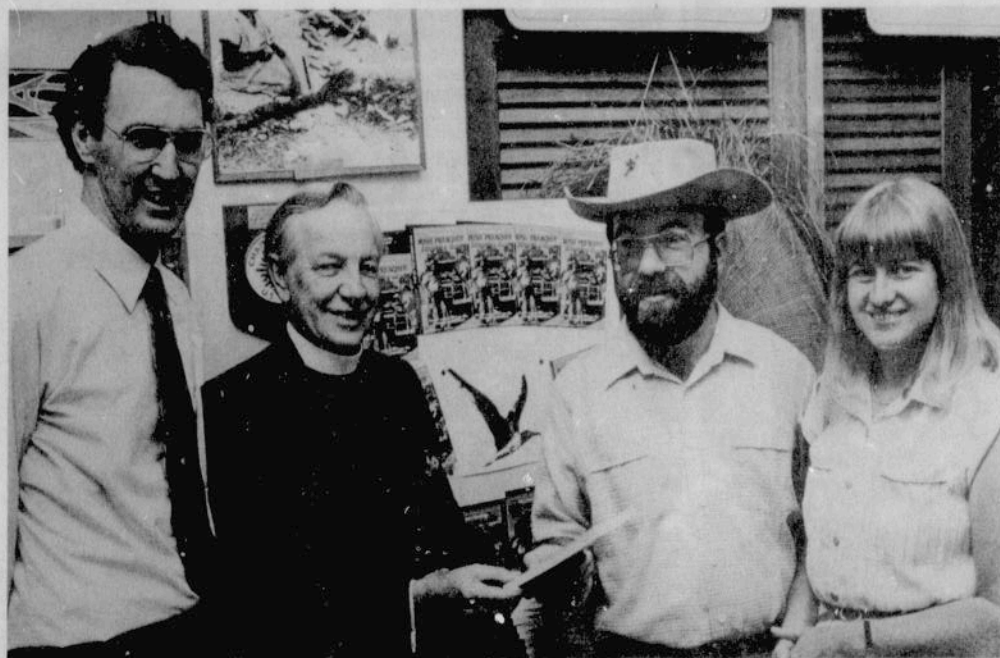




A Book for those who don't read books!



John Waterhouse, Dean Lance Shilton with Kerry Medway and his wife Julie at the launch of Kerry's new book "Bush Preacher Bites the Dust".

Photo: Ramon Williams

A book was launched in Sydney, Thursday, December 8th, which the author, Kerry Medway quite clearly stated was meant for those who don't read books! The book "BUSH PREACHER BITES THE DUST" is a compilation of true stories, about events and experiences in one of Australia's "frontier" towns, Coober Pedy. The author, or rather the preacher, is Kerry Medway who, together with his wife, served the Bush Church Aid Society in that area.

"The Australian male is missing out on the Good News of Jesus Christ," said Mr. Medway. "I noticed a shortage of books,

dealing with the great things of God, in our book shops and felt I had better do something about it.

"The film 'CHARIOTS OF FIRE' was not made by Christians and yet told the Christian message so clearly!"

People like a laugh, explained Kerry Medway. In this book the humour is there. It is lighthearted and entertaining, yet brings the Gospel of Jesus Christ through in a way that everyone can understand.

"I wanted to put the Good News of Jesus Christ into the minds, and hands, of the working class man. The man who

would not usually read a book!"

"The whole aim of the publication is to provide Christians with a book they could purchase and pass on to others," said Mr. Medway.

The book is published in Australia by Sydney based company, ALBATROSS BOOKS. The same book will also be published in England, by LION PUBLISHING.

John Waterhouse of ALBATROSS BOOKS, explained that this book was chosen because it was about an actual place; about a person and about the Power behind that person's ministry.

"This book is packaged for the general market," said Mr. Waterhouse. "It will be distributed throughout Australia by four different distributors. It is a book for people who do not normally read books, even down to the size of the print used."

The book is profusely illustrated with line drawing by Graham Wade. Many are humorous and each story has its own appealing illustration.

In launching the book, the Dean of Sydney, the Very Reverend Lance Shilton described it as a book that "once you pick it up you cannot put it down!"

He had read an advance copy and, even though interrupted during his reading of it, found it easy to "pick up again" where he left off. The stories are short, interesting and to the point.

"The book will make a significant contribution to Australian literature," said Dean Shilton. "It should receive a good response from the average Australian. Kerry has had deep Christian experiences and this comes across. The book is written from those experiences and it is with pleasure I launch this book."

The Federal Secretary of the Bush Church Aid Society, the Reverend Wakely Wade, praised Kerry Medway for his ability to have "that common touch" with the "ordinary Aussie". His ability to tell stories, with a humorous touch, will appeal to all, especially men, claimed Mr. Wade.

Priced at only \$3.95, the book is priced so that everyone will be able to afford it. One businessman has already ordered enough, to give one to each of his staff for Christmas, which is what this book is all about.

It is a book meant to be given away, especially to those who do not normally read books!

One of the most interesting features of the launch was the news that the English market will receive a large number of copies to meet the expected high demand for the book there.

The ACR will review the book in our next issue.

English Remarriage proposals under fire

Marriage Solidarity — a group which emerged only recently from its cocoon inside the General Synod — came out in real earnest this week to take a swinging blow at the Synod's current marriage proposals, Option G.

Recently it launched its leaflet, *The Church and Remarriage*. And between seven and eight thousand copies are waiting to be handed to diocesan clergymen who will be attending consultations on Option G this month — most of them between January 10 and 30.

The clergy who go to the specially convened meetings to discuss the chosen procedure for marrying some divorced persons in church will be confronted with the Group's view of "What's wrong with these proposals?" Lack of biblical or theological criteria, and the fact that the proposals have never been referred to diocesan synods, are two of the main objections.

Canon B30, with its affirmation of the lifelong nature of marriage, is quoted in full, together with extracts from the Marriage Services in the Book of Common Prayer and the Alternative Service Book, both of which contain the vow "till death us do part".

The five authors of the leaflet, who were at a press conference in London on Tuesday, claimed the "clear support", given to them in letters of the Bishops of London, Salisbury and Norwich.

'Verging on folly'

The five are: Canon David Stevens, a

Peterborough General Synod member; the Rev. Roger Beckwith, Warden of Latimer House, Oxford; Mr. Raymond Johnston, an Oxford General Synod member; Mr. Robert Edwards, of the London Diocesan Synod; and Mr. Gordon Wenham, a lecturer at the College of St. Paul and St. Mary, Cheltenham.

"The Church of England, not for the first time in our view, is on the edge of making a fool of itself," said Mr. Edwards, who chaired the press conference. A difficulty for many people, he added, was the disingenuous attempt to show that the proposals in Option G complied with what was set out in Canon B 30.

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Splinter movement in Swedish Church

What may prove to be the first step towards a radical split in the Church of Sweden has been taken with the recent information of a "free synod" by groups opposed to women priests.

The leader of the free synod is Bishop Bertil Gartner, of the Diocese of Gothenburg, where the Swedish ombudsman recently found in favour of a woman priest who had complained of sex-discrimination in the appointment to a local congregation.

The free synod is made up of the twelve 'decanats' or free deaneries which have been slowly growing up in the Church over the past two or three years.

An official release from the Church of Sweden says that the future course of events will be determined by how true the free synod members are to their own statements: the leaders have, for instance, repeatedly stated that they want to remain in the Church of Sweden.

But the formation of the free synod is in direct opposition to the expressed wishes of the head of the Church of Sweden, Archbishop Bertil Werkstrom, who has made it clear that the Church fully accepts female ministers and that he expects all ministers to work with him and accept them as equals.

He has also said that, if the members of

the decanats want to work for renewal in the Church and for a faith, they are more than welcome to do so; and that there is no need to form a separate organisation to achieve these objectives.

The press-release says that all the Swedish bishops except Bishop Gartner support the Archbishop's statement. It adds: "It seems difficult to understand how the free synod can remain within the Church and still be true to its own declarations." And Archbishop Werkstrom has expressed the view that, through their action in forming the free synod, the dissidents "have made all further discussions with them meaningless."

Meanwhile, the Diocese of Gothenburg has had to pay 8,000 kronor in damages to Silva Edvall, a woman priest, for unfairly discriminating against her and has had to give her the post which earlier had been given to a male priest with less experience and fewer qualifications. It is thought that this is the first time that the Church has been found to have broken the law in this way.

Church Times



Miriam Cutter, again ran a very full programme. Theme was the Wild West, with team members decked out as cowboys and Indians. Children of all ages gathered for morning Adventure time and various afternoon activities, including craft, sports, beach carnival, hikes, sand modelling and castle making etc. The team used many ways to communicate the Gospel simply and interestingly to the children. Chorus (it wasn't unusual to hear kids singing 'Happiness is to know the Saviour' in the camping ground showers). Puppet shows. Skits (all with the Wild West theme, of course). Costumes to add flavour. Daily memory verses. Teachers also gave the children lessons each day, using visual aids and activities to hold attention and reinforce the main ideas.

Teens and adults weren't forgotten, with various teen and parent activities being held. Night events like the bush dance were enormously popular, with hundreds of campers joining in enthusiastically. And the team took every



40,000 Holiday-Makers Hear Good News

The camper stared in disbelief as a group of Indians in full battledress charged through the camping area, followed by dozens of excited, shouting children. 'Martha, come and look at this', he yelled to his wife. However, it wasn't a Western film being made, but a Scripture Union Family Mission team in action, complete with costumes.

These Christmas holidays, 58 S.U. Family Mission teams again operated in



camping areas up and down the N.S.W. coastline, from Brunswick Heads in the North to Eden in the South. As well, some teams set up in urban locations such as Penrith and Marrickville (minus the sand, of course) and inland locations like



Deniliquin.

The number of people involved in these Missions' outreach is staggering. This year, nearly 3,000 volunteers drawn from all major denominations gave up much of their annual holidays and donated considerable time, money and talents to make the missions a reality. Altogether, some 40,000 holidaymakers have come into close contact with the Missions and have seen the Gospel in action as groups of Christians lived together as close caring communities within the camping areas.

This far-reaching evangelistic activity represents the largest regular project of personal evangelism in N.S.W. Most of the holidaymakers contacted have little or no contact with the established church. Already this year, many reports have come in of children, teenagers and parents committing their lives to Christ, some after several years of contact with Missions. For all this, we praise God.

Easts Beach, ably led by SMBC student Kevin Flanagan and his associate leader

opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. 'God loves you and has a special plan for you. He wants you to love Him in return...'

Kiama Mission, just north of Easts beach, was a complete change of pace. Led by Mark Eaton, the bearded curate of Pymble Anglican, the mission specialised in reaching out to young people. Groups of team members daily visited pubs and other youth hang-outs, seeking to make contact and build friendships.

Posters around town proclaimed 'Theos 8 p.m. nightly', the evening coffee shop run by the mission. And young people turned up in droves. The night I visited, the local church hall resounded to the sound of loud Gospel music. Between musical brackets, a suntanned blonde-headed girl called Alison told of her conversion.

'I used to think no Bible-bashing Christian was ever gonna give me religion. I would go down to the local surf club and think I was really cool... I used to see a lot of movies. One day I saw a film 'Thief in the Night' about how

Jesus took all the Christians away. It scared the hell out of me (in both ways)!'.

After sharing how God had changed her life, Alison ended up with this challenge:

'If you were to die tonight without God, and were knocking on heaven's door, God... would have to tell you he didn't know you. And you can't say you didn't have a chance — everyone in this room here tonight has got one.'

On returning to Sydney, I was thrilled to hear of young people converted as God worked through the Kiama Mission.

The experience of these 2 missions could be multiplied dozens of times over. At Kiama, team members wore T-shirts bearing the message 'No Christ — No Life. Know Christ — Know Life'. This summer of 1983/84, as Scripture Union Family Mission Teams again sought to share God's Good News, we praise God that hundreds of holiday makers have indeed come to know Christ in a very real and personal way, and have gained eternal life.

Peter Walker.



Riches, Poverty and the Bible

by Dr. Peter O'Brien (A talk given at the ACR Dinner for Sydney Synod persons in October.)

The visit several months ago of Dr. Ronald Sider to our shores has served to focus attention on several issues facing Christians in the west and, in particular, here in Australia. I refer to those matters dealing with wealth and poverty and interpreting the Bible. There is, first of all, the obvious fact that most living in the west are well off and especially is this evident when we contrast our circumstances with those of so many living in the third world. My ten years in India showed me that although 1% of the population of that country was extremely wealthy many of the remaining 99% were in abject poverty. So often we felt completely at a loss as to how to help people whom we met who were living in wretched circumstances.

But one does not need to have lived overseas to be faced with these dilemmas. The same issues press upon us through television, through World Vision ads, and via appeals in the newspapers as well, so that in recent days we have been made more acutely aware of the real poverty within our own country even if it does not reach the depth of a Bangladesh, a Chad or an Ethiopia.

Our unease is increased rather than reduced when we are told by third world theologians as well as Christians from the west that the Bible makes it plain that 'God is on the side of the poor', that we need to live a simple lifestyle, and that we ought to share our goods and possessions with those in need. Since our knowledge of those in need, the argument runs, has increased dramatically through the newspaper and television, then we have a greater responsibility to act promptly and unreservedly.

Some pressing questions thus come home to us as Christians: 'What does the Bible say about wealth and poverty that is applicable to the present day?' 'Is wealth evil?' 'How should I use it if I have some?' 'Is poverty set before us in the Bible as an ideal?' 'Does the Bible teach a general call to renounce our possessions?'

It is not possible to answer each of these in a brief address. But as a way forward I propose that we tackle three issues. The conclusions we reach, I trust, will assist us as we seek, honestly before God, to come to answers to the above-mentioned and similar questions.

1. Who are 'the poor'?

If it is true to say (though the point has not been proven) that 'God is on the side of the poor', then it is obviously important, for a variety of reasons, to determine who 'the poor' are.

There is a group of passages in Luke's Gospel (e.g. the Magnificat, 1:46-55; the Nazareth sermon, 4:16-30; the beatitudes and woes, 6:17-26; and Jesus' words to John the Baptist's disciples, 7:18-23) that speaks about the poor being blessed. Whom did Jesus have in mind? Was it the spiritually humble and dependent, or a socio-economic lower class, who might then be regarded as a kind of model or paradigm for other parts of the New Testament as well as to us in the twentieth century?

The 'poor' were often referred to in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalter, and it is likely that Jesus had this background in mind when he used the term. The Hebrew words for 'poor' could be used of those in a socially or economically inferior position (Pss. 12:5, 113:7). Because God was pledged to uphold the cause of the poor and needy, who have no other defender, it was natural that a man in trouble should plead his poverty and need before God. So Psalm 34:6 states: 'This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles' (see also Ps. 86:1).

The poverty terminology in the Psalter came to be used of a whole range of need and suffering in addition to literal poverty: at Ps. 88:15, a sick man is called 'poor' or 'afflicted'; the question of his economic status is irrelevant to his being called 'poor'. Persecution also leads the psalmist to cry to God that he is poor and needy (note Pss. 22:24, 35:10, 69:29, 33 in their particular contexts). At the heart of the term 'poor' is a description of need. On occasion it refers to a socio-economic need; at other times it does not.

In addition the word 'poor' can also describe the nation Israel, that is, the people of God: so in Psalm 9 it is Israel, over against the nations that oppress her,

which is described as 'the poor' (see also Ps. 68:10 where the congregation which God saved from Egypt is called 'the poor').

The dominant note behind the poverty vocabulary of the Psalms is that of need, most frequently that need which arises from the attacks of enemies, whether they are rich oppressors, enemies of the king or enemies of the nation.

In the passages of Luke's gospel noted above Jesus, in referring to the poor, was not speaking of the spiritually humble and dependent. Nor was he referring to the socio-economic poor, as rich. Rather, he was using Old Testament language to designate the poor as God's people in their desperate need, those to whom he had promised his kingdom.

The Beatitudes of Luke's Gospel (6:17-26) are a proclamation of the gospel in terms that any Israelite of Jesus' day would apply to himself — the poor, the mourners, the hungry. On the other hand, the woes are directed against the rich, the full, the laughing, that is, those who will not identify with Jesus, the suffering Son of Man because they consider that in the present time they have sufficient. They find their satisfaction, their salvation, in the things of this life.

So we are not dealing here with a division along socio-economic lines, but a separation of those who in solid identity with the people of God are in desperate need of salvation and are willing to stand with this unlikely Messiah to see it come. On the other hand, those who are happy enough with this present order ('who have already received' their comfort, 'who are well fed now', 'who laugh now'), see in this world all the possibilities they need for a sufficient life, and they will not stand with Jesus.

Jesus was not endorsing the cause of the proletariat in pronouncing that the poor were blessed with the kingdom, for immediately after Luke's record of the Sermon on the Plain we note that Jesus proceeds to bless one of the wealthiest men in Capernaum, a soldier who had at least one servant (Luke 7:1-10).

The poor, then, are those in desperate need of God's salvation. They may be poor in socio-economic terms, sick, oppressed or persecuted; but the essence of their poverty is their great need before God to whom they cry for salvation. As a result they are willing to identify with the suffering Son of Man.

2. Possessions and becoming a Christian

The second issue of concern to us is the cost of discipleship and, in particular, whether Jesus taught that poverty was an ideal to be followed. Do his words about renouncing all and following him (e.g. Luke 14:25-33) mean that the total and absolute renunciation of possessions is a prerequisite for becoming a Christian?

Some imagine that Jesus was calling certain people to a special kind of 'professional' following. On the analogy of the disciples of a Jewish Rabbi they interpret this passage of the Twelve, i.e. of a limited group committed to a rule of living with their teacher. The Twelve then become a pattern for professional Christians today.

But in Jesus' teaching, as recorded in Luke's Gospel, we note that the essence of being a disciple is giving attention to his instruction. The Twelve were disciples par excellence, but the essence of their discipleship was not their physically following him, but their obedience to his teaching.

His words, 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be

my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:26, 27), were addressed to large crowds travelling with him on that final journey to Jerusalem. Jesus was saying at that moment to be a true disciple meant coming with him to Jerusalem to die. He was asking them to do exactly what he was doing: to turn their backs on all their loved ones, to treat them as though they hated them, to reject even their own lives.

If this was our Lord's words to disciples on the road to Jerusalem, it had not been his word on other days. On other occasions he had counselled disciples to honour and care for parents. But what does come out clearly as having abiding importance is the summary statement of verse 33, 'So then whoever does not bid farewell to all that is his, cannot be my disciple'. Kissing goodbye to everything they held dear was required of all who would become disciples. In the extreme situation, the limits of discipleship are revealed — there are none. The disciple must continue with his Lord even to the point of turning his back on family, possessions and life itself. It is not always necessary to do this, but at any moment it may become so.

The point regarding the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-30) is much the same: he is commanded by Jesus to sell all. But the primary thing in Jesus' words was the offer to follow him, not the demand to sell everything. In effect Jesus was saying to him: 'You have kept the commandments, now enter the kingdom, only first dispose of your possessions. At this point it becomes plain that the young man values his possessions more than the eternal life he is supposed to be seeking.

The fact that Jesus' disciples are amazed at their Lord's demand suggests it



Peter O'Brien.

may have been the first occasion he required it. Later he promises the kingdom to all who for his sake have left houses or parents or brethren or wife or children, that is, those who let nothing stand between them and God's rule. They must kiss everything goodbye and let nothing stand in the way. For the rich young ruler it meant selling possessions. For the disciples it meant leaving home.

There is no poverty ideal nor demand for renunciation as customarily understood. Indeed, how could Barrabas

or others have properties to sell? And why didn't they sell everything, anyway, if there was an ideal of poverty?

This naturally leads us on to:

3. Possessions and the Christian Life

The language about the poor in the Bible draws our attention to the enormous need or poverty of the human race at every level: spiritual, physical, economic, political and social. God's salvation in Jesus comes to those in desperate need who abandon themselves to him, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with himself.

In reading the Bible the Christian is made aware of the wonder of God's salvation on the one hand, and among many other things what his attitude to and use of possessions should be on the other hand. Regarding the latter we are given strong warnings against greed (see Luke 12:13-21), we are encouraged not to be anxious but to remember the Father's providential care for us (note Luke 12:22-34).

Of particular importance are Jesus' positive directions about possessions. In the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1ff.) Jesus tells the story of a manager who is threatened with redundancy. He acts shrewdly in the short time before the crisis which deprives him of his master's property. He renegotiates some promissory notes in a very favourable way for his master's creditors and so places them in his debt. After he is ousted from his job he will have friends. The Lord Jesus commended this steward because of his shrewdness, 'for the son of this age are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light'. In his own limited framework the man of this world sees a crisis coming and uses all his resources to avert it or to provide as successfully as he can for himself afterwards. The disciples on the other hand believe the kingdom is about to break in, but they are not throwing everything into it nor getting themselves ready for it.

The parable rather surprisingly presents a positive orientation towards possessions. The term 'mammon' means that in which one puts one's trust, possessions, indeed wealth of all kinds. It belongs to this present age which is passing away and not to the kingdom of God. Jesus counsels the disciples to make use of this mammon while it still has purchasing power prior to the total devaluation of the last day.

This wealth is not true or lasting. Nevertheless disciples are to employ it faithfully and wisely during the period of their exile. Then in the age to come they will be entrusted with the real mammon and that which is of true value in the kingdom of God.

Jesus' teaching opens up a positive role for those disciples who have possessions, and our Lord's words encourage a truly generous lifestyle, rather than a simple one. Jesus urges us to engage positively and joyfully with all our resources in the friend-making work of the kingdom. Romans 12:8 infers that the possession of wealth, which makes distribution materially possible, together with a person's spiritual capacity, namely their God-given inclination to 'meet a need, are one of the Holy Spirit's gifts.

Those of us who are rich in this present world are to put our trust in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment, not in our wealth. And we are to be rich in good deeds, evidencing a generous lifestyle with its willingness to share (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

1. For further details see David P. Secombe, *Possessions and the Poor in Luke-Acts* (1982) to whom I am indebted.



Lesley Hicks

I am not naturally inclined to credulity. More often, when I hear or read remarkable stories, whether in a Christian or secular context, I tend to be agnostic. I just don't know. But I am prepared to exercise a "willing suspension of disbelief" where the credibility of the one telling the story is known and good and his or her account is a first hand one. Where I have never myself experienced any such thing, however, I am usually inwardly sceptical, adopting a 'wait and see' policy.

Hey, Martha Stories

A new weekly magazine has been launched here called the Star Enquirer, catering evidently to mass credulity. 'Hey, Martha' or 'gee whiz' stories form its staple contents — the sort of incredible tale (Babies Fathered by Space Aliens; Does Death Stalk Princess Di?) that is supposed to cause a husband to turn to his wife with "Hey, Martha, did you read ...?" In the U.S., no doubt a "Christian" equivalent would flourish too, with tales of remarkable healings and miracles.

Christian Equivalents

Here, briefly, are three stories related to me in each case by those intimately involved, whose integrity I can vouch for.

A migrant was greatly distressed because his wife was sick and, he feared, dying. He asked a colleague at work, a friend of ours, to come with him to visit her in hospital. This friend offered to pray

Confessions of an agnostic

with them. He began in English, then switched to a 'tongue', something he did not usually experience or practise. The faces of the sick woman and her husband lit up — the language in which he was praying was their own, totally unknown to the user. The woman subsequently recovered.

Another Christian friend suffered a severe one-sided headache, foreign to his experience, for a day or two before an unexpected request to visit a friend's son who had just been diagnosed as having an inoperable brain tumour. As they met and prayed, my friend's headache disappeared. So did the patient's tumour — subsequent X-rays found it inexplicably gone.

Now in neither case have I conducted a Lourdes-like examination to test the validity of the miracle. I just know and respect these people, who, full of wonder themselves, have related to me what they believed God had done in and through them. And stifling my natural Thomas-like scepticism because I was not there to see for myself, I say "How wonderful — praise God!"

Back from Death

I have also heard a man called Ray Roberts, with his wife, tell of his return from death. For twenty minutes or so he was pronounced dead at Katoomba, but he recovered, and was moreover healed of the almost total paralysis he had suffered previously. The Lord evidently had more work for him to do here.

Though one could collect and catalogue many such 'Hey, Martha' stories, I doubt if that would be helpful. But while our faith does not depend on signs and wonders — Jesus rebuked those who sought them — neither should we deny nor hide the fact that God does choose at times to work in extra-ordinary, super-natural ways.

The Great Awakening

Recently I have been reading accounts of the eighteenth-century revivals in England and the American colonies, including extracts from the journals of the Wesleys and George Whitefield. They leave one feeling exhausted at their tireless energy and marvelling at the extraordinary — supernatural, in fact — impact of their evangelism.

Social historians attribute their impact to various social and psychological factors. The implication is that we do not see similar revival here in late 20th century Australia, nor have we ever experienced such a movement, because the conditions here have never been ripe for it.

Australia's Need

But if the true agent of revival is the Holy Spirit, sociological and psychological factors are not the ultimate deciders. On the part of Australia's Christians, prayer — sustained, stubborn prayer — is the necessary prerequisite.

I'm not pining for more of the miraculous to strain my credulity, but I do long to see that sensitivity to sin and openness to conviction, applying first to myself and all who belong to Christ, and ultimately to great numbers outside the kingdom who either seem quite content with themselves as they are, or who, hating themselves, still will not turn to Christ.

Any grass-roots religious movement runs the risk of rejection by the hierarchy, however. Bishop Joseph Butler of Bristol said to John Wesley: "Sir, the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing; yes, Sir, it is a very horrid thing."

We cannot be too careful!

Developing Aboriginal Ministry in the Diocese of the N.T.

A significant step forward in Aboriginal Ministry in the Anglican diocese of the Northern Territory took place at the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria on December 9 & 10, 1983. The relaxed bush setting of Numbulwar community (Rose River) was the venue for a conference attended by representatives of five Aboriginal parishes — Oenpelli, Ngukurr (Roper River), Angurugu and Umbakumba (Groote Eylandt), and Numbulwar.

The Conference followed a call at the 1983 Synod for steps to be taken to hand over the pastoral responsibility of these parishes to Aboriginal people. The Conference was chaired by the diocese' only Aboriginal priest, Gumbuli Wurramarra, and was also attended by Bishop Clyde Wood, representatives of CMS, students of Nungalinga College, Darwin (3 Anglican, 2 Uniting Church) and its Registrar.

The participants discussed a list of nine questions prepared by the Bishop. These concerned the most helpful form of leadership for Aboriginal Communities, what can be learned from traditional practices, who should choose leaders, and what kind of training they needed.

The overwhelming response of the Conference was for a shared pattern of leadership, although with a recognised leader, and with leaders chosen by the Christian community. This response was encouraged and inspired by shared ministry already being exercised in varying degrees in the parishes, particularly at Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt, where there has been no resident minister for a number of years. There, as in other communities, strong leadership is being exercised by women. Representatives from Umbakumba told how the Church Council frequently discussed their life together and the leaders regularly visited their people, shared their problems and the good news

of Christ. This ministry goes together with a pattern of nightly fellowship meetings in the open air to sing, pray and share the Word of God.

Concern was expressed about the opportunities for celebration of Holy Communion in such situations, and it was felt that a man should be chosen to be ordained priest in the context of ministry shared with others (men and women) who may well be ordained as permanent deacons.

There was also concern that training of these leaders should be appropriate for the context and needs of the communities and not keep them away from home for long periods. Students from Nungalinga College expressed their appreciation of intensive periods of training at the College and the growth and fellowship with other Aboriginal Christians that they experienced. The benefits were self-evident.

It was felt that training should begin with an intensive period of 6 months at Nungalinga College and be followed by a continuing program of a couple of months study each year while the shared ministry continues. The Certificate and Diploma of Theology studies at Nungalinga College will be appropriate for such training. The College will be encouraged to adapt these studies to meet this long term training approach, while the Bishop will choose the appropriate point in the training process at which ordination will take place.

The Conference was followed appropriately on the Sunday morning by the baptism of three adults from an outstation, by Gumbuli Wurramarra in the sea at the mouth of the Rose River, and their confirmation by Bishop Wood on the beach.

Report prepared by David Thompson, Registrar, Nungalinga College, Darwin.

Disturbing Anglican Youth

International Youth Year will be a disturbing year for the Church. This was the conclusion reached by the Anglican Youth Unit at its meeting in Sydney on Wednesday 30th November and Thursday 1st December, 1983.

The themes of participation, development and peace will provide a creative and exciting challenge for the Church as it struggles with the issues of youth involvement.

The first task for the Church, from the local parish to the national level, is to identify long term goals and hopes for young people. International Youth Year can then be used to work towards achieving them. It is internationally agreed that I.Y.Y. should not simply be a series of grand one-off events. The National Anglican Youth Unit will be producing resources and guidelines to assist local churches in their planning and thinking for I.Y.Y.

A priority in N.A.Y.U.'s work is the development of youth policy for use in the Church. These will be the result of wide consultation with young people and those who work with or are concerned about young people. Policies will aim to provide an Anglican approach to the issues and a variety of strategies for practical action at various levels. Policy is continually being reviewed and updated.

English remarriage proposals continued

The leaflet — which Canon Stevens said was being paid for by "150 people with whom I am in close touch" — sets out eleven things which the group believes are wrong with the marriage proposals. Lack of any explanation as to how they can be reconciled with the explicit wording of the canons and the Marriage Service is the first one.

And "there is no guarantee that all bishops and clergy will agree to 'work' the new system. Why should they?" the leaflet says. Some will continue in the way permitted by present legislation, it suggests; others will continue, as a matter of conscience, not to conduct such services; and yet others will follow the

Church Times

Tear Fund Director Appointed

Mr. Stephen Bradbury of Auckland New Zealand has been appointed as Director of TEAR Fund Australia to commence duties from the 1st of February, 1984. Stephen is a History and Social Studies teacher having been the head of History and Social Studies at Selwyn College in Auckland. He is 35 years of age, married to Chris and they have two small children, Sarah & Thomas. Stephen Bradbury has had a long involvement with both Scripture Union and ISCF having directed several camps for schools work of Scripture Union. As a student he was president of the Auckland University Evangelical Union and participated in other activities of the Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship the New Zealand equivalent of AFES. Currently Stephen is an elder of the Willow Avenue Chapel in Auckland.

No stranger to TEAR Fund activities, Stephen has served on the council of TEAR Fund New Zealand and has been an ardent promoter of the relief and development issues as well as the practical implication of the gospel for caring. With these concerns in mind he has been a speaker at ISCF, C.U. & TSCF Conferences.

Tony McCarthy Chairman of the Board of TEAR Fund said, "Stephen Bradbury is a fluent communicator. He has a deep commitment to the out-working of the Christian gospel for sharing resources and fellowship between communities. He has given practical demonstration of this in his own school and congregation. We look forward to his leadership and service as Director of TEAR Fund."

Aboriginal Church Leaders course



Twenty four Aboriginal men and women attended a 4-week course of Certificate of Theology studies in October/November at Nungalinga College. The studies included 4 units towards the Certificate:

The Prophet Jeremiah
Parables of Jesus
Christian Education with Youth
Christian Worship.

At the final worship service a Certificate of Theology was presented to Mrs. Mabuda Mamarika from Umbakumba, Groote Eylandt. She had completed the Certificate through study at home and in courses at the College over several years.

Students attended from Derby, WA, Central Queensland, Central Australia and NT: Goulburn Is., Groote Eylandt, Numbulwar, Oenpelli and Galiwinku.

Bible Smuggler to Visit

A former US Marine, now "God's Smuggler to China", will visit Australia in February. Known as Brother David he is the Asian Director of the non-denominational missionary movement "Open Doors with Brother Andrew".

The author of the book "God's Smuggler to China", he has been arranging the delivery of Bibles to Christians in restricted countries for the past seven years. Often this is done through Christian tourists taking Bibles in their luggage. Supplies are delivered

direct to people who have requested them. Delivering Bibles to Christians living under persecution can be dangerous. Recently two couriers were executed in China. Other workers are in prison in Asian countries.

Brother David is "totally committed to reaching all China with the Gospel of Jesus Christ." His vision is to assist the church in restricted countries by prayer support and provision of requested Christian materials, mainly Bibles.

Newcastle: Unemployed should be allowed to earn more

The Anglican Social Responsibilities Commission recently released a statement and background paper arguing for an increase in permissible income for unemployment beneficiaries.

The Commission called the present system a "disincentive to return to work".

Following a recent meeting in Sydney, the Commission released a background paper by Professor John Giles of Newcastle University, a member of the Commission, who is involved in job creation and unemployment problems in Newcastle.

His paper argued for an increase of the "permissible income" attached to unemployment benefit to \$40 a week from the present limit of \$20.

He said: "the unemployment benefit system was designed as a short term help for people who, having lost their fulltime employment, are seeking new full-time employment. In a time of protracted high unemployment, the community has a significant section of the population living on unemployment benefits as their permanent income."

"A person on unemployment benefit may engage in part-time work, but the

unemployment benefit is reduced according to a scale dependent on weekly earnings. This scale either discourages such people from seeking part-time work, or encourages taking part-time work and not revealing it to the authorities.

"A serious social problem has developed especially with young people who feel alienated from the community because they can't contribute and feel that the community does not want them to contribute. This problem is not solved by increasing the unemployment benefit, but by making way for them to contribute by opening up work opportunities."

To raise permissible income limit to \$40, the Government would lose \$10 in reduction of benefits, but would gain \$3.05 in extra tax. "Such a reform," said Professor Giles, "would have social acceptability. Many who are concerned at youth unemployment would see that this opens up a way for youth to contribute to the work force. There is also the possibility that with this opportunity for work experience, the young unemployed might be better equipped to find fulltime employment."



Allan Craddock

Optimism — Foolishness or Wisdom?

Perhaps there is nothing more infuriating for a troubled person than being told by a well-intentioned helper that "everything will turn out alright in the end". Such a comment suggests that the person doesn't fully appreciate either your circumstances or your feelings.

However, despite this fact, there is often a great advantage in being able to take an optimistic view of difficult circumstances. This positive perspective is to be preferred to a negative view in which everything is seen to combine into an unavoidable and inevitable total disaster. But is the negative view realistic while the positive view is unrealistic? Is the latter view simply a foolish form of deception which will interfere with an attempt to come to terms with the circumstances?

Any perspective which is out of touch with reality will prove to be unhelpful. This applies as readily to pessimism as it does to optimism. When faced with difficulties we need a thoroughly realistic view of ourselves and our circumstances. This must also extend to include a realistic view of our resources. By this I mean the various things, abilities and persons on which we can draw in our attempt to deal with or adjust to our dilemma. To see what we have going for us in our circumstances is a realistic and constructive form of optimism.

But what can you say to the person who at this point still says "I have nothing going for me at all"? Intellectually, I know that such an extreme statement is hardly likely to be true. Furthermore, the very fact that I'm sitting there trying to help is surely one positive thing! However, I appreciate the troubled person's emotional position — it feels as if there is nothing positive and there are no helpful

resources on which to call.

The key issue now is that feeling of despair and helplessness. How can one be realistically optimistic under that kind of emotional bondage? Or, to put it another way how can one become hopeful? The key "resource" for the Christian must surely be God. The basis for hope lies in the promises of God made to those who have placed their faith in Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

This attitude of mind and feeling is referred to by Paul: "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." (II Thessalonians 2:16-17).

In all things the Christian can take encouragement from the presence of God through Christ. I recently read of a Christian dying from cancer who spoke of "finding God even in cancer". This can easily be misinterpreted. God is not to be found in corruption, but in helping us to come to terms with our mortality. It is in the liberation from disease, either through healing, perseverance in a way that glorifies God, or death and resurrection, that God's grace is extended towards us.

This view is reflected in the oft-quoted passage in Romans 8:28 — "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Some things many not be good, but we can be sure that God is good and that God will help us in the face of these things. This is the basis for the Christian's optimism even in the face of the direst circumstances."

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND HOMES POSITION VACANT DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Church of England Homes is a child and family Christian welfare organisation with its head office in Parramatta. The Position: The Director of Children's Services is responsible to the Director of Welfare Services for the operation of the Children's Services Department. Responsibilities include co-ordinating and planning the work of an extensive fostering programme, five family group homes and a youth hostel. The Person — The appointment calls for a person with experience as manager of child and family welfare programmes, particularly fostering and residential care. It would be expected that the applicant would have tertiary qualifications in the Social Sciences and be able to lead the committed professional staff of this organisation. The applicant would also be expected to be able to implement the new work proposed to commence in 1984. Conditions: Salary negotiable. Car provided — Superannuation available. A most rewarding position for a person of definite Christian commitment. Applications in writing giving qualifications, experience and references to:

The Chief Executive Officer,
The Church of England Homes,
P.O. Box 427,
PARRAMATTA 2150

Applications close 31st January, 1984.



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Editorial

Tradition & Scripture

As the church ever wrestles with contemporary problems there are inevitably clashes between what the Bible teaches and the historical practices of the denomination. New problems, often caused by long held traditions, throw us back to the scriptures for fresh light. But sometimes that light stands as a divine "NO" to churchly tradition.

What then? What are we to do when tradition and scripture, church practice and knowledge of God clash? There are three stances that can be taken.

The denomination changes

The first and the most honourable solution is to adjust denominational reality to suit the Bible. This is the solution that galvanised the Reformation. It springs from the fact that the Word of God is the only possible redress for the word of man, that word — whether from philosophy, culture or rebellion — which is irretrievably poisoned and poisonous due to our sinful rebellion. Because of what the Bible teaches about our dreadful and innervating sinfulness we believe that man must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, alone. Because of our sins all words of men, no matter how noble or uplifting they may appear or even be, are found in the end to be polluted by their source.

Churchly practice must give way to scripture. It is only where the effects of sin are underestimated, as in the Roman Catholic denomination, that church tradition is somehow seem to be a necessary and authoritative source of instruction. But as we know from bitter experience, when human traditions are given the exalted role of being either the necessary reception centre for the Word of God (deciding what is or is not God's Word), or the role of authoritative interpreter of that Word, it is the "tail" of churchly practice which ends up wagging the "dog" of the self-disclosure of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The King becomes captive to the "palace". Why? Houses built on rotten foundations collapse and imprison their inhabitants. Church tradition, because of our sins, can

never be a necessary pre-condition or after-thought for God's Word.

Thus in the Anglican confessions when church traditions are seen to conflict with the bible it is the bible which must prevail. The Thirty-nine Articles, the introductions to the Prayer Book, and the ordination services all place the bible above church experience. "It is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written," says Article 20. In the service for the consecration of a bishop nowhere does the bishop-elect swear to uphold the traditions of the church, but everywhere and exclusively to be faithful to the bible and its teachings.

"Will you then study the scriptures and pray for a true understanding of them, so that you may be able to teach and exhort with sound doctrine and be able to withstand and convince those who speak against them?" etc.

Nothing changes

The second solution to a tradition-bible clash is far less than the one our confessional standards and the scripture allow, but it does have a certain nobility, although tarnished, that comes from honesty. It is the solution that says "Yes, what we do and what the bible teaches are two different things, but for the moment we will have to live with the contradiction." The "have to live with the contradiction" usually comes from pragmatism, and when on the lips of those who are well-placed in the power structures, sometimes lack of courage. But it has the benefit of honesty, and with its "are two different things" it does hold out the possibility of a future genuine repentance.

Bible chopped

The third solution is execrable, for it makes the Word of God bend to the word of man. Now, for all the right understanding of God's Word that the Reformation has brought us, this is the solution we are all, without exception, privately and corporately, likely to pursue. Because of the deep rooted nature of our sinfulness we are all naturely prone to make the bible conform to reality as we have

constructed it. We place the bible on the Procrustean bed built by our habits and traditions, and chop off the bits that don't fit neatly on the mattress. But we must flee this tendency to suppress the truth.

In a denomination or christian group which publicly places the bible over christian experience, pride ensures that we execute this solution with some subtlety. One proven method is to only allow those questions to go forward to the bible which tradition asks, thereby placing the bible in the dock and our practices on the bench. Committees will be told what they can or cannot examine, the proscription being dictated by what is acceptable to ecclesiastical tradition. So committees may be sent back again and again to search selected Anglican divines and laws for "acceptable" solutions to problematical clashes between belief and practice.

Another way is to only allow changes to be mooted on grounds of cultural acceptability, not theology. Theological reasons would be too compelling, and likely amongst christian men to unseat tradition from its throne. This paper has already noted that several Sydney Synod reports failed to bring forward all the positive theological reasons for change, favouring pragmatic ones (ACR 3rd October, 1983, pp. 3 & 4). One can only hope that these positive theological grounds did not occur to members of the committees involved. It would be better to die than to suppress the truth, either actively, or by worn out acquiescence.

Lay presidency, surplice, re-marriage, etc.

This year the Anglican Diocese of Sydney will continue to examine certain traditional practices. Committees will continue to explore the questions of lay-presidency in the Lord's Supper, relief in the use of the surplice, the ordination of women, the re-marriage of divorcees, etc. This paper will follow these endeavours with interest. All involved need all our prayers, lest the Procrustean poison which boils deep within our breasts yet again be allowed to spill over and win the day.

Great Potential for Christian Books in Australia

A REPORT

Christian publishing in Australia is alive and kicking according to John Waterhouse of Albatross Books, a Sydney Christian publishing house.

Fresh from the launching of Kerry Medway's book "Bush Preacher Bites the Dust", John exuded enthusiasm in a special interview with the "Australian Church Record".

When asked how he saw the potential for publishing Christian books here, the answer was: "The opportunities are untapped, but the situation needs to be exploited by professionals".

John Waterhouse believes that there is a place for Christian books in general bookshops, not just those catering for the christian market. But the books must be good because buyers are becoming more discerning, shop owners more discriminating and overseas publications more competitive.

In Australia, he says, there is only a handful of christian publishers — all facing the same problem of a small and diversified market. The contrast with the situation in America, however, is stark and dramatic. Because of the much larger population and buyer potential, American publishers are able to get away with relatively easy publishing because there is no real risk.

"In Australia, however, every book must be a best seller", Mr. Waterhouse said.

"The task confronting Australian publishing houses is to produce at least four good books out of five", he added.

The main Australian publishers are the Lutheran Publishing House, Albatross Books, ANZEA Publishers and Hodder and Stoughton.

"Every successful Australian house

needs to have a range of overseas books to give a turnover on which to build up the local Australian range", Mr. Waterhouse said.

"There is a growing acceptance for Australian Christian books. Nine years ago it was a battle to promote an Australian book, but the situation has been dramatically reversed", he added.

He sees the keynotes to success as a professional product that is solidly marketed.

"When this is achieved we believe that we can build up a sound business as well as of a job for the Gospel".

John Waterhouse stresses that most good books today are commissioned. The publisher sees a gap in the market and then looks for a writer to fill it.

It is not a matter of just rolling up to the publisher with your manuscript, because most manuscripts received are never published.

A major secular publisher in Sydney receives about 2,000 manuscripts a year, but of these only six or so are actually published.

"I have taken a conscious decision, as a publisher, not to wait for the perfect manuscript. I now look for a writer who is competent but not perfect. I then publish his work with the best marketing techniques I can muster and then hope that the author will be stimulated to improve upon his work even further next time", Mr. Waterhouse said.

Waterhouse sees teenage Christian fiction as an untapped market. He has three books in this category coming up for publication next year.

"Again, I am not waiting for the perfect manuscript but will get them out on to

the market place and hope that as the market comes to accept the product we will get more books and better ones later on", he said.

Other untapped areas for Christian publishing are adult fiction and general interest books.

"I see great needs at the pastoral level for Christian workers and lay Christians. In many ways books fulfil the function of theological colleges for lay people. They are the source of teaching, inspiration and motivation for lay people to train and equip them for Christian service" says John Waterhouse.

Waterhouse says that Albatross has been closely scrutinising what is coming from overseas and has decided that Australia can produce material that is just as good.

"I used to be intimidated by overseas material, but the attitude changed after I attended a Christian booksellers meeting in Dallas. It was a major Christian trade fair in America".

"I spent four days looking for products that might be suitable for Australia".

"I thought to myself: 'What is so special about this material here in America?'"

"I then decided that at the ideas level their products and their organization were not intimidating", Mr. Waterhouse said.

He went on to say that it was his conviction that a small, tight and creative publishing house could produce equally good material.

Waterhouse agrees that some Australian material may not sell overseas but the local market is sufficiently strong to allow local books to sell on their own.

Albatross Books has had a print run of

16,000 copies of Kerry Medway's book — 10,000 for the English market and 6,000 for Australia. They are expected to be sold within four months.

"This is good, reasonable publishing", he said.

The "Record" asked Mr. Waterhouse why he had decided to start an Australian publishing house.

"Well, I enjoy working for myself rather than working for a Board. I wanted to publish books that were prophetic and articulate. Something about the future and not about the past. I wanted to publish books that commend the Christian faith in a friendly manner and not a defensive one", he said.

This included books dealing with the way that people think about the Christian faith. Books that interested the seeker, not necessarily the committed Christian.

"In other words I wanted to publish books with a function of evangelism", he added.

John Waterhouse believes that many Christians do not fully realize the influence of television on their daily lives and that because of television reading habits have changed.

Nevertheless he still thinks there is a place for publishing for mature Christians. As well as for new and growing Christians. The target was to get quality Christian books to the readers.

At the end of the interview the "Record" asked Mr. Waterhouse how he was going at the present time.

"Great!", was the reply. "We are having our best year yet and are optimistic about 1984. Instead of concentrating on matters of financial viability we are, at last, able to concentrate on product and growth down the line", he said.

New Anglican Evangelical Journal

Many of our readers will be familiar with the problems associated with the dismissal of the editorial board of *The Churchman* magazine. This is an important issue! The Churchman will continue to be published by the church society. However, there will now be a new journal ANVIL, to compete with it.

In a recent issue of Church of England Newspaper Archdeacon George Marchant wrote about the new journal — we reprint it to give our readers a further insight into the issues involved.

"If I were asked — say, by the Editor of CEN — to explain what has motivated the setting up of a new Anglican Evangelical theological journal, with all the difficulties needing no elaboration here, I would have to call attention first of all to a background which is all-important.

First of all, the development of evangelicalism in the Church of England since the Keele NEAC of 1967, through the Nottingham NEAC 1977 requires a positive historical recognition. Set within the changing conditions of the Church of England now synodically governed, the changes taking place within the whole Christian world, together with the vast agenda of ethical and pastoral issues raised by our times, this represents a considered address 'to serve the present age, my calling to fulfil'.

It has provided itself with a new structure, the Anglican Evangelical Assembly with CEEC, reconstituted as its standing committee, all based upon wide representation.

Following this, a firm grip has to be taken upon the fact that growing numbers, developing academic and pastoral specialisation necessarily have produced debates about policies wherein difference of opinion has to be contained within a fellowship that is patient enough to bear while continuing to thrash our differences.

Old symbols

Next, there has been a critical reaction at work. When through inevitable historical change, old symbols of security, lose their significance, when a comforting fortification of uniform characteristics has been either outlanked or left away from

where the real action is, it is likely that will ring alarms and call for some return to the walls.

One other piece of background needs noting also. In the '60s, just before the Keele NEAC, a process was set up to try to bring together our societies to save overheads and overlap. It came to a head in the Mabledon Conference of December 1972, producing from there a joint consultation between CEEC and Church Society, which led to proposals for a joint new organisation in 1975.

But at the Church Society Annual Meeting to implement this, an alarm was sounded, the new Council dropped most of those who had been engaged in the merger, and from that time Church Society has distanced itself from CEEC, even though represented on it, and has talked of 'post-Keele liberalism', with which it tends to see CEEC, and presumably also AEA somewhat 'tainted'.

Certainly it has tried to give itself the role of being a centre of evangelical orthodoxy, a refuge for all who seek assurance in the strong affirmations of established evangelical watchwords. One final element has been to CHURCHMAN to conform to this policy.

In the light of what has happened to CHURCHMAN, not surprisingly there has emerged from many a call for a new journal 'representative' (to quote from the CEEC resolution on the matter in April this year) 'of the broad spectrum of evangelicalism for which CHURCHMAN has provided a scholarly theological forum of opinion and discussion' and 'free from editorial restrictions arising from the policy or views of any individual society or institution'.

The recent energetic attempts of Church Society and the new editor of CHURCHMAN to assure all that that journal will be just as 'open' as ever to service the whole constituency has raised many questions. What choice is Church Society making between either maintaining itself as a touchstone of orthodoxy and using CHURCHMAN as its vehicle of controversy in debate, or offering CHURCHMAN to be and do just what the outgoing editor and board were trying to do, and distancing itself from it

once again, to maintain its own position in some other way!

Trying to give some rationality to what has happened suggests that the former choice, however masked, will have to be the course taken.

Hence it has been urged that the new journal should be founded, to genuinely service the evangelical constituency; that will engage in theological, ethical, and

social issues, with a lively awareness of the insights upon all these fields from other disciplines. It will seek to promote discussion towards resolution of problems, as far as seems possible.

Thus the title 'ANVIL' represents an analogy, suggesting that under fire and hammering, old shapes, mis-shapes and even crude material can be re-formed, to serve afresh changing circumstances.

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Chronicle

Katie Luther

1983 saw much attention paid to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther, in recognition of the 500th anniversary of his birthday. Long articles were written and impressively long lectures were delivered in honour of the occasion. In Sydney the event did not go unnoticed, a very rare distinction in that the anniversary of his birthday was observed by both the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Australian Church Record*. Few men have been able to draw together that particular combination to honour their birthday.

Readers of the *Record* will undoubtedly have felt the same pain as your columnist upon reading the editorial in the *Herald*. One suspects it was written by either the priest/journalist Edmund Campion or Mr. Alan Gill, noted religious journalist of our city. At one point in the midst of what was in fact a useful editorial, Luther was unfortunately misquoted. The man of whom *Christianity Today* had chosen to run an article entitled *Luther: Father of the Christian House* was made to undervalue the shining jewel in his life, his wife Katherine von Bara. How unfortunate that the full quotation was not used, it should have read:

I would not change Katie for France or for Venice, for God has given her to me and other women have worse faults. She has a few but her virtues outweigh them.

Mrs. Martin Luther, Katherine von Bara was a woman of courage and determination, of common-sense and practicality. She was tender and compassionate, but hard-headed, and most important of all, she was not in awe of her husband, the noted theologian, Dr. Martin. She was in truth the very model of a clergyman's wife, for as Roland Bainton reminds us:

... the public arena was not her proper sphere. Her contribution to the Reformation is not on that account to be disparaged. She presided over the first well-known Protestant parsonage ...

Katherine was born in 1499, and was put into a convent when twelve years old, on the occasion of her father's re-marriage. She took the vows at the age of 16. With other sisters at the convent in Nimsleu (in Duke George's territory), she came under the influence of Luther's teaching. It was felt that they needed to escape into territory friendly to the Reformation, and friends arranged the escape in the covered wagon of Leonard Kepp, who delivered pickled herrings to the convent. There does not seem to be evidence to sustain the old story that the nuns left inside empty herring barrels!

In her new life Katherine was hard to marry off, mainly because her hopes rested in the suit of a handsome young aristocrat from Nurnberg. His family disapproved the match and finally Katie married Luther, who was 16 years older than her. It was not at first a romantic alliance, but became a relationship of great solidarity and love, and indispensable to the Reformation. Katie at times ruled her husband, curbing his prodigal use of money, and forbidding him from undertaking foolish dangerous journeys.

In domestic affairs I defer to Katie. Otherwise I am led by the Holy Ghost.

The couple were loaned, then given the Augustinian monastery where Luther first lived as a monk. There were 40 rooms on the ground floor, and cells above. In that house Katie cared for her husband, their six children, certain indigent relatives, students and visitors. She was of course aided by servants, but herself gardened, cooked, brewed ale, milked the cows, made their butter and cheese. She acquired a farm at Zulsdorf, 2 days journey from Wittenberg, and became then to her husband "The rich lady of Zulsdorf, Frau Doktor Katherine Luther, who lives in the body in Wittenberg, in the spirit in Zulsdorf."

Katherine von Bara was a model German hausfrau, a model clergy wife. Her last recorded words are purported to be "I will stick to Christ as a burr to a top-coat." There is no doubt that his appreciation of her led Luther to his often stated blueprint for a Christian marriage and house — "Let the wife make her husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave."

What was her contribution to his ministry? What would it have been without her? Who can tell, for we never hear the question asked. In most discussions and assessments of the life, ministry and contribution to the Reformation of Martin Luther, her name is never mentioned. She suffers the lot of the wives of the Reformers. Yet one should ask — How indispensable were they to the ministry and achievements of their husbands? What did they contribute in their own right? It is perhaps only in this day, when women's history is the burgeoning growth area of historical study that we are moved to ask such questions.

In another sense Katie Luther suffers the lot of many a clergy wife. How many others have their contribution to a ministry ignored? How many clergy speak of "my ministry" rather than "our ministry" and thereby ignore the indispensable contribution of one who quietly labours alongside, who like Katie Luther, does not see the public arena as her proper sphere.

We may very well ask, and indeed ought to ask what is the proper sphere of a clergy wife. Is there one role and model for her to follow? If so, what is her role? Your columnist heard some members of a congregation whose clergyman is a bachelor say recently — "Next time we must have a married man. A wife is necessary." One wonders about the concept of a clergy wife's role held by those particular parishioners. One wonders how they would feel about a working wife of a clergyman. Would they deny her the right to find her growth and fulfillment and make her own unique contribution in her own sphere, apart from the work of her husband? Should she stay home and not work — should she make her sphere the women's work in the parish, whatever her previous training and qualifications? Questions such as these have been in the mind of the writer of this column ever since reading a small book published in 1963. *Married to the Church*, is a book in which ten English clergy wives write "frankly about themselves and marriage." The clergy wives are a theological cross section of the Church of England, for there are Evangelicals, Catholics, Liberals and Radicals. The first contribution, entitled "Clergy Wives are people, too" is by Rosalind, Mrs. Robert Cantuar. This brief piece was first published in *The Times* in July, 1982 and some of us read it first in that forum. Mrs. Runcie begins by outlining what she sees as the usual societal view of a clergy wife — someone who is a drab and uninteresting human being ground into submission by her husband's job, running all the parish groups and generally being a do-gooder. She makes a plea for this to change, and for clergy wives to be able to work if they find it necessary for their own self-fulfilment.

One suspects, indeed knows, that the writings in the English *Married to the Church* would be echoed by a cross-section of our own clergy wives. They too would talk of sorrow and frustration, achievement, a result and joy — of expectations placed upon them which they were able to fulfil.

Perhaps some may choose through the columns of this paper to share their own experience for the benefit, enrichment and encouragement of others. Their contributions would be welcomed.

Martin Luther addressed a letter to his Katie in July, 1545 in this way:

To my dear wife Katherine von Bara, preacher, brewer, gardener, and whatever else she may be ...

Is that the model of a clergy wife from the one who presided over the first public Protestant parsonage — a clergy wife who can do almost everything?

Quotations in this column are from Roland H. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* and Shelagh Brown, *Married to the Church*, SPCK, London, 1963.

WORLD

Protest fast by 45 Soviet Pentecostals

Forty-five Pentecostals from the village of Chuguyevka, in Eastern Siberia, were planning to fast for up to thirty days from January 1st in protest at the refusal of the Soviet authorities to allow them to emigrate to West Germany.

In documents which have reached Keston College the Pentecostals give a detailed account of the persecution experienced by their congregation since the summer of 1981 and of the arbitrary refusal of their emigration applications. In September seventy of the Chuguyevka congregation fasted for up to ten days, with the intention of following up this fast with more and longer protests if there was no response.

The authorities sent a commission from Vladivostok to meet the Pentecostals, but the only response since then has been negative: the refusal of a number of applications to emigrate that had been filed before the hunger-strike.

In this new hunger-strike which began on Monday, fourteen expectant and nursing mothers will fast for five days, along with two seventeen-year-old girls. Five women will fast for ten days and two for twenty days. Of the men, two pensioners and three young men will also fast for twenty days and seventeen men will fast for the full thirty-day period.

The Pentecostal congregation in Chuguyevka consists almost entirely of Germans. They moved to Chuguyevka from Akhangaran, in Soviet Central Asia, in the first few months of 1981, hoping to be able to make a new beginning where they were not known. However, their worship services were soon noticed by the authorities, and they began being fined and imprisoned.

In March, 1983, fifty members sent their internal passports to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Society, with declarations renouncing Soviet citizenship and requesting permission to emigrate to West Germany. The passports and their declarations were sent back from Moscow to Vladivostok, and officials have been trying for force the Pentecostals to take them back.

However, says Keston, the Christians from Chuguyevka remain firm in their resolve. In an open letter to the West German and Soviet Governments, the UN General Assembly and world media announcing their plan to renew their hunger-strike they insist on their right to emigrate in accordance with the Soviet constitution and the law on citizenship, as well as international law. They claim that there are no legitimate reasons for denying them emigration such as recent military service or access to State secrets.

Keston suggests that they may perhaps receive a satisfactory response to their requests in less time than it took for the most recent Pentecostal emigres, the Vashchenkos and Chmykalovs (including the famous Siberian Seven), who sought permission from the authorities for over twenty-two years before finally being allowed to leave last summer.

Church Times

English demo: friars arrested

Dominican friars were among about forty-five Christian CND protesters who were arrested during demonstrations at the US nuclear bomber base at Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire during Christmas.

The three friars, dressed in their white habits, together with two women crossed the perimeter fence where, at the end of a runway, they chained themselves to a seven-foot processional cross which they had brought along.

The group remained for forty minutes inside the base, where they held a short service. Military police used bolt-cutters to cut them free and they were deposited at the main gate. Two other groups of demonstrators who entered the base

were also arrested and ejected without charges being brought.

The friars, who are based at Blackfriars, Oxfordshire, entered the base in the knowledge that they were risking arrest. But one of the three, Bro. Gilbert Marcus, said afterwards:

"There is a school of thought that says that clergy should stay clear of political involvement. But the Church has a long history of political involvement; and, if the gospel can't speak to politicians, it can't speak to anyone."

The Holy Innocents' Day demonstration attracted about 150 people. "We had asked for a small demonstration so as not to make undue demands on police time," said Mr. Paul Johns, Christian CND chairman. "We'd have found any more embarrassing."

The night before some of the protesters met in a school hall at nearby Bicester to pray and prepare themselves for their act of "holy disobedience". "Our attitude is that one doesn't play a game of catch-as-catch-can with the police," said Mr. Johns, "The object is not to get arrested."

Those protesters who remained outside the base on the road at the end of the runway were treated to an impromptu service by a Roman Catholic priest who was present. "A simple and effective liturgy," said Mr. Johns.

Church Times

Aspects of Church Army criticised & reforms proposed

The Church Army will have to become politically involved in issues of social justice if it is to make an adequate Christian witness today, says an authoritative report on the society published in England recently.

The report, from a review group commissioned by the House of Bishops, is critical about many aspects of the Church Army. It contains a number of major proposals for reforming the organisation into a body better able to carry out its task in the modern world.

But the group, chaired by the Bishop of Sheffield (the Right Rev. David Lunn), is also critical of the wider Church — which it says, in effect, has failed to give enough thought or care to the purposes and needs of an organisation like the Church Army.

"There has developed a gulf between the Church Army's self-perceptions and aspirations and a Church which has drifted in many places into the use of officers conventionally and traditionally for pastoral and maintenance functions," the report declares.

"We discerned a certain sense of 'mismatch' between headquarters and the officers, the founding principles of the Church Army and the present reality, and between the Church Army and the Church of England. It is only through careful dialogue that these matters will be resolved."

Decision-making

Among the recommendations: that the Church Army should pay more regard to "areas of recognised need and priority," since too few of its personnel are working in inner cities and other needy places. The report also calls for closer links with the boards of General Synod, "to enable wise decision-making and action." Further, Church Army candidates should be sponsored by their bishops, selected and trained in much the same way as candidates for other ministries.

As for the Church of England, it is asked "to consider seriously the reality of its commitment to the stipendiary lay ministry and the practical systems needed to fund and deploy members" of it; and whether, indeed, it wants to renew its invitation to the Church Army to be one of its agencies of evangelism and care.

The review group was set up as a result of a deputation to the House of Bishops in January, 1982, to tell the Bishops about the Church Army's planning for the future and to seek their advice.

REVIEW

Grenadian Church was "Next On Hit List"

(Journalist Dan Wooding, who recently went to Grenada with an Open Doors team, reveals this fact after investigating what had been happening to the Christian Church there under the Marxist regime that had ruled this tiny Caribbean island for 4 ½ years - until a bloody coup in October 1983 triggered the American invasion.)

A document has come to light which indicates that the Church in Grenada was to have been "shut down" by renegade members of the country's revolutionary leadership.

Investigations have revealed that a far from subtle campaign against Christians on this beautiful tropical isle was already being carried out by the late Maurice Bishop, the Prime Minister of his so-called People's Revolutionary Government.

But some of the plotters who finally toppled Bishop in the bloody coup in which Bishop was murdered, triggering the invasion by American and Caribbean forces, felt that the British-trained lawyer-turned-revolutionary was going too slowly in dealing with the Church. So they drew up plans to hit the church with total closure.

I have seen minutes of the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement, the only party allowed on the island, in which Foreign Minister Unison Whiteman, voiced anger at the fact that the party was spending too much time on small issues instead of the central one of dealing with the Church.

At a meeting, which took place in the capital of St. George's, between September 14-16, with Bishop in attendance, Whitehead told his revolutionary colleagues: "Too much time is spent on small issues instead of fundamental issues, for example the church. We do not fully grasp how the church is working at this time and what tactics and strategy must be employed to counter what the church is doing to the revolution."

Sources confirmed to the *Open Doors News Service* that some of the hardcore Central Committee members, who were highly influential during Bishop's 4 ½ years of government, were planning to "totally immobilize" the Church, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, fearing its deep hold over many of the 110,000 population.

"Our information is that the church in Grenada appeared to be relatively safe under Bishop, but certainly with the new people taking over, it seemed that efforts were going to be made to remove the church," says Therese Mills, editor of the influential *Sunday Guardian* in nearby Trinidad.

Mills said that the Christian church in Grenada was considered by hard-liners as the "real enemy" to the total success of their Marxist-Leninist revolution.

"Let's face it, they were right," she added. "The people's religion still has a grip on them and they (the hard-liners) wanted to break that. So the big enemy to them was not the politically conservative element in the society, but the church."

The Open Doors team, which visited Grenada to offer any help it could to the believers, discovered from pastors on the island that a campaign to undermine the Church's effectiveness was already in full swing.

The Soviet-inspired Pioneers organization was operating and indoctrinating many young people with communist ideology; reeducation classes for all government workers were compulsory, including civil servants, those in the medical profession, post office workers, teachers and bus drivers — even grave diggers. Work projects were also scheduled each Sunday to keep people away from Church.

Lively interest in Church Society's AGM

'A RESULT beyond what one might have hoped for', was one comment on the election of Church Society's new Council, to serve through 1984. The vote took place at the Society's Annual General Meeting in November.

The balance of the 20-member Council was seen as a strong encouragement for those who favour a "sensible, balanced and courteous" handling of the Society's objectives. It would reassure members and other well-wishers that the Society was 'not in a downward spiral'.

Among those re-elected for a further year alongside the Chairman Prebendary John Pearce, and the retiring Treasurer, the Rev. Peter Ronayne, were Mr. Raymond Johnston and Canon Harry Sutton.

Among the newly elected are Mr. Mark Birchall, a member of General Synod of Christian Weekly Newspapers, and the Rev. Philip Hacking, Vicar of Christ Church, Fullwood in Sheffield.

The auditors took over an hour to check and count the votes. Then even after a recount, there was a triple tie for the 20th place. On a show of hands it went at last to Prof. John Cockin.

About 120 members crowded into the Conference Room of Whitefield House for the vote which meant standing (or kneeling) room only for over half the company.

Last year's attendance was recorded as 38. And five years ago, according to John Pearce, 'we sat around and elected each other'.

Conversation round the room attributed the increased turn-out to recent reports and correspondence about the Society in the Church of England Newspaper.

This wider scrutiny revealed various weaknesses in the Society's constitutional procedure. There was strong pressure from the floor for postal voting in future. At present the small gathering at the AGM elects the Council; a coach-load of determined partisan members could sway the whole vote.

The list of candidates does not appear before the AGM, to allow prayerful consideration. Nor does it give any indication of who the candidates are or what views they hold.

In a keynote speech the Society's Director, Dr. David Samuel, spoke on 'The Reformation of the Church under the Word of God'. In meetings round the country, he has pointed out what he sees as wrong with the Church of England. On this occasion he took the subject of how this job should be done.

"We must be clear in our objective," he said. "And that is to reinstate the Bible to the place in the Church where it belongs, as in Article 6 of the 39 Articles.

"Then we must be correct in the instruments we use. Our weapon is faith in God. Church Society is nothing. I thank God it is nothing. God can use it, nonetheless. Like Luther, we can trust that 'the Word will do it'.

"Finally we must be consistent in the pursuit of our goal. We want to see the whole Church brought under the authority of the Word today. We cannot go back; we must go forwards."

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MARANATHA

Childless by choice?

The Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev. Donald Robinson in a broadcast over 2CH said —

When a married couple decide to remain childless we may understand their reasons. Yet I suspect that it reflects a deeper trend which should concern us all.

An increasing number of couples in our community are deciding to be childless by choice. They do so not for medical or biological reasons but for mere practicality.

Some clearly fear the responsibility that parenting would bring.

Some place their careers as a higher priority — a more important goal — and so choose to be childless for convenience.


Other couples feel so pessimistic about the state of our world that they think to bring forth children would be an act of unkindness.

Maintaining marriage as a mere fashion, deliberately barring the

procreation of children, is a perversion of the marriage relationship. It is as misguided as eating food without swallowing, enjoying the goodness of its taste yet receiving none of the goodness of its content.

How encouraging it is to see the different outlook held by the many growing christian families in our community. The hope that they have, and the confidence they hold — not in mankind or science but in God — allows them to see children as one of the most positive aspects of married life ... in fact as God's blessing.

Raising children is an essential part of a parent's sexuality in its wider sense. Couples that voluntarily deprive themselves of children in effect restrict their own growth as people. After man and woman become one flesh, they were told to be fruitful and multiply. This was as a blessing and not as a curse. It surprises me that so many people today act in fear or selfishness and ignore the blessing.


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ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY ASSISTANT ORGANIST

The Dean and Chapter propose to appoint an Assistant Organist early in 1984 owing to the present incumbent's appointment as Organist of Grafton Cathedral. This position may be taken on its own or, in special circumstances, could be combined with another position in the Cathedral or Cathedral School.

Enquiries are invited to the Precentor, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney Square, Sydney 2000. Applications will close on February 24, 1984.





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THE GOOD READ

The Letter to the Hebrews

By Donald Guthrie
IVP/Eerdmans, 281 pp.

The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, which have served many Christians so well in their study of the Bible, are now in the process of revision. Leon Morris as the General Editor of the new series declares that the intention of the revision is to maintain the balance of the previous commentaries. They concentrated on the meaning of the text without going into scholarly technicalities. The aim of the revision is to take account of new insights in New Testament studies that have emerged in recent decades. Despite the negative comments that are often heard in Evangelical circles about the Revised Standard Version, this reviewer is glad to note that the new series is based on that text, though it is borne in mind by the commentators that readers will use a variety of translations.

The new commentary on Hebrews by Donald Guthrie is more extensive than its predecessor and this is fitting when one considers the complexity of Hebrews and the importance of exploring its meaning. Guthrie surveys the arguments that have been put forward about authorship and concludes that we cannot identify the author. However, much can be discerned from Hebrews about the situation of the readers. Although Guthrie toys with the idea that they may have been Gentiles, he concludes that the traditional view that they were Jewish Christians is more likely to be correct. Although he considers and finally dismisses the view that they were former members of the Qumran community, he follows the suggestion of W. Manson that they were a house group which had broken away from the main church. This separatist group is said to have considered themselves superior to the rest. However, this is a rather tenuous argument, based on a particular interpretation of 5:12 and 10:25. In assessing the purpose of Hebrews, Guthrie rightly concludes that, "on the whole the view that posits the threat of an apostasy to Judaism among certain Jewish Christians, whether former priests or not, has generally more to commend it than alternative views". A helpful discussion of the background of Hebrews and its theological emphases concludes the introduction.

As he proceeds with verse-by-verse

exegesis, Guthrie is concerned to show how the drift of the argument would have special value for former Jews who had become Christians. However, the theme of the superiority of the Christian faith, which dominates the major part of the document (1:1—10:18), would have significance also for those converted from a pagan background, "in view of the



fact that Gentile believers as well as Jews accepted the authority of the Old Testament scriptures and would need a new interpretation of them". In seeking to establish the latter point, Guthrie gives helpful insights into the relevance of Hebrews for Christians today. In other words, this commentary gives guidance at various points about the way in which Hebrews could be expounded in sermons and Bible studies.

Guthrie is clearly working on the Greek text of Hebrews but carefully explains any argument based on the Greek. He also has a happy knack of condensing and explaining simply various points of scholarly debate about the theology of Hebrews. However, this reviewer was disappointed with the inadequate explanation of the concept of perfection, as it is applied to Christ (2:10, 5:9, 7:28) and to believers (7:11, 9, 9, 10:1, 14, 11:40, 12:23). It is not true to say that "the whole thrust of the argument in this epistle is that man must strive for perfection" (p. 164). Believers are perfected as a result of the perfecting of Christ.

Nevertheless, many readers will be greatly assisted by Guthrie's work and will find themselves "carried on to maturity" (6:1) by engaging themselves with the argument of this important New Testament "word of exhortation" (13:22).

David Peterson

Collected Writings of John Murray

Vol. 3: Life, Sermons, Reviews
Banner of Truth, hardback, 389pp.
Price: \$17.85

A recent article in the Banner Magazine pointed to J. I. Packer as the 20th century's successor to B. B. Warfield. If this is so, then the mantle of the Hodges must surely have fallen upon the shoulders of John Murray.

This is the third volume in a series of four from a man who was a close confidant to Machen and a contemporary of van Til, E. J. Young, Stonehouse and Kuiper.

The first third of the book consists of a biography prepared by Iain Murray. It tells of John's birth and upbringing in the remote Scottish Highlands. There is a tender picture of the burly father embracing Murray's elder brother with the words, "Goodbye, Tommy, I'll never see you again." He was one of many Scottish sons who died in France in 1914-18. The younger son John was later posted missing, but returned, minus one eye.

His wound did not deter him from scholarship. Like many of his race, he received intellectual stimulus in a Godly home and after the war earned his M.A. He felt a pull to both mathematics and theology, and chose the latter.

Murray, as is ideal for covenant children, had known Christ since childhood, but the trenches seemed to put mettle into his spiritual life. His colleagues and students in later life recall not only his academic gifts but his piety. His prayers gave the hearers an "awesome sense of God's holiness and man's sinfulness and creaturehood, combined with full assurance of His love and grace."

He went to Princeton and later looked for a pastorate. However, he was destined to teach theology and went to Westminster in 1929. He would have been welcomed at Princeton but the split over liberal theology had occurred and he preferred the newer institution.

A lover of the Puritans, he was never narrow in outlook. He recommended their authors but not most of their commentaries!

Possessed of a Celtic wit, his views on Christian liberty and their expression put him offside with many legalistic American

Fundamentalists. His rule was the Word of God and he trenchantly criticised evangelicals who sought "to impose standards of conduct and criteria of holiness that have no warrant from Scripture... this attitude of mind is gravely wicked. It is an invasion upon our God-given liberty because it is an invasion upon the sufficiency of the law of God, the perfect law of liberty."

His sound theology was an antidote not only for legalisms but for the antinomianism which frequently recurs in evangelical circles. In his opposition to the legalistic "pietism" of fundamentalism, he provided the strong counter-balance of true piety and spiritual devotion.

Despite a life confined mainly to the ivy cloister, he could captivate children and youth. In addition he laid down rules for open-air preaching as practical for today as they were then. "Go where the people are and not where you hope they will come... Nothing can draw and hold so well and so surely in an open-air service as the preaching of the Word in the power of the Spirit... There are successful ways of gathering a good audience..."

Sought as a preacher, Murray was not a popular communicator in the lecture hall. Nevertheless he adorned both offices and urged the need to press the gospel upon all men without distinction: "If we fail to present this offer with freedom and spontaneity, with passion and urgency, then we are not only doing dishonour to Christ and His glory, but we are also choking those who are the candidates of saving faith."

His latter days were spent in the highlands he loved, working on the farm, preaching twice each Sunday to no more than two dozen people, and visiting them during the week. He married late in life.

Two thirds of the volume comprise nineteen sermons, several addresses at the Lord's Table, and a selection of book reviews published between 1939 and 1953.

The reviews are an object lesson in themselves. They reflect theological insight clearly expressed, and a charitable heart in dealing with controversy.

Can this reviewer emulate his example? Why not? For that matter, why not each one of us who is called "to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ"? Note: Iain and John Murray were not related.

Donald Howard

Who is Larry Crabb?

Dear Sir,

The report of an interview with John Webb (ACR 12 Dec) raised a number of issues. First, what is Biblical Counselling? Mr. Webb does not make this clear.

Second, what gave Mr. Webb the idea that his Master of Arts course in Biblical Counselling at Grace Seminary is "comparable to Th.Schol"? Has Mr. Webb ever read the Th.Schol syllabus? Did his course have such a massive content on New Testament Greek and Old Testament Septuagint?

Third, where and what is Grace Seminary? Who is Larry Crabb? Are we going to have a spate of clergy with only undergraduate Th.L's going to USA and doing "Mickey Mouse" courses to pick up Master of Arts or Doctorate degrees? It would do Mr. Webb well to read the pre-requisites and course requirements of the Master of Arts in Counselling at Macquarie University before he starts talking about his eleven month "intensive program" as being a Master of Arts degree.

There has been an upsurge of courses for clergy in USA, clinical pastoral education being one of them, which have a heavy emphasis on soul-baring and soul-searching. This is fine for those who like that sort of thing, but it is not academic, and it is not the stuff of which Masters and Doctoral degrees are made. One would wonder where Dr. Larry Crabb got his Doctorate. We need to be very careful lest academic standards in Australia become eroded like they have in America, by home-spun degrees which sound impressive, but are not really worth the paper on which they are inscribed.

I think the interview with John Webb added nothing to our understanding of the professional training which should be necessary before anyone can claim to be a competent counsellor. There are clergy making a handsome living out of free-range counselling services provided for the public, which on examination, indicate that the entrepreneurial clergy conducting them have nothing more than an odd collection of American-type degrees and diplomas. If this is what Biblical Counselling fosters, it is not for me.

Yours sincerely,
Benjamin Stewart

Crude Attack

Dear Sir,

In your editorial of 28th November concerning 'Marriage Contracts' there is a crude attack on an unnamed spokesman for the 'Anglican Church' who presumed to venture a view expressed differently from the way your writer would have preferred. I too have reservations about the purported comments of the unnamed spokesman, but I have even stronger reservations about one Christian addressing others in the simplistic and arrogant way that the Australian Church Record has done at least twice this year. Here I refer not only to the editorial in question, but also to the Record's comment on the Holy Communion Service in which a woman priest assisted in Melbourne earlier this year.

Who are the anonymous spokespersons responsible for the editorial comments in the Australian Church Record anyway? Might we hear a more gracious "independent provocative evangelical voice"?

Yours faithfully,
David Powys (Rev)

"Merry Xmas"

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your "Merry Xmas" editorial with its expose of the anti-Christian-discriminatory tactics of the N.S.W. Anti-Discrimination Board. I look forward to more of the same as the atheistic policies on both sides of the House gain momentum in both Federal and State Parliaments.

Do I detect a slight movement in sympathy towards the Fred Nile/Jim Cameron "simplistic, jingoistic and old-fashioned... for many Christians an embarrassing" (ACR Oct. 31, p.4) stand in the public arena?

Many Christians are looking for leadership in our Society and they need to understand the implications of government policies. There is no reason why believers in Jesus Christ should not make use of their freedom, as responsible members of this nation, to remind our leaders that they too are answerable to Almighty God.

Yours sincerely,
David Fry

Dear Sir,

We have received a copy of your Christmas editorial, entitled "Merry Xmas", on the subject of the Board's forthcoming report on religious discrimination, as written up in the

LETTERS

Doctor of Ministry

Dear Sir,

As a Christian academic I have been interested of late to read of clergymen doing Doctor of Ministry degrees from foundations in USA.

This is a new innovation to my knowledge, and I would like to know more about these degrees and their status. It appears that one can undertake this degree without a first degree at University or CAE level, or with just a Th.L. qualification. This must surely make them suspect as a doctorate, but there might be other factors which operate of which I am unaware.

I wonder if this means that we are going to have a situation where most clergy will eventually be known as "Doctor" as they are in the American Church scene. That would be regrettable, as we already have masses of medical graduates, dentists and veterinarians who have adopted the honorary title of "Doctor" to which they are not entitled academically.

Maybe one of your readers could inform me as to the content, status and entry requirements for Doctor of Ministry degrees, by which foundations the degrees are offered, and whether they are open only to clergy. I gather there is a theological faculty somewhere in Sydney which is fostering these degrees in USA, and I would be glad to know more of them.

Yours sincerely,
(J Foster)

Festival of Light

Dear Sir,

"It being so serious, we could cry". (Editorial Oct. 31)

Having written a penetrating and most commendably outspoken editorial alerting Christians to the immediate danger of the militant atheism of senior members of government and deploring the situation where 'a minority violently opposed to all forms of religion has gained appointment to some of the most influential positions of our country', you go on to denigrate the efforts of the one body of Christians who have been 'sounding the alarm' for ten years — namely the Festival of Light.

Far from 'simplistic and jingoistic' those who attended the "For God, Queen & Country" rally heard Dean Shilton call this city and state back to God's standards of personal purity and righteousness in government.

Dr. Clair Ibbister "sounded the alarm" at the devastating effects, observed and documented, that the iniquitous Family Law Act has had on the families and children of our land. She asked why the Family Planning Association should have received yet another grant, this time \$130,000 of taxpayers money, to further its contribution to permissiveness amongst teenagers by giving contraceptives to all over 16 years who ask for them.

Rev. Fred Nile challenged Christians and people of goodwill to give themselves, without reserve to repel the enemy within — the atheists and militant humanists in their attempts to socially engineer our society to their preconceived pattern.

It is time Christians ceased to be embarrassed to take a public stand for God's righteousness in government and legislation. The atheists and humanists feel no such embarrassment.

A close look at the Christians' early warning system — the Festival of Light and their submissions to government enquiries and select committees, the research by expert members into law, education, child abuse and pornography and moral pollution and the outspoken public statements — should make most Christians say "Thank God for the Festival of Light!" When the churches have been silent on social issues, F.O.L. has been heard loud and clear.

As a postscript, "the Strange Silence" (Editorial Oct 3rd) of the churches on Sunday trading was shattered by Rev. Fred Nile on 29th November in his forthright speech to the Legislative Council. He reminded the Parliament that Sunday is the Christian day of rest and worship and is ordained by God as such for our benefit. He voted against Sunday Trading.

Yours sincerely,
(Mrs.) Muriel R. O'Neill

Catholic Reaction

Dear Sir,

Re "Catholic Reaction" by Graeme Roberts (ACR 12/12/83) I do feel for Graeme with all the Luther literature which has been disseminated this year. He may not realise that living in a Protestant country where the Gospel is preached, he does not see the excesses of

Roman Catholic countries, like South America where Voodooism is so widespread, his church not only tolerates it, but follows Voodoo initiation of a child with baptism and the Mass. Not that the church approves but they would lose all their flock if they did not tolerate this devilish practice.

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be compromised, but are we speaking about the SAME Gospel? Graeme states that it "is followed strictly to the church's interpretation, just as the Anglican church follows its own interpretation". Praise God, the Gospel needs no interpretation. True, the Virgin Mary is blessed through all generations, but NOWHERE in the Bible is she to be a Mediator between us and God. This was demonstrated when, during the Crucifixion, the veil across the HOEY of HOLIES was sent in twain. Why? Because each one of us could enter the Presence of God through Jesus Christ — and on-one else — neither Popes nor priests, saints nor angels, nor the Blessed Virgin Mary who is in the same position as ourselves — of the Adamic race in need of a Saviour. Indeed, in the Magnificat, she says "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my SAVIOUR."

If Graeme read the Bible as he says the church encourages, try it, bathe himself in it and put out of his mind any interpretation other than what God gives him, for the Holy Spirit's work is to guide us into all Truth — not fallible man. Graeme writes well and is intelligent enough to read the Word of God and listen for Him — Seek and you will find.

Yours sincerely,
Phillis Creasey

Backwards not Forwards

Dear Sir,

It was most encouraging some issues ago to read the report on the Reformation Rally in Sydney. It took my mind back forty years to 1943 when Bishop Hilliard and I were the guest speakers at the Rally. The Church Record masthead for years carried the words: "Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant & Reformed." For over 100 years now it has been the voice of Evangelical Anglicans throughout the land. May it ever be so!

There have been great gains over the past 40 years for which we can thank God. The Holy Spirit has been at work in many denominations, particularly the Roman Catholic, and Protestant positions about the Bible and worship in the common tongue have been won in a way that seemed inconceivable a generation ago. As much as it might go against the grain of old conservatives like myself, the 1977 Australian Prayer Book has also been a great gain.

There are some losses. Among them is the distressing failure in many congregations to build warm and accepting Christian fellowship so that the pagan world sees a quality of loving and caring unity to Christians. Another loss is the widespread acceptance of strong drink by Christians and Christian homes and the failure of our pulpits to teach the better Christian way of abstinence from this gross social evil in our society.

From my perspective there are three major issues which we Anglicans face today and which we must pursue, trusting God and using all the energy and purpose that we have. First we must seek every possible means to witness to the pagan society in which we live.

Secondly, every Anglican must accept a personal responsibility for building in his own life and in his congregation that quality of Christian life and expression that we need to be able to penetrate the pagan strongholds that are strengthening around us in Australia.

Finally, we Anglicans need to re-discover the joy and pleasure of belonging to "the rock from whence we were hewn."

There is a creeping spirit of undenominationalism abroad which could weaken our Anglican witness and divide brother against brother. We must resist such a spirit and acknowledge and preserve our Anglican heritage and pass it on with pride and love, having done all in our power to add to its influence for Christ at home and abroad.

Yours sincerely,
Rex Meyer

Gospel Offer

Dear Sir,

The Rev. Neil Baker asks (ACR, 14th Nov. p.11) for "just one verse of scripture which says that Christ died to make possible the salvation of all people".

My experience of those to whom proof verses on this subject (as with most subjects) are submitted is that they "interpret" them to support their own views varying over the spectrum from Calvinism to universalism and to attack the "errors" of others. Were it not for this I should be tempted to quote a very large number of (to me) relevant verses, including 2. Corinth. 5; 14, 15 and 19 and John 3; 16 and 17.

Yours sincerely,
Ollera Clarke

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