave as proof the fact that two of their men had been down to the tomb, but had not seen Him. He surely would have appeared to the men! But He didn't. (It is interesting that when He did appear to Peter, they said, "The Lord is risen, indeed!").

When our Lord replied, "Oh fools! and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!", He included His women emissaries with the other prophets.

I believe it is really male pride which is slow to accept women co-workers, preaching, leading services and administering the sacraments. A convenient interpretation is held tenaciously, often on an unclear point in the Bible, while important disclosures of God's mind about the question, are ignored.

Since God sees women as an improvement to the human race, and since both men and women share the privilege of being created in God's Image, it is unlikely that God wants the most important human activity — preaching the Gospel, with its attendant sacraments — carried out exclusively by males.

C. G. Knox

Dear Sir,

In my letter published in ACR of 3.6.85, I want to emphasise that I did not write the word "mean" as you have printed it, in the phrase "the loving brother/sister relationships which men and women should have towards each other generally in the Church."

No-one in your columns seems to be denying that men and women are of equal status in God's sight. In the world generally before Christ and in the Old Testament law women certainly were of inferior status, but that is changed by the Gospel of Christ when we allow it to fully operate in all of our hearts and lives. Yet there are still those who would deny suitably gifted women the privilege of sharing in the ordained ministry of the Church. It seems to me that those who do not want to share this privilege fall short of what our Lord would desire for them.

The New Testament Scriptures set forth what our Christian life and fellowship in the Church which belongs to Jesus Christ should be: a loving fellowship rejoicing in the love and salvation of God, loving and caring for every one of the members and reaching out with Christ's love and salvation to all those in

the world around us. The life of Christ in every member will enable each one to grow into ministry according to the innate natural gifts that God has given each individual and as each one is submitting himself or herself to God. We are to share Christ's life and love with one another.

A church which rejects the ministry of Christian women is rejecting Christ Himself in the persons of people whom he has called and enabled and is failing to love and accept them as fellow human beings made in the image of God. Let us all, men and women, each ask God to show us how we need to repent, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Yours sincerely,
Beatrice V. Robinson (Dss.)

Using women's gifts

Dear Sir,

Should not the church be more concerned about its spiritual state than keeping women out of the priesthood? St. Paul would not have ordained unbelieving bishops, yet precious time is spent searching out tiny clues on his views of women. If the Spirit wills, women will witness in season and out of season, in the pulpit or out of the pulpit. God can work miracles through anyone He chooses, even to put to rout a bevy of unbelieving bishops if necessary.

God chose a little maidservant, captive in a foreign land, to humiliate the king of Israel who did not know he harboured a prophet. Yet this unnamed lass testified to her mistress of a prophet in Israel who could heal her husband's leprosy (11 Kings Chap. 5). So convincing was she that this great warrior set forth of find Elisha and was healed.

I know a woman today who calls herself a "helpmeet" — an unbiblical word, but like Deborah, God has raised her up to defend the Protestant Faith which her Church is fast losing. Yes, there is always a woman somewhere, sometime to fill the gap in our defences which even the best men shy away from through lack of moral courage.

The nit-pickers of St. Paul's epistles forget God chose a woman, not only as prophet but judge of Israel. Deborah was as good as any man in the sight of God for He raised her up in a critical time of Israel's history. Today we face the most critical time of the ages — the nuclear age. Will God preserve His Protestant nations? What hope when its very soul — the Church — is Travelling Together with the same old enemy of Israel, but under a different guise, dripping now with spurious holiness. Are we to worship God or Baal? If the latter, then God help us! Will He use women to turn the tide or will they supinely follow the men who regard themselves as Head of the woman? That is the real question with which to concern ourselves.

Yours sincerely,
Phyllis Creasey

No discrimination in love

Dear Sir,

I refer to your Editorial in ACR June 17 re racial discrimination. In another Editorial you mentioned about 'love and truth'. This subject has been in my mind for as long as I have been a Christian and that is since 1935. Racial

discrimination has been in existence since the beginning. Jesus told us to 'Love our neighbour as thyself'. We are well fed, well heeled, overweight, affluent status seeking people, so why bother about our neighbours. In Colossians Paul emphasises the Christian graces which Christians are to demonstrate. He commands them to love. How did Jesus love? By self-sacrificing Himself to others and for others. Do you do this? Some of us at times substitute for the real thing something which looks like love. We are prepared to make considerable sacrifices to time, energy and even money. But we do that instead of giving ourselves to others. This is the acid test. Racial discrimination is very real, and we must not kid ourselves. How often do we get up and welcome visitors to our churches? Do we make them welcome or do we leave them alone, strangers in a far off land? Does the colour of their faces disturb us? The New Testament plainly states in Roman 10:12 that racial barriers are broken down in Christ 'there is no distinction between Jews and Greeks'. Let us not be a hypocrite for any racial discrimination must fade into insignificance in the fact that 'we are all one in Jesus Christ' (Gal. 3:28). All the above is written from first hand experience and not hearsay.

Furthermore, this 'lack of loving thy neighbour' is found in all denominations which I have visited.

Yours sincerely,
Denis Tan
Queensland

True Church with a true gospel

Dear Sir,

In referring to the Pope's visit to Australia next year in his letter in the June edition of "Southern Cross", Archbishop Robinson stressed the importance of positively affirming those elements of Christianity which we share in common with the Roman Catholic Church. May I suggest that is a dangerous position which could easily lead the archbishop and cause him to lead our Church into compromise.

There is a wholeness about truth, and its parts are integrated. "A body of divinity". If we approach truth partially, we can find elements in common with almost every heresy, cult, philosophy, communism etc. The approach must surely be truth as a whole first, and particularly its main parts, and only later its component parts.

It is here that we immediately find, as the Reformers did, a great gulf on matters relating to the way of salvation. This error of approach was noted in A.C.R.'s review (20 May) of David Samuel's book "Pope or Gospel?"

I also note a tendency today to suggest that papal claims are the main barrier between our two churches. As audacious, blasphemous and serious as those claims are, I suggest the central problem is the gospel itself. Rome teaches a different doctrine of justification and from this many of the other problems flow. We preach two different gospels.

Our two churches must walk separate paths.

Yours sincerely,
(Rev.) Maxwell Bonner

YOUTH LEADERS FOR WILDERNESS CENTRES

Sydney City Mission Australia has exciting employment opportunities for people who enjoy a challenge and who have excellent leadership qualities. The Mission now requires staff for stage two of its Wilderness Programme to be located at Nowra.

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- Bushcraft teachers
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Applications in writing, along with references to: Merle Hurcomb, Director, Sydney City Mission Aust, 103 Bathurst St, SYDNEY NSW 2000. SYDNEY CITY MISSION AUSTRALIA.

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Editorial

The tax debate

What should Christians be saying in the current tax debate? There would seem to be several broad Biblical principles that are relevant.

First, it needs to be remembered that civil government has been instituted by God, under His authority, as His minister for good (Romans 13:1ff; 1 Pet. 2:13f). It therefore has a legitimate (although circumscribed) role and as such has the right to raise taxes in order to finance its activities. In this context, Christians should not only oppose tax evasion but also support moves towards ensuring that all who participate in society make some contribution to taxation as they are able.

Second, there is the Bible's clear concern for the poor, defined as those folk who are destitute and dependent on the rest of us to maintain a decent standard of living (Prov 14:31). We have an obligation to give generous regard to their needs. This means that compensation for low-income earners and welfare beneficiaries needs to be adequate when tax reform is implemented, and maintained in the future. As well, it might be argued (although not immediately obvious from Scripture) that progressivity should be a feature of tax collection. At the very least, a regressive system should be opposed.

Third, the tax system should not hinder work and economic development, since both are part of God's plan for mankind. Thus, we should seek a tax system which promotes employment (especially for the poor and weak) and does not create an excessive burden through excessively high rates of tax.

Fourth, Christians need to promote the family as the basic unit of society. This raises questions of the impact of tax reforms on women, children and unpaid labour in the home, as well as the thorny question of income splitting.

Fifth, we need to promote fairness as one means of fulfilling our calling to be peacemakers (Matt. 5:9; Heb. 12:14). The tax system should reduce the resentment that has existed on the part of those taxpayers who observe others evading their fair share of the burden.

Behind all this, of course, is the Bible's key message to economic man: he needs to shift his focus from mammon to God. Indeed, while ever the considerations of the material world govern popular thinking, some might say that there is little reason to expect the above principles to be held in proper perspective

across our society. We all need to stand back from the social norms which so easily seem to hold us captive, and instead see ourselves as our Creator sees us.

In this regard, it might be said that modern man has lost the ability to evaluate himself and his world from a moral point of view. His operating code is that of individualism and utilitarianism, known in Australian parlance as the 'I'm Alright Jack' philosophy. When a person has no reference point outside himself, ethical judgments inevitably become self-centred, the concept of justice distorted, and sensitivity to others dulled. Robert Browning summed it up by noting that 'man seeks his own good at the whole world's cost'. Christian values, now regarded as obsolete, are forced to give way to the so-called rationality of enlightened self interest. Men and women become divided from each other, and are led to justify by artificial means the mistreatment of their fellows.

But the Bible makes it clear that our economic behaviour is just as much subject to God's scrutiny as any other aspect of our lives. In Micah 6, we read:

He has showed you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

There is no room for an individualism which attempts to abrogate responsibility to those around us. Looked at in another way, we are to view economic matters in terms of right relationships, rather than mammon alone. Our economic dealings and attitudes are to be characterised by a desire to serve others in a context of acknowledging our own dependence on God.

It is this perspective that we need to have on the White Paper and the Tax Summit. There is an old saying that the best form of taxation is that which is paid by somebody else. Many of the views expressed in the debate over tax reform, when stripped of their gloss, boil down to this: hollow pleas from self interest which are devoid of any appreciation of Christian values.

In 1 Corinthians 7:31 we are reminded that 'this world in its present form is passing away', and in the final analysis tax wins or losses will not last into eternity. All men and women need to give up their small worldly gains and turn their attention to the living God, for this is the only investment which will profit us in the long run.

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Lesley Hicks

In a not-too-successful attempt to keep track of information and ideas for my writing, I maintain a filing cabinet, and in it is one file labelled **Dangerous Nonsense**. I headed confidently for it this week, expecting to find a full-page newspaper advertisement I had filed away some years back. No luck — either I'd put it in some other category I couldn't remember, or hadn't kept it after all. That's the problem with my filing system!

I was prompted to look for it by reading **The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow** by Constance Cumbe (Huntington House Inc, Louisiana, \$11.50). It's a strange and disturbing book, not particularly well-written or compiled, but not itself to be classified as dangerous nonsense. Rather, it deals with informations about movements and organizations in America and around the world and ideas they propagate which may not be nonsense at all but are certainly dangerous in a spiritual sense.

The clipping I was looking for is reprinted in the preface of the book and on the back cover. Perhaps you remember seeing it in the Sydney Morning Herald on April 25, 1982; perhaps, disturbed and puzzled, you also kept it. On the other hand you may have dismissed it as sheer rubbish, while wondering how on earth its perpetrators could afford to pay for such a huge ad. If you had known that the same advertisement appeared in 20 major newspapers around the world, reaching many millions of readers, you may have taken it more seriously. It ran, in part:

"THE WORLD HAS HAD enough . . . OF HUNGER, INJUSTICE, WAR, IN ANSWER TO OUR CALL FOR HELP, AS A WORLD TEACHER FOR ALL HUMANITY,

THE CHRIST IS NOW HERE.

HOW WILL WE RECOGNIZE HIM?

Look for a modern man concerned with modern problems — political, economic, social. Since July 1977, the Christ has been emerging as a spokesman for a group or community in a well-known modern country. He is not a religious leader, but an educator in the broadest sense of the word — pointing the way out of our present crisis. We will recognize him by his extraordinary spiritual potency . . .

WHO IS THE CHRIST?

Throughout history, humanity's evolution has been guided by an enlightened group, the Masters of Wisdom . . . At the centre of the Spiritual Hierarchy stands the World Teacher, LORD MAITREYA, known by Christians as the CHRIST. And as Christians await the Second Coming, so the Jews await the MESSIAH, the Buddhists the FIFTH BUDDHA, the Moslems the IMAM MAHDI, and the Hindus await KRISHNA. These are all names for the one individual. His presence in the world guarantees that there will be no third World War.

WHAT IS HE SAYING?

(A plea for brotherhood followed)

WHEN WILL WE SEE HIM?

(An announcement that "within the next two months" the "Christ" would speak to humanity through a worldwide

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Dangerous Nonsense

TV and radio broadcast, to be "heard inwardly, telepathically, by all people in their own language".)

It ended: "WITHOUT SHARING THERE CAN BE NO JUSTICE; WITHOUT JUSTICE THERE CAN BE NO PEACE; WITHOUT PEACE THERE CAN BE NO FUTURE."

Four information centres were then listed: Amsterdam, London, New York, Hollywood. I remember discussing the text with fellow-Christians, thinking it undoubtedly described a false Christ, if not the Antichrist figure spoken of in such passages as 2 Thessalonians 2 — the "man of lawlessness". But nothing discernible happened within the two months — perhaps our antennae for telepathy were not operating! — and it was largely forgotten.

Constance Cumbe is an American evangelical Christian, a lawyer, who has made it her business to research the movement which sponsored this advertisement. This book (and also a set of tapes which are circulating, claiming that the Antichrist is already here) is the result of her researches.

The New Age Movement

The sub-title of the book is **The New Age Movement and Our Coming Age of Barbarism**. If all that Mrs. Cumbe says is valid, Christians should be very alarmed indeed, though we should also be lifting our heads in hope of the real Christ's return. I am inclined to take it with a cautionary grain of salt, yet I am very glad of the warnings and I shall be alert in future to watch for the catchwords, organizations and teachings she describes, and to see if they indeed seem as powerfully satanic as she fears. I certainly recommend that others read this book and be similarly alerted, whether one takes it all as seriously as Mrs. Cumbe does or not.

A few months back in this column I wrote of some other dangerous nonsense — the "Learn to Love Yourself" trend, with its courses in, amongst other things, "rebirthing" and fire-walking as paths to greater personal adequacy and control over one's life. I am fascinated to learn that both of these esoteric offerings, and many others, are associated with this same New Age Movement.

What Constance Cumbe outlines is a vast leaderless network of organizations in many countries. Some of the names which crop up frequently are the Tara Centres, the Unity-in-Diversity Council, Findhorn Foundation, and the Lucis Trust (formerly Lucifer Publishing Company). From the writings of key people such as Helena Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, David Spangler and Marilyn Ferguson (and some of the works of H. G. Wells and Teilhard de Chardin), she illustrates both occult and Nazi tendencies in the philosophies underlying the New Age Movement, emerging clearly at times as outright worship of Satan.

The Great Invocation

I have on occasion noticed on Wynyard or Town Hall station a large hoarding featuring **The Great Invocation**: "From the point of Light within the Mind of God, let light stream forth into the minds of men. . . . May Christ return to earth. . . . Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on Earth." This too is the work of the New Age Movement, and distributing this "prayer" in dozens of languages is intended to condition mankind for the new world era.

But the real Jesus says to his real followers "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name . . ." (Luke 21:8).

New appointment at 2CH

Director of religious programmes

Twenty five year old, DAVID SULLIVAN, has been appointed the new DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMES at 2CH.

David, who was previously Production Manager at the stations, brings a great deal of expertise to this important position. In this new capacity, David will be responsible for the selection of music and the scheduling of Sunday programmes.

Meeting and interviewing visiting Church dignitaries, supervising the PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE COUNSELLING SERVICE and liaison with other Departments to ensure that the Christian ideal is spread, are other areas which will come under the responsibility of David.

David, himself a committed Christian, sees the new position as a challenge, "Although my broadcasting background is technical, I feel, as a Producer, I have learned a great deal about effective



David Sullivan 2CH

communication, and this is obviously a vital part of reaching people with the Christian message."

Celebration '85 update

New Christian counsellors course

Thousands of Sydney Christians will benefit from a new counselling course — thanks to Sydney Celebration '85.

The "Christian Life and Witness" course has been reworked by the counselling committee into a new, fresh and relevant approach to Christian counselling.

Lay people from throughout Sydney will benefit from the course, whether or not they decide to use their skills at the Leighton Ford Sydney Celebration '85 outreach in September.

The new course comprises three segments. The first, prepared by Moore College Lecturer Mark Harding, gives the biblical basis for counselling.

The second focuses on the relational component, and has been prepared by Tom Smith of the Anglican Board of Education. It encourages counsellors to be sensitive to where the counsellor is on the particular night. This avoids the 'pre-packaged' or 'formula' approach, and encourages sensitive listening. Training for this segment includes role plays and workshops.

The third, co-ordinated by Norman Pell, Director of Crusades for the Leighton Ford team, is an updated "Good News is for Sharing" course.

Members of the counselling committee, who devised the "Christian Life and Witness" course, represent a wide range of denominations, and bring a

considerable amount of expertise to the task.

The Rev. David Cohen of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Manly, chairman of the counselling committee, said "The Christian Life and Witness courses are a vital component of Sydney Celebration '85."

"But perhaps more importantly," he continued, "they have a relevant contribution to make to every congregation in the metropolitan area. I hope that large numbers from every church will benefit from the programme."

David Cohen expects around 500 to attend each session, totalling 2500 for the whole course. Thousands of potential counsellors, he said, will be able to receive free training in highly valuable skills.

The classes are open to all Christians whether or not they choose to counsel at the Sydney Celebration '85 meetings.

Courses and Locations

One night a week for five weeks, commencing Monday, 22 July.
Mondays — CITY — Pitt Street Uniting Church — 6.30 p.m. — 8.30 p.m.; Tuesdays — HURSTVILLE — St. Giles Presbyterian Church — 7.30 p.m. — 9.30 p.m.; Wednesdays — CHATSWOOD — Church of Christ — 7.30 p.m. — 9.30 p.m.; Thursdays — CITY — Pitt Street Uniting Church — 7.30 p.m. — 9.30 p.m.; Fridays — PARRAMATTA — St. John's Anglican Cathedral — 7.30 p.m. — 9.30 p.m.

"C. H. Spurgeon Tonight"

Hailed as successful dramatic characterisation

The dramatic presentation of "C. H. SPURGEON TONIGHT" featuring Professor Craig Skinner, has completed an Australian and New Zealand Tour and has been hailed as a huge success by the many thousands who have seen it.

Dr. Skinner set out to present C. H. Spurgeon as he was, and how he would have wanted the presentation, not as a concert or mere entertainment but as a thought provoking presentation. "C. H. SPURGEON TONIGHT" achieved those aims.

For those who attended the "C. H. SPURGEON TONIGHT" presentations, the monologues and character presentation, even down to the unbearable pain experienced by C. H. Spurgeon, will leave a lasting impression. Dr. Skinner went to great lengths to set the scene, through a multi-media audio-visual presentation portraying the life and times of the great Spurgeon.

Approximately 4,000 people of all ages, have viewed the presentation in eight centres. Dr. Skinner also preached in numerous pulpits, spoke at Theological Colleges and was interviewed on radio, including Sydney's FM stations. An extra 54 speaking engagements were fitted in, during his 14 weeks, which were part of his Sabbatical Leave from his position as Professor of Preaching, at the Golden



Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California.

Six weeks of this period in the South Pacific, were used for the five day "JUBILATE" meetings of celebration and outreach, during which he was assisted by the "SINGING STONES" of the U.S.A., a talented husband and wife musical team, whose ministry was enthusiastically received wherever they appeared.

A number of first time decisions were made and others claimed to make significant spiritual decisions, during the meetings.

(RAMON WILLIAMS)

ADDRESSING THE NON-CHRISTIAN MIND WITH THE GOSPEL Part 2.

Two ways of knowing

Royle Hawkes

Apologetics is the art of communicating the gospel to persuade non-Christians to show repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ. This process essentially means telling the gospel story in such a way that it will best challenge the non-Christian's sinful self-rule. Our sinful self-rule has not changed since the Fall, but how we think about it does change. Apologetics seeks to show clearly how the gospel still says to our generation, "stop, go back to Jesus Christ".

This is offered as the second of an occasional series to help in evangelism.

I teach Science at a University. One morning in the Staff Room I'd rashly defended a Christian viewpoint. A friend said "Royle, surely you don't believe all that rubbish!" Now we are slow thinkers, we Hawkeses. Several years later, here is my reply.

"Yes, of course, I do believe it. A man my age oughtn't to pretend. A half-held belief is a poor foundation for the second half of one's lifespan. If you want a summary of what I believe, the Apostle's Creed will do: (A caring Father-God, a crucified-but-now-living Christ, a Power for present living, a coming judgement, a sure heaven).

But I can also well understand why you genuinely think it ridiculous that I do believe. I may be misjudging you, but I hazard a guess that you dis-believe because you are saturated with one particular way of "knowing" i.e. evaluation of data by the five senses and their modern day extensions. You are a scientist.

What I hope to do in this short letter is to defend my belief by setting up an alternative to your way of knowing. But before I do let me define terms and clear the ground.

Science

Our profession, yours and mine, attempts to see how the things around us work. Why do things happen as they do? What principles and laws govern them? Of course the degree of precision varies. Our friends the physicists and chemists ("pure scientists") might say that we biologists are not scientists at all. (The braver ones among us might level the same charge at those who deal with the "Social Sciences".) Be that as it may, we all formulate hypotheses (theories), test them by experimentation or observation, alter the theories to fit the results of our tests, and proceed to more and more accurate knowledge (we hope).

We scientists once had a monopoly on this approach. But now most people have come to think like this. (Such is the result of our success in "producing the goods".) In fact, ours is possibly the first "truly scientific" generation. Ask the average person on a Sydney street, and you'll probably be told that all existence can be explained and all problems solved by science and its workhorse, "technology".

This way of thinking of course has important implications for both "rubbish-believers" like myself and "non rubbish believers". (Would you pardon me if at this stage I revert to "Christians" and "non-Christians"? The term is acceptable by ancient usage.)

Consequences of an exclusively Scientific view of life

An exclusive belief that you can only be sure of things you can prove by "Science" might be faith-threatening for the Christian. The sequence would be:

- Step 1. Both "Science" and the Bible seem to speak occasionally on the same topics, such as origins and causes, but with, it seems, different conclusions. I suppose that the classic example here is creationism versus evolution.
- Step 2. Science/technology is so demonstrably effective in all areas of material life that Christians may inwardly feel that the Bible must be in error where it disagrees with Science.
- Step 3. Therefore if the Bible is "wrong" in those areas which can be examined, how can Christians believe it in those areas which cannot be explored by the scientific method? Forgiveness by God, life after death — and so on.

The consequences of a blinkered, one-way only, approach to knowing is no less disastrous (I believe) for the non-Christians. The reason? It tends to make Christianity (or any faith for that matter) seem irrelevant. For example the sheer effectiveness of Science may seduce folk into apathy in pursuing serious investigation of faith. (Have you read the New Testament documents since attaining adulthood?) Christianity may be rejected out of hand, not because of lofty intellectual misgivings, but simply because Science has rendered "all that superstition" unnecessary. The "need" for God is eroded away. You don't need Him in order to explain the "mystery of life" because now, with our knowledge of the genetic code, molecular biology and the like, there is no "mystery of life". Similarly the wonder of human variability is reduced to nucleotide sequences, the mystery of the heavens yields to the space sciences and even sin is reduced to bad genes and unfortunate upbringing. So God and the Bible may not be refuted as intellectually unbelievable. They may be simply ignored as being unnecessary.

Conflict between Science and the Bible

Now I'd be dishonest if I glossed over the controversies that have taken place in recent times between some Christians and some scientists. To treat that topic thoroughly would require not a letter, but a book. But rather than just ignore the problem, I'd like to make 3 comments and invite your discussion of it later on, if you like.

'Science and Christianity have different aims, different focal points.'

1. Science and Christianity have different aims, different focal points. One is trying to look at the principles and mechanisms that govern the behaviour of material things. The other isn't very concerned with those aspects. It focusses on relationships, firstly human to God and secondly, human to human. Insofar as the Bible addresses itself to the "nature of things" at all, it does so, not from the viewpoint of "scientific how and why" — but rather from the viewpoint of "what bearing do these phenomena have in the plans of God for mankind?" i.e. "Why" in the ultimate sense. If an analogy will help here — take Morse Code. Science might investigate the frequency and intensity characteristics of the signal emissions. The Bible would focus on the message being sent by the sender.

2. The nature of the writing reflects the purpose of the two approaches. To do its job, Science demands the utmost precision in written expression. To do its job, the Bible has had to be written in terms comprehensible by folk of all cultures and in all ages from about 1300 B.C. and onwards. The surprising thing is that it is so scientifically accurate in general terms. There are no bizarre statements such as abound in, say, Theophilus Thompson's account of pandemic influenza from 1510 onwards¹ which I use with my medical classes. But it would obviously be incomprehensible to most ages and cultures to describe Genesis 1-3 in evolutionary terms and expect it to be understood by primitive people.

3. A lot of the apparent conflict has come about because both Scientists and Christians have been too dogmatic about things outside the scope of their disciplines. Scientists for example have mistakenly denied the historical accuracy of many biblical texts rather than admit to the incompleteness of archaeological studies². Christians, on the other hand, have at times extrapolated wildly from biblical texts to fit their own cosmological theories and then, from positions of power, tried to enforce them e.g. Galileo. And both sides have, at times, paid scant attention to the Hebrew way of expressing spiritual truths in poetry and parable.

Another way of knowing

There are many ways of "knowing", "believing", "being sure of". The scientific approach by which you "prove things" is one way, and quite legitimate for many purposes. I for one, say "hear hear" when the TV ad tells me that toothpaste A is to be preferred to brands B . . . Z on "the basis of scientific testing" (provided of course that they display the test protocols and the results). That method is the best way to evaluate toothpastes.

But it is purest fallacy to assert that other truths cannot be believed, simply because they cannot be tested in the scientific way. My contention, put simply, is this. That nearly all of the things which we'd stake our lives on as being true are based, not on scientific proof, but on history.

No, I'm not joking. Let me tell you 3 things I'm really sure about. One — the sun will rise tomorrow. Two — that unless Christ comes back within 70 years (what an optimist I am), I will die. Three — my wife loves me. One and two I believe on the basis of **past behaviour** (the sun has always risen in the past, and no one recently has lived past 118 years). The third proposition is also based on my observation of my wife's past and present behaviour. All 3 propositions, I repeat, are believed (I intuitively "know" their truth), not because of scientific method (experimental proof) but because of **historical method**.

"But" (I hear you say), "there is a big difference between those types of situations and belief in the cloud-cuckoo land of Christianity". Not so really. Stay with me for a few more lines.

The case for Christianity

Christianity exists. There are ways of examining its origins. It is traceable back to about A.D. 30. Not before then. There are masses of documents of various degrees of antiquity and reliability³. These are all examinable by historian and amateur alike, and amenable to rigorous scrutiny both by commonsense and sophisticated historical analysis. Some can be pretty soon dismissed. (They are out of kilter with the known events and dates of history for example, or the authors had an obvious "axe to grind", or the local scene they purport to describe is obviously "made up" and inaccurate as judged by consensus of contemporary secular documents; and so on.)

Early Christians were aware of the tendency to "gild lillies". And the best of them were careful to avoid what Peter quaintly calls "cunning by devised fables"⁴. But when all the excessive stuff is pruned away from the early Christian writings, we are still left with a hard core of 27 manuscripts, all written within the lifetime of many of Jesus' contemporaries, and some written within 30 years of the critical events. They are the stuff of history.

Four of these are accounts of the activities and teachings of one Jesus of Nazareth. One (Acts) focusses on the early Christian community. None are unbiased, in that all were written by Christians. Nevertheless all were written with an accurate local knowledge and a genuine desire to communicate truth and accuracy as the authors saw it. The new movement was unpopular. There is no

motive that I can see for the authors to keep telling unpopular lies. So these writings merit more than a passing glance, especially insofar as they concern Jesus, their focal point.

His personality is fascinating. And here I stumble somewhat because his nature is so difficult to pinpoint. A mixture of gentleness and strength, of love and yet severity towards injustice and hypocrisy. He was moral purity itself yet he was the friend of society's rejects. His ethical teaching is wonderful, although running counter to much, if not most, commonly practised human behaviour. His healing miracles and his "natural miracles" are much too numerous and well documented to be mere invention or exaggeration. Apparently even his opponents accepted the facts of his miracles, although they disputed their significance.

'Jesus is explicable only on the basis of the impossible.'

However, to my mind the aspect of Jesus which is hardest to come to terms with is the claims that he made about himself. He claimed not only to be human but also to be divine — to be none less than God's Son, existing eternally before his human birth. He claimed that "I and my Father (i.e. God) are One". I'm currently wading through John's gospel for the umpteenth time, and in my Bible I've marked, in red, all the places where Jesus claimed to be more than just a man. Practically any page in the gospel could be used as a flag to support St. George or the Sydney Swans. These claims are not just a few isolated rushes of blood to the head. They constitute his settled frame of mind.

Someone once said of Jesus "He is mad, or bad, or God". **Mad?** Now there are numerous folk who've made claims like his. We usually put them in institutions for their own protection. Their claims do not gel with their behaviour or their personalities. Something doesn't ring true. But on the lips of Jesus? No. He is too sane. **Not mad.**

Bad? Once the temporary rash of popularity passed, Jesus stood to gain nothing except death by persisting in untrue claims to divinity. But persist he did. If there was any selfseeking motive in his making these claims, I've never been able to see it. His intimate friends could detect no moral blemish in him and neither (save sacrilege!), could his enemies. **Not bad.**

My weighing of the evidence says that Jesus is explicable only on the basis of the impossible, i.e. that He is God become for a time, human.

I may seem to have drifted somewhat from my theme. So let me summarise. Examination of the reliable source documents of Christianity leads me to confront a person unexplainable except on the basis of His own claims, impossible as these may seem. I cannot **prove** Him like a theorem, but I can assert that the most likely interpretation of the historical evidence is that He was who He said He was. Or more accurately, given the almost unassailable evidence for His resurrection, "He is Who He says He is!"

Now if I accept **that**, then it follows that I accept His views on **all things** as being true. Things like sin, a human destiny, and eternal life, and so on. All "that rubbish" if you like.

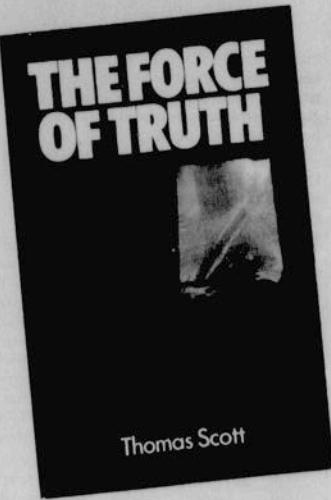
I've stated my case, but I need to take it a very critical stage further. Because Christ did. There's a sense in which we've only reached a "knowing about" rather than a "knowing inwardly" or "knowing personally" stage. Yet the essence of Christianity is to know Christ personally⁵. And for an illustration of

continued page 12

THE GOOD READ

The Force of Truth

Thomas Scott, *Banner of Truth*, 127 pp.



Thomas Scott lived through the last half of the 18th Century and the first 21 years of the 19th Century. His *Commentary on the Whole Bible* is still used by many evangelicals because of the wisdom it contains. This small book is Scott's testimony of his conversion.

In an age when people tend too often to be superficial and when far too few

really think through their faith this book makes fascinating reading. Scott was an ordained clergyman at the time of the evangelical revival and was in a parish near to John Newton. But he was not a clergyman for the right reasons and he had no time for the "enthusiasm" of Newton and his colleagues.

He wrote this "autobiography" to show the process by which he came into a full understanding of the Gospel. In it he shares his motives, his thoughts, his reading and his battles with views he found hard to accept. It is an intellectual as well as a spiritual pilgrimage and gives a real insight into how the process worked in his life.

One of the most fascinating features of the story is the role of John Newton. Newton's story is, of course, well known to us but this book sheds new light on the way in which he acted as a pastor to his ministerial associate. His sensitivity and his patience which, in the end, won the day are a real object lesson. His correspondence and his willingness to take a "low key" approach in his personal dealings with Scott went a long way to Scott's willingness to persevere in his search for truth.

This book does not take long to read, nor is it 'heavy' reading. It is a powerful book which deserves to be read for the insights it will give to us in our dealings with people today and as a reaffirmation of the power of God's truth in the life of those who seek to know it.

D. Kirkaldy

Josh McDowell continued

The second talk was advertised as "Maximum Sex: Love is still possible in a junky world!". Josh changed this into two talks, parts one and two, rather than repeating it in the evening. (The resurrection talk was repeated word for word on Tuesday evening.)

Maximum Sex, part one, was an example of Wisdom commending the gospel. The pathway to a better sex life is paved with the clues to better relationships:

- 1) Develop a healthy self image: God accepts me just the way I am.
- 2) Develop the ability to communicate: both speaking and listening.
- 3) Develop a clear conscience from the past.
- 4) Develop the capacity to forgive and be forgiven.
- 5) Develop the spiritual dimension of your life: secular researchers find that a spiritual component helps in sexual relationships.

The second part of the Maximum Sex talk went for 90 minutes to a packed Great Hall, around 750 people. (The Resurrection talk the previous night drew less than 500).

For one person, "It was like listening to Bill Cosby, I just laughed and laughed". Entertaining portrayals of the difficulties of courtship and the wisdom of being a Christian provided a platform for the invitation for people to become Christians.

Pray for the follow up

"Prepackaged" and "slick" were common feelings, although neither were said harshly. The presentation was excellent! The precise pausing, the practised movements. Josh is a performer and he does it very well. There are not many places you can go and buy a copy of Wednesday's talk on Tuesday...

Many Student Life members had already heard the talks on tape and were able to confidently bring their friends

Legal Secretary

required by partner in city firm. A junior with good speeds, plenty of common sense and a willingness to learn would be ideal. Add to that a concern for clients and a sensitivity to their needs and you have the job!

Ring David Ford 235 2844.

Christian worship in plain English

Kath White is the co-ordinator of the NSW Adult Literacy Information Office (ALIO). Prof. Robert Eagleson is an associate Professor at Sydney University and is currently leading a Commonwealth Government project introducing plain English into official documents.

They spoke to the Church Record about the real difficulties many people have in coping with the bulk and quality of printed material given them at worship services.

As promised in the first part of this interview, we pass on their practical advice.

Part 2: Practical advice

Plain advice

From the ALIO's materials:

They recommend generous use of white space, short paragraphs and a limited number of pages. Vocabulary should be very familiar or structurally regular. Long words of formidable appearance should be avoided. Sentences should not be too long, or perhaps of two or three clauses. Figurative language, especially metaphors, is often bewildering to the reader who is unfamiliar with this literary device.

A list of factors affecting readability is given:

word frequency
word length (number of syllables)
hard or rare words
sentence length
sentence complexity (length, number and type of phrases and clauses)
directness of style (number of personal references, personal pronouns and names)
idea density (number of ideas or concepts per unit)
ratio between abstract and concrete words and ideas
predictability
structure of paragraph

Professor Eagleson has made several helpful observations in the Current Affairs Bulletin.

"It is not just the amount of content that is important, but also its organisation. Success here contributes as much as skilful selection of language, for good organisation helps readers find their way through the material... Readers will always struggle on to the full stop before they pause to absorb the material. The longer the sentence, the more information that is packed in, the greater the strain on the reader's memory. The material does not have to be complex, it is the bulk of it in long sentences that creates problems."

The Plain English Movement also recognises that readability is not just an issue of clarity or concept. Organisation and language, that is, the physical appearance of a document is also important. Hence attention is given to size of type (small print is definitely taboo), spacing of material, use of capitals, colour and other aspects of design. Good layout contributes to the reception of the message.

"I find the Prayer Book formidable"

Intricacy of content neither requires nor excuses entangled language. There is no reason for convoluted sentence structures, esoteric phrasing or superfluous words, no matter what the subject is.

It is not being argued that the techniques of Plain English should be adopted universally. When writing to colleagues, experts may employ more private, specialist terminology. Above all, we need the language of literature with all its richness and variation. As we have been at pains to show we are not engaged with simple issues of right and wrong in language but rather with considerations of effectiveness. Its use is a keen sense of social responsibility.

Managing the Prayer Book

Kath White has some perceptive comments on the Anglican Prayer Book.

"I find the Prayer Book formidable. From the outside, it looks like an early 20th century book of poetry. Inside shows a lack of white space, long paragraphs, small print, too many alternatives and unfamiliar words. Complex sentence patterns are used. There is a formidable compression of ideas.

"The Prayer Book is really written for leisurely study. As it is used in our services, the person in the pew can't take in all the ideas thrust at him. It is not written to be alternatively listened to and read aloud.

"While the structure of the psalms is good (simple, compound sentences), the metrics in them are confusing.

"Terms used are unnecessarily difficult. Some sound simple, but are unfamiliar to the unchurched and ordinarily educated people. Words should be chosen, not necessarily because they are short, but because they are orally used in the community.

"We must have a syllabus for explaining key terms"

As an example, Miss White commented on the words used in the General Confession on page 122 of an Australian Prayer Book. 'Confess' could replace 'acknowledge', 'done' replace 'committed', 'truly' replace 'heartily', 'wrongs' replace 'misdoings'. 'Wrath and indignation' is tautologous, and today mean different things than are intended by the Prayer Book's compilers.

Specialist terms have a place, but people must be taught to understand them. We should retain only those that are key conceptual or uniquely Christian terms. For example, 'Almighty' and 'confess'. Any other language that theologians have accrued since Bible times. We can translate into words used by the general population.

Individual forms of service could be printed on stiff card to be more manageable. Much more of the service could be in the forms of the litany: short sentences read by the minister broken up by responses from the congregation.

The important matters to consider are presentation, length of sentences, and number of concepts per sentence, plain English and very limited use of jargon, and perhaps including a Glossary of terms.

Professor Eagleson offered ACR advice on special Christian words.

"The first time a jargon word is used, provide an explanation. Often, the explanation can be given without the word at all. It is not the degree of length or difficulty of a word that matters: it is whether it is commonly used. For example, 'elephant' is more widely understood than 'tort'. This is a big problem in the church's language."

To do a readability study based on the number of sentences and syllables per 100 words is misleading. Many of the words we use are short but unfamiliar: 'grace', 'communion of saints' etc." (ACR

continued page 11

Banner of Truth Conference

Speakers Iain Murray and Al Martin

The Rev. Iain Murray, General Editor of the Banner of Truth Trust, and Pastor Al Martin of Trinity Baptist Church, New Jersey, U.S.A., will be the speakers at the 1985 Banner of Truth Conference in Australia. Both men have been greatly used by God to encourage ministers and missionaries in various parts of the world through their writings, preaching and speaking engagements.

The Conferences are built around the theme: "Historic Christianity in the Modern World."

Public meetings will be held in:

Tamworth Friday 9 August, St. Andrew's Hall, Marius St. Enquiries: (067) 65 4074
Sydney Saturday 10 August, The Assembly Hall, 44

Margaret St. Enquiries: (02) 569 4502
Wangaratta Thursday 15 August, Presbyterian Church, Rowan St. Enquiries: (057) 21 6444
Geelong Saturday 17 August, Presbyterian Church, Latrobe Tce & Ryrie St. Enquiries: (052) 21 6238
Melbourne Mon, Tues 19,20 August, Civic Centre, Camberwell Rd. Enquiries: (03) 819 5347

Minister's Conferences will also be held in Melbourne and Meroo, near Sydney.

Two previous Banner of Truth Conferences have been well attended and have proved to be times of rich fellowship and learning.

Full details are available from:

Banner of Truth (Conference)
C/- Stanmore Baptist Church,
140 Albany Rd.,
PETERSHAM, 2049

Run . . . Ride . . . Row . . . for Bibles

"Mary Hughes", described as the girl with "better legs than Robert DeCastella and better looking than Cliff Young", will fire the starting gun for this year's RACE FOR BIBLES. Last year "Mary Hughes" walked 980 km to Melbourne, to raise funds for Bibles in S.E. Asia, dressed in Welsh costume.

The Bible Society in Australia (NSW), invites everyone to RUN (24 km.); RIDE (70 km.) by bicycle, or ROW (24 km.) by means of scull, sail or canoe, from Sydney to Parramatta on Saturday, July 20th. The race will start at 1.00 p.m. from Pier One in Sydney, and, by three designated routes, finish at Parramatta Park, approximately two hours later.

Intending participants are asked to contact Bible House, 95 Bathurst Street, Sydney, as soon as possible.

Each participant will be supplied with a Participant's Pack, sponsorship forms and at the finish, will receive a Certificate of

Achievement, with Good News Bibles being presented to the winners in various categories.

It is hoped that, through sponsorships money will be raised to provide Bibles for the young people of India, as a special project for I.Y.Y. (INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR).

Last year four Bible Society workers raised over \$16,000 for strategic projects in the Third World, through a similar event. This year, the Bible Society is opening the event to everyone, athletic or not.

Race officials, "checkpoint Charlies", sponsors and "cheers-along-the-way" are all needed!

Tony Gardner and his Dixieland jazz group will provide entertainment at the starting and finishing lines, while for those at the park near George and Noller Streets, Parramatta, other music and fun will be part of the proceedings.

P.T.L.'s response to I.Y.Y.

"FREE" Gospels . . .

The POCKET TESTAMENT LEAGUE has produced a special edition of the Gospel of John, for Christian young people to use in witnessing to non-Christian youth, in this, the INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR. The title on the cover is "FREE".

The Gospels are specially marked, with Salvation passages underlined. An easy-to-read supplement is included in the back pages of the Gospels, to "Help the reader know the steps to receive the Lord Jesus Christ into their life," said the National Director in Australia, Keith

(RAMON WILLIAMS)

Williams.

The Gospels were produced in co-operation with the BIBLE SOCIETY, for use in evangelistic outreach. They are pocket-size and in a translation which will be understood by non-church going and essentially, non-reading, youth.

The "FREE" Gospels also come free! A special offer of 15 Gospels, free of charge, is being made by the POCKET TESTAMENT LEAGUE to any Minister or Youth Leader who requests them.

ORGANIST

is required for Rozelle Anglican Church. To play at one Morning Service each Sunday on a Henry Jones Pipe Organ. The position would suit someone of Christian conviction. Honorarium is available. Telephone 810 1072.

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BROKEN CHAINS JUVENILE MINISTRY (a non-denominational Christian group)

visits teenage institutions such as Mt Penang, Minda, etc. and are expanding into a 24-hour telephone counselling service.

Volunteers are required to attend a training course at Beecroft Uniting Church Hall for 5 Monday nights beginning July 22nd at 7.45 p.m. After training, volunteers will be rostered to attend to calls within their own home where a "Diverta" phone is used. This means the caller dials the advertised number and the "Diverta" phone re-dials into the volunteer's phone, thus the caller and the volunteer remain anonymous. It is a listening and resource line.

For further information, telephone 868 2393.

Film Review

The Falcon and the Snowman

(rated M) Village

This film concerns the true story of Christopher Boyce and Dalton Lee who sold American defence secrets to the Russians during the 1970's. They were subsequently arrested, tried and are now serving long prison sentences.

The Falcon and the Snowman attempts to explore the reasons why an idealistic young American, Boyce, and his no-hoper best friend, Lee, sold these secrets on Boyce's own initiative. Both Boyce and Lee came from strongly conservative and catholic, middle class backgrounds. At his trial Boyce alleges he began spying after coming across CIA documents on a CIA-backed overthrow of the Whitlam government in 1975! This is something we will most probably never know the truth of. The film uses this idea as the reason for Boyce's spying, that he became disillusioned with his country when coming across this interference in the affairs of an ally. I found this part of the film unconvincing.

The film points an accusing finger at the lack of an individual or a national basis of morality in American society as the cause for Boyce's treason. Boyce and Lee grew up serving as altar boys in their catholic church. However the film opens with Boyce breaking from his seminary

where he is training to be a priest. The catholic church doesn't live up to his idealism and the film presents this as a recurring theme in the first half. For Boyce there is no concept of a relationship with God, rather the Church is the ideal of innocence in moral dealings which is broken down as the film progresses.

Boyce and Lee are the characters around which the film is constructed and all other characters in the film are merely two-dimensional. The tension of Boyce and Lee's spying activities is interwoven with Boyce coming to realise he is just as wrong as those he sets out to hurt. Further, he hurts beyond measure his own family.

It's a serious film; I couldn't help feeling while watching it that the producers felt that personal morality is impossible to achieve. It is well made, with good acting all round especially in the character of Dalton Lee. However I wouldn't recommend it for anything like a fellowship outing. The M rating is because of the constant swearing, which detracts from the whole film. So see it if you're interested in this period of the recent history of both Australia and America.

JEREMY CAVANAGH

Christian worship continued

did this readability test, and found that without taking jargon words into account, the readability of AAPB was at Year 10 or School Certificate level.)

Using cliches has the dangers of being out of date and being soporific.

Material must be organised. If our goal is to extend the knowledge of the congregation, we must have a syllabus for explaining key terms: atonement, justification, sanctification. In the Anglican church we have an immediate form of syllabus in the 39 Articles.

Other important elements are:

- Sentence length. Long sentences put a strain on short term memory and thus our comprehension.
- Order of clauses. People prefer the main clause first, particularly if there is a series of subordinate clauses.
- Don't put a lot of material between subject and verb, verb and object.
- Use more verbs, fewer nouns.
- Words and language styles of previous centuries should be rephrased into today's English.
- Organisation is essential. The congregation must be able to see where it is being lead. It should be given signals: headings, paragraphs...

Above all, new material must be tested. The new NRM and government forms are widely tested before implementation. Do comprehension tests; devise ways of getting feedback. University exams show the lecturer whether or not he has got across his message, or assumed knowledge which his students didn't have. We must work out ways of doing the same.

From Plain Words:

"Be short, be simple, be human

"It is a temptation to cling too long to outworn words and phrases. The dividing line between dignity and pomposity is not always well marked. . . pomposity is a persistent and insidious danger. Jargon is a dangerous habit. If you use an abstract word when you might use a concrete one you are handicapping yourself in your task of making yourself understood.

Defoe: If any man were to ask me what I would suppose to be a perfect style of language, I would answer, that in which a man speaking to five hundred people, all of common and various capacities, idiots or lunatics excepted, should be understood by them all, and in the same sense which the speaker intended to be understood."

Accommodation

MANLY: Serviced rooms, casual or permanent. Cooking facilities. H. R. Russell, 17 George St. Manly. Ph. 949 2596.

BOWRAL: Beautiful spacious flat in quiet cul de sac, linen etc. Lock-up garage, 5 mins to shops (048) 61 1407 Evenings.

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This service to readers is a form of free advertising. A person wishing to buy or sell anything can place a free advertisement of up to three lines.

If the advertisement is successful, the advertiser is asked to pay The Church Record 10 per cent of the value of the sale price, up to a maximum of \$10 per advertisement.

The service is known as FREE AD and runs on an honour system. The advertiser will be responsible for forwarding to The Church Record office what is owing.

LOST — PUPPET THEATRE: Blue Calico cover with flowers, over folding timber frame. "Borrowed" from Dapto. If found or seen please ring Nick (02) 627 1015.

CORTINA 411 1978 Gha Green Automatic 77,000km long leg good condition (WV) \$15 4500 only. Mayroney 626 6143.

Wanted to buy: Word copies of The Anglican Hymnbook. Phone 419 3228 or 419 3693.

For Sale: Calvin's institutes, assorted introductions & commentaries all mint condition Porter 772 3070.

Wanted to buy: Church Dogmatics by Karl Barth the set or part thereof phone 516 1405.