

from Broken Hill, a distance of 1157 km (719 miles).

One young man was reported to have organized a party of 110 young people from his area, known as "The Hills District" of Sydney simply because he "wanted to share the experience with others".

Every room of available accommodation was booked out for the occasion. The classrooms in the Katoomba High School were converted into sleeping areas, to accommodate the 300 billeted there. Meals were available in the school's auditorium. Church halls were used, caravans and tents. The organizers used a parking area within the Convention Site, for several 12 x 12 tents, which provided space for 108 young people.

Two observers, Gary Gilmore and Colin Cooper, came from the Mt. Tamborine Youth Convention, in Queensland, to have a closer look at this Youth Convention which has steadily grown from an attendance of approximately 600 in 1975 to 6,000 in 12 years.

"The unusual thing is that there is no hype or gimmicks," stated Ross Knight, a member of the Executive Committee. "The young people simply come for Bible Study and fellowship in the things of God".

One minister commented that he personally received encouragement to keep reading the Scriptures and studying God's word. He wouldn't miss a Katoomba Youth Convention for anything!

During this year's Convention, Don Carson dealt with the topic, "The Kingdom of God", based on studies such as "The Promise of the Kingdom" (Isaiah 9:1-7); "The Presence of the Future — or, Are You Greater than John the Baptist?" (Matthew 11:2-15); "Who Enters the Kingdom?" (John 3: 1-21); and "Waiting for the Kingdom, Waiting for the King" (Matthew 24:36-25:46).

Reg Piper's topic was "The Sermon on

the Mount". His studies dealt with such subjects as "The significant Life" (Matthew 5:1-16); "By Royal Command" (Matthew 5: 17-48); "Put God First" (Matthew 6); and "Two Ways to Live" (Matthew 7).

What is achieved through such a Convention? The answer was graphically shown during Saturday evening's program.

Phillip Jensen asked for a show of hands from those who attended the 1979 Youth Convention, when Dr. Helen Rosevear of WEC International spoke. Quite a few of those present responded. Then he asked if these same people had been there last year. One young lady, down the front, indicated she had not been back for several years.

Phillip asked her to come on stage and defend herself, much to the amusement and whistling of the rest of the young people. When asked, she replied that her name was "Jenni". Again it was explained that she had been there in 1979 but not during the past four years. When asked to explain why, the answer was given, "I have been a missionary in Argentina!"

This was Jenni Payne who went out to Argentina to work amongst university students, as a result of answering the missionary appeal in 1979 and after wise counselling from her minister ... Phillip Jensen! Miss Payne then went on to tell of her missionary work, including the not-so-glamorous aspects.

The Katoomba Youth Convention may only be one step towards commitment, but this story illustrated to those present that the Lord is using such meetings, to His glory.

Already plans are underway for next year's Katoomba Youth Convention. As this will be Australia's Bi-Centennial Year, the theme will be "True Citizenship", with Phillip Jensen and David Cook, the Principal of the Sydney Missionary and Bible College, as the speakers.

Full details and registration forms will be available later in the year.

Ramon Williams

Bible distribution in Soweto

20,000 in spite of 'ANC' opposition

World Literature Crusade has been at work in South Africa since 1981, spreading the Gospel through evangelistic crusades, prayer schools, leadership training seminars and home-to-home literature distribution.

A major evangelistic outreach was launched last June in Soweto, a black township of more than 2 million people, southwest of Johannesburg. Sixty-two churches within the township have joined with World Literature Crusade to share the Gospel in Soweto.

As part of a special Christmas outreach last December, 20,000 Bibles and Bible Correspondence Courses were delivered

to homes in Soweto. The Bibles were provided by WLC supporters who live outside of Soweto, and were printed in three languages that are spoken within the township. A bookmark with a Christmas message and the donor's signature was also included with each Bible.

In spite of threats by the African National Congress (ANC), a militant group of black South Africans who advocate the violent overthrow of the government, the Bibles were quietly delivered to homes in Soweto during the Christmas holidays.

MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE

DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

Rev. N. Anderson will be commissioned as Minister-in-Charge, St. Mary's, Preston on 17th February.

Rev. K. J. Cahill is to be commissioned as Associate Priest, St. Matthew's, Glenroy.

Rev. M. Chin was commissioned as Minister-in-Charge of the Anglican Chinese Mission of the Epiphany on February 3rd.

Rev. H. F. Dillon is to be Executive Director, Mission of St. James and St. John and inducted as Rector, St. James Old Cathedral on March 10th.

Rev. I. N. Hunter is to be commissioned as Senior Chaplain, Missions to Seamen on March 12th.

Rev. Dr. P. Marshall, formerly Director, Zador Centre, Canberra/Goulburn Diocese will be commissioned as State Director, Department of Industrial Mission on February 22nd.

Rev. R. J. Nunan was inducted Rector, St. Cuthbert's, Grovedale on February 13th.

Rev. K. W. Parker will be inducted as Rector, St. Peter's Mornington with St. Martin's, Mount Martha on March 31st.

Rev. R. B. Street, formerly with St. Stephen's, Viewbank is now Chaplain, Royal Melbourne Hospital.

Rev. J. Swift, formerly Chaplain with the Australian Army is to be inducted Rector, St. Aidan's, Parkdale on March 3rd.

Rev. J. Leaver was appointed Area Dean of Frankston as from 1st December, 1986.

Rev. M. Lamont commenced missionary service in North West Australia as from 31st December, 1986.

Rev. S. Blair has resigned as Associate Minister, St. James Old Cathedral to take up appointment as Southern Field Officer, S.A.M.S. as from 1st February.

Rev. T. Green has resigned as Associate Minister, Department of Chaplaincies and Chaplain to Correctional Services to begin Chaplaincy appointment with Department of Industrial Mission as from February 1st.

Rev. J. Stockdale has resigned as Rector, Holy Trinity, Thornbury to become full time Chaplain with Department of Industrial Mission.

Rev. T. Stokes has resigned as Rector, Fairfield/Alphington as from February 1st.

Rev. J. F. Hannon has retired from ITIM Staff Chaplain, Police Academy and Senior Police Chaplain as from December 31st, 1986.

Rev. M. W. O'Donovan has retired as Minister-in-Charge Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy as from February 1st.

Rev. L. Wade was commissioned as Minister-in-Charge, Christ Church, Melton 4th February.

Rev. John H. Brown died 31st December, 1986.

Rev. Donald W. Hardy died 3rd January, 1987.

Rev. Kevin Curnow died 9th January, 1987.

TASMANIA

Rev. W. J. Cuthbertson is now Rector, St. James the Apostle, New Town.

DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Rev. C. Desgrand formerly at Sarina in the Diocese of North Queensland was commissioned as Rector, Emerald on January 29th.

Rev. R. Hart formerly at Barcoo, became Rector, Springsure on January 28th.

Rev. G. Harch was commissioned as Minister-in-Charge of Middlemount/Dysart on January 30th.

Rev. N. Wagstaff will be commissioned as Rector, Barcoo on February 27th.

DIOCESE OF CANBERRA & GOULBURN

Rev. D. Octigan was inducted as Rector, Tumbarumba on December 5, 1986.

Ven. L. Turley became Rector, Holy Trinity, Fortitude Valley in January.

Rev. W. Devonshire, St. John's, Canberra retired on December 31st, 1986.

Rev. D. Saines was appointed Youth Office of the Diocese as from January 1st.

Rev. J. Bowen resigned from St. Luke's, Deakin as from January 26th to take up duty as Chaplain to the Collegiate School, Hobart.

Rev. R. Pocock, Army Chaplain, Bandiana, Victoria was inducted as Rector, Boorowa on January 28.

Rev. R. Salway, formerly Rector, Holy Cross, Hackett, was inducted as Rector, Tarcutta on January 30th.

Rev. R. D. Silberman, formerly Rector, St. Paul's Murrumburrah was inducted as Rector, Holy Cross Hackett on January 29th.

Rev. G. Ballard was inducted as Rector, Binda on January 16.

Rev. R. Cooper, formerly Rector, St. Stephen's, Kambah has been appointed Director, South-West Region with the Australian Board of Missions as from February 1st.

Canon R. Moon, formerly Rector, All Saints' Ainslie, was installed Dean of St. Saviour's Cathedral on February 12th.

Rev. H. Lockwood, formerly in the parish of Griffith, Diocese of Riverina is to become part-time Chaplain, Wagga Base Hospital and part-time Rector, The Rock, Riverina Diocese.

DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

Rev. J. A. Brook will resign as Rector of Castle Hill from 31st March to go to Tasmania.

Rev. N. Mayhew resigned as Assistant Minister of Minto on February 15th to become Assistant Minister of Pictou.

Rev. G. S. Gardner resigned as Rector of Lindfield on 15th February to become Director of Anglican Youth Department.

The Australian



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MARCH 2, 1987

CHURCH RECORD

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NAR1678 Telephone 264 8349 PRICE 80 CENTS

New Leadership for Vital Youth Ministry

The Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev. Donald Robinson, has appointed the Rev. Glenn Gardner as Director of the Anglican Youth Department.



Rev. Glenn Gardner

Glenn, who took up his appointment on 16th February, has had close association with the Department for many years. His first contact was as a counsellor with Camp Howard.

This interest was encouraged when Glenn was catechist to Neville Bathgate, who had founded Camp Howard while Youth Chaplain of the Department.

Glenn served on Youth Council from 1970 to 1984 including 4½ years as Chairman. He is also on the Council and Executive of Scripture Union.

The Department's work has grown in recent years, including the opening of the Caleb Centre at Strathfield where training resources for youth workers and leaders are available.

Andrew Hudson, the Department's Regional Youth Consultant in the western region, greatly assists youth ministry in that area. It is hoped that his work can be used as a model for further regional workers in the near future.

The camping and conference centre ministry continues to grow and provide a valuable resource to the parishes. Over 22,000 campers use the Department's properties each year.

Camp Howard, the vacation holiday programme and Howard Educational Camps, a mid-week programme for schools, both have over 2,100 young people attending each year. Both provide excellent opportunities for the presentation of the gospel to young Australians as they are challenged by new experiences and friendships.

The Council of the Department has recently assessed its ministry and has formulated further strategies for encouraging, supporting, and initiating ministry to youth in the diocese.

Glenn's gifts and previous experience will play an important role in putting these strategies in place. He is married to Jenny and has three children Jilleen (13), Sarah (9) and Stephen (5).

Cyclone devastation to Scripture Union camp in Vanuatu

Tradesmen needed

Scripture Union's Regional Secretary the Rev. David Claydon reports that Cyclone Uma which recently swept Vanuatu, almost demolished the Movement's newly re-modelled campsite.



Carpenters Tony Went and Noel Ashurst supervise work at the tank stand Vanuatu Jan '87.

Camp and Conference Centre. During the Christmas holidays a workparty organized by Hervey Bay (Qld) High School teacher Allan Morgan completed extensive renovations and improvements to the site.

However much of this work has now largely been destroyed. "A large section of the campsite was swept away by the cyclonic winds accompanying Uma", reports David Claydon "only two buildings remain intact. Fortunately all the drainage and electrical rewiring are still o.k."

Scripture Union's Co-Ordinator, Pastor Philip Wivirau lives in a village of 1,000 people near Vila. This village was completely demolished. Philip's family has moved into one of the remaining campsite buildings.

David Claydon has issued a call for volunteer tradesmen who can give time to travel to Vanuatu and help the locals rebuild.

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Jensen — "We must be flexible."

"We change the inflexible gospel, but we are inflexible about the changeable. We've got it wrong — we must be flexible."

Phillip Jensen's talk on 'Church Growth' was just one of the highlights of the Katoomba Summer School of ministry held on 25-26 January at the University of NSW, where Mr. Jensen is a chaplain.

At almost the last minute invitations were sent to ministers of many denominations throughout the state to attend this first 'KSSM'. A rough 150 responded from across the denominations and the state to participate. They were not disappointed.

Donald Carson, from Trinity College, Illinois, and a Baptist minister, was the main speaker, presenting four talks in an attempt to answer the question 'How does the kingdom work? How is God's power manifested?' His talks were a feast of Biblical insights — albeit packaged in an immense vocabulary (some home-made perhaps!), with practical, and pointed application. He urged us to adopt the Biblical 'dream' of a brand new world, and not to apply the kingdom of God to anything less than this. He urged us to see that such a 'dream' focuses on the king and doesn't lead to 'domestication' of the gospel. As part of God's grace we are gifted people given to the church to serve one another. This service is the mark of the Apostle's ministry, his authority being expressed by self-denial and service. And I am sure nobody present could ever forget his most moving talk on 2 Cor 12 in which he betrayed enormous understanding of the apostle Paul and showed how the kingdom 'works' through weakness, God's power is displayed through suffering.

The other speakers added their own distinct and valuable contribution. Reg Piper, Anglican minister from Adelaide, spoke with great sensitivity of his own personal grappling with charismatic questions. His simple explanation of the Bible's view of our present time was most profound. The day has dawned in Christ, now is the time for salvation. And yet it is not a time for healings, prosperity, justice except in so far as these come to both the

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Charles Colson has surgery

Removal of low-grade malignancy

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — Former presidential aide Charles Colson underwent successful surgery here Jan. 7 to remove a small, low-grade malignancy from his stomach. Colson, now chairman of the board of Prison Fellowship Ministries, an organization he founded in 1976, is recovering at Georgetown

University Hospital.

Doctors are optimistic, believing that they removed all necessary tissue surrounding the growth. No further treatment will be necessary, doctors believe. "After a period of several weeks of convalescence, we expect Chuck to resume his usual vigorous and far-reaching personal ministry," said Prison Fellowship President Gordon D. Loux.

"Doctors became aware of the small growth during tests to determine the extent of a bleeding ulcer; we are grateful to God for the early detection and treatment," said Loux.

Colson, a popular evangelical speaker, is also author of several books, including international best-sellers *Born Again* and *Loving God*. Prison Fellowship now works throughout the U.S. in more than 425 prisons and in 30 countries, in both religious training and criminal justice reform.

Moore College Library

"Friends of the great Lord"

Colossians 1:15-23

One of the things that keeps the new sects alive is having a good devil. That is, someone or something that they can oppose and condemn. Something which they stand over against and define themselves against. This kind of devil is important for such groups because it helps them form a negative definition of themselves. A kind of "I thank you that I am not like that tax-collector" attitude.

All of us can fall into the trap of defining ourselves in terms of what we disagree with. We thus live with the danger of having only a negative religion. There is a problem in this of course because there are things we disagree with and which we see to be morally or theologically wrong.

Problem

Paul had a problem a bit like this with his Colossian friends. He saw they were in danger from some new teachers. So he keeps up his prayers for them, and he writes them an encouraging letter. He strengthens the Colossians by affirming the truth of the gospel they believed and affirming their own response to it. As for the things he disagreed with, he leaves that until he can reinforce the positive truth of the gospel.

His letter begins by reminding them of how he prays (1:3 onwards). His reported thanks to God carries on into a great hymn of praise to Christ (1:15-20). In fact this hymn forms the solid core of the letter. Here is where Paul wants their attention. The best antidote to error is the strong statement of the truth. And Paul gives it to them strongly.

Identity

He is reminding them of what they already know. But Paul goes over it again because there was nothing better to get rid of the poor alternative being served up by the new teachers. Paul doesn't need heretics, hypocrites or opponents to define himself or identify what his churches stand for. Paul defines everything by Christ. It is Christ who gives him his identity and who is at the centre of his life. So it is Christ whom Paul puts before the Colossians in the hope that they will not be taken away from him as the one who can provide everything they need, and who should be their supreme Lord.

We have been rescued into the kingdom of the Son (1:13). So we are under the rule of the one who is the actual image of the invisible God (1:15). In Christ we see God standing before us in human form. "In Christ, God shows his righteousness, wisdom . . . his entire self" (John Calvin).

Creator

Christ is the one who has created all powers (1:16). In fact they, and everything else were created for him. They exist for his glory and benefit. He is their creator and Lord. How silly to look to these lesser powers for help when you are already in the kingdom and under the rule of the Creator of all powers.

Nor is Christ just a great King in a distant heaven. He is also the head of the church (1:18). He is directly involved in its life. He is its head for its protection (see Eph. 1:22). The church need neither fear its opponents nor look beyond Christ for its help. It is a sad thing that at various stages in the history of the church Christians have looked to dead Christians, famous living ones, special techniques, angels, even other spiritual powers for help in their Christian life. A particular plague at the moment is 'marshmallow Christianity': the addictive reading of exciting Christian success stories and

biographies which give us a short term lift (about a week I think).

Lord

Yet this is the church that has as its Lord Christ who is the beginning of the new creation (1:18). He is also the first to rise from the dead; the guarantee that we too will rise with him. Even such a great difficulty as finding life after death is solved by Christ.

Christ is the ruler over creation, the power over the powers, the head of the church, the beginning and the first to rise from the dead, so that in every way he might be supreme (1:18). That is the nub of it. That is what the new teachers had missed. That is what much modern Christianity has missed. The supremacy belongs to Christ. In every way it is God's purpose that Christ should be pre-eminent.

Fullness

God has such an exalted view of Christ that he was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (1:19). 'Fullness' seems to have been one of the key words used by the new teachers at Colosse. They appear to have been suggesting that some further fullness of God was needed beyond what was received by the Christian when he accepted Christ. It was as though God had more to give of himself than what was given in Christ. But Christ himself has all the fullness of divinity residing in him. He lacks nothing of God's nature or being. So those who have Christ have all that God gives.

In particular it is in Christ that God is reconciling the world to himself. He is making friends with the rebels. He is making peace in his creation. And he does this by the blood of Christ shed on the cross (1:20). 'All the fullness of God' is really the subject of the sentence. 'All the fullness of God' is reconciling all things to himself. It is a cosmic reconciliation and peacemaking, and presumably involves the subjugation of the forces that remain rebellious (see 2:15).

Help

If God has accomplished that in Christ why go beyond Christ for help? Even Christian methods and ideas (such as various techniques and ideas about prayer) can take us away from Christ. Better to allow Christ himself to be the one who helps and directs our life.

This cosmic reconciliation has included ordinary sinners like the Colossians (1:21). God has reconciled them by Christ's death to present them holy and without blemish before him (1:22). They are friends of the living God, there is nothing against them, they have been brought into the kingdom of his Son, they have everything going for them . . .

Don't Move

As long as they stay firmly committed to the gospel and the faith they first heard. (1:23). They are not to be moved from the hope they have, to some other orientation. How sad that Christians from then till now have been moved away from this magnificent gospel which has brought them into friendship with the living God. The trouble is that the heart of it is not grasped. People still think that forgiveness by the death of Jesus is no big deal. People still underate the greatness of Christ. Some still get hooked on more exciting alternatives which mostly appeal to their pride and desire.

For Paul the only way to prevent this is to fill our minds again with the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dale Appleby

Anglican Mission leaders view on child abuse

A product of broken down family structures

Emotive, sexual and violent maltreatment of children in Australian society is all part of a wider societal illness, the Rev. Ray Cleary, Associate Director for the Mission of St. James and St. John says.

"Child abuse — in every form — is the product of broken-down family structures in Western urban countries, and the growing isolation of family members from natural supports and networks of helping people," Mr. Cleary says.

"Only in extreme cases should we require compulsory community reporting of abuse, or suspected abuse. Infant welfare centres, schools and kindergartens are an appropriate source for initial response, and when families at risk do not respond at this level, properly established child protection units should become involved."

Mr. Cleary stressed his belief that currently-operating child protection units

are inappropriate models. He wants better-trained family and child professionals to be engaged by the community as skilled teams who give child rearing their highest, pressure-free priority.

"I am not, however, advocating no response," Mr. Cleary says. "Rather, I suggest an alternative approach which I describe as discretionary reporting. It should be a properly constituted child protection unit's task to be the first professional intervention source. This unit would assess any necessity for police to intervene."

In addition to being an Anglican priest, Mr. Cleary is a trained social worker and economist with direct casework experience in the field.

"My eight years experience at the Copelen Street Family Centre in South Yarra confirmed for me that mandatory reporting of children at risk was not desirable nor a deterrent or solution to the difficulty," Mr. Cleary says.

Ministry and Scholarship

Baptists sponsor lecture series

Ministry and scholarship come together in the Baptist Biblical Studies Fellowship lectures. The lecturer is both concerned with ministry and an accomplished scholar.

The encouragement of godly scholarship and practical Christian ministry is the reason for the existence of the BBSF. When either of these two is neglected the life of the whole church is damaged. The church cannot afford to do without one or the other. Biblical scholarship which is devoid of application for Christian ministry is incomplete, and leads to a dry irrelevancy. On the other hand, the exercise of any sort of Christian ministry which is not constantly being informed by the results of Biblical scholarship, is in danger of losing sight of its foundations. Such ministry will eventually have nothing to say, being full of good or religious deeds but without any message.

BBSF has sought during its brief history to bring to Baptist pastors and others a selection of the best Biblical scholarship available to us in Australia, with the intention that biblical insights should be presented in a manner which would promote practical Christian ministry. In order to achieve this goal the Fellowship has organised a number of public lectures focusing on the understanding of various books of the Bible. These public

lectures include practical workshops on interpreting the scriptures and a helpful package of notes and diagrams, with a suggested preaching outline of the book under consideration.

The Baptist Biblical Studies Fellowship is pleased to be able to report that the speaker at their next day of public lectures will be Rev. Dr. David Peterson. Dr. Peterson is both Head of the Department of Ministry, Moore Theological College, Sydney, and is an accomplished scholar in the field of New Testament studies. His doctoral thesis on perfection in the Letter to the Hebrews has won international acclaim.

"It is our belief that Dr. Peterson's lectures entitled 'Preaching and Teaching from the Gospel of Luke' will be a great assistance to a scholarly understanding of the gospel and a practical aid to its interpretation," said a spokesman.

The lectures are scheduled for Sat. 14th March, 1987, at Drummoyn Baptist Church, and are open to all who have any sort of teaching responsibility in their church. Registration is \$10 payable from 9.00 a.m. at the door on the day. (Students \$5) Registration covers the cost of all lectures, notes and a light lunch. Tapes will be available. For further details please contact: Rev. Richard Morrison, 118 Lindsay St., HAMILTON 2303 (049) 61 1264.

Medicine will make you fit for life

The Bible Societies new performing troupe launched

A dynamic new performing troupe will leave audiences all over Australia asking for more when the production they feature in is unleashed onto the public this week.

Named Mr. G's Mobile Medicine Show, the fast-moving, fun-filled production launched itself into the Melbourne Secondary school system today.

The 30 minute show, in which God is referred to as Mr. G, aims to speak to young Australian people about matters such as selfishness, the threat of nuclear war, sex, self-esteem and drugs. The show is the first production of the Bible Society sponsored Downunder Theatre Company, whose chief aim is to spread the Good News of the Bible to all Australians.

At the end of the production, the Bible Society's Downunder magazine for youth is distributed, and this brings the show into a Scriptural orientation. The actors then may lead a 30 minute discussion on matters raised by the show, or offer a session on dance or drama.

The age of the actors range between 18 and 23 and, according to writer/director Simon Nette, they are "hugely talented".

"The troupe and the show itself is on par with any secular or educational team," Simon said.



Mr. G's Mobile Medicine Show Actors: (Top to Bottom): Paul McEadden, Andrew Sorenson, Belinda Luscombe, Ian Cook, Elissa Armitage.

The troupe hopes to perform nine shows in schools every week around Australia. The Bible Society needs Christians who are willing to seek bookings for the troupe and coordinate their visit in regional areas.

A promotional video and cassette is available together with brochures and other information through the Downunder Theatre Company, 241 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000. Ph (03) 63 4398.

Review debunks sole parent mythology

Use of supporting parent's benefit analyzed

The Minister for Social Security, Brian Howe, has announced the release of a Social Security Review Issues Paper which counters community perceptions of sole parents in the Social Security system.

"Too many people in Australia think the Government spends too much of the taxpayers' money in support of unmarried teenage mothers who don't want to get a job," Mr. Howe said.

"For the first time we have a thorough analysis of sole parent families which shows that much of what the community thinks about sole parents is, in reality, fiction."

"There is a firmly entrenched community myth that the Supporting Parent's Benefit has encouraged teenagers to choose motherhood instead of the boredom and low status associated with being unemployed," Mr. Howe said.

"In fact the proportion of teenage single mothers has actually decreased in the last ten years."

"Only four per cent of all supporting parents are teenagers."

The paper called, 'Bringing Up Children Alone: Policies for Sole Parents', was written by Judy Raymond of the Policy Analysis and Development Branch of the Department of Social Security.

H.M.S.'s Care Force has a new director

"Bringing christian concepts to the wider community"

The Rev. John Livingstone this month joined Care Force as Director of Welfare Services. He takes the place of the Rev. Bryce Wilson, who has become HMS Associate General Secretary.



Rev. John Livingstone and Mrs. Jan Livingstone.

Mr. Livingstone says one of the deciding factors behind his difficult decision to leave his parish (St. Stephen's Normanhurst) was that the Care Force position would give him an even greater opportunity to put together the caring and teaching aspects of Christianity.

Social action programmes

While he was Minister at Green Valley, Mr. Livingstone met Maurice Goodall (now Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand) and was very impressed by some of the social action programmes Mr. Goodall had initiated in his home city. Mr. Livingstone found particularly interesting a centre where social workers and troubled families lived together.

A very much modified version of the live-in teaching idea was set up in Green Valley. "Surrogate Grandmothers" from parishes all over Sydney were assigned to families that needed support.

In 1974, as well as being the Minister at Green Valley, Mr. Livingstone became Director of the New Areas Committee.

(CARE)

PNG 'Big Man' meets Jesus

Converted in a Sydney hospital

When the body of Sir Iambakey Okuk, one of Papua-New Guinea's most powerful "big man" political figures, was buried in the Central Highlands late last year, grieving tribes rampaged in city streets and mountain villages.

In Port Moresby, thousands of mourners marched to the national parliament building where the body lay in state. Sir Iambakey Okuk died after a long battle with cancer.

During the series of tests to determine the nature of his illness, conducted at Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, Sir Iambakey became a Christian.

Justice Mari Kapi, chairman of Prison Fellowship PNG told of Sir Iambakey's and his wife, Lady Karina's experience in Sydney.

"About midyear, a prayer movement began. Since then Christians in Port Moresby and Mount Hagen have joined together, and a leader's prayer group has been established."

"The group consists of Christian leaders from all walks of life and meets every Wednesday from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. at the Supreme Court building in Port Moresby."

"This group organised a leadership dinner in November with Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship International. Mr. Colson gave his testimony and several participant leaders made commitments to Christ."

"More recently and prior to his death, Sir Iambakey heard about the group and requested we visit him and pray with him. It was our intention to be with him and comfort him during his time of illness."

"However, it was much to our encouragement when Sir Iambakey and Lady Karina shared how they both received Christ at the Prince Alfred Hospital while they were in Sydney."

"Sir Iambakey shared with the prayer group from the Bible how God had forgiven his sins. He had one desire — to bear witness to his colleagues of the life-changing power of Christ."

"He shared that if he were healed and lived, he would bear testimony to the power of God. If, however, God in His wisdom took his life, he had no fear and knew he would go to be with Jesus."

Sir Iambakey led the way. Mr. Justice Kapi said.

"On reflection, we think that this was perhaps the most important decision he had to make in his lifetime. We challenge our own colleagues and peers to accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord and with God's strength and wisdom lead this nation into prosperity and peace."

Sir Iambakey's body was buried at Kundiawa after a traditional farewell and feast for the dead.

(ON BEING)

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World evangelization church's priority

Population explosion challenge to christians

World evangelisation is the primary and urgent challenge confronting the church in the closing years of this century, according to Dr. Leighton Ford, chairman of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation. Ford cited global population projects recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The bureau estimated that, in the remaining 14 years of this century, world population will increase by 1.3 billion to reach a total of 6.2 billion. "That increase of 1.3 billion exceeds the world population total for 1850," Ford pointed out.

"Christians in developed countries have to be shaken out of their complacency to recognise that this phenomenal population explosion confronts us with a gigantic challenge," he maintained.

Ford stated that the census report indicated that most of the growth will occur in the poorer countries of the world. Growth there will take place at a rate more than three times that in developed countries at the end of the 20th century, according to the bureau's World Population Profile: 1985.

The most dramatic growth is expected in Africa south of the Sahara which is expected to register an annual increase of three percent. At that rate, the population will double in 23 years. Second in its rate of growth will be the Middle East and North Africa which will increase by 2.7%. Next will be Latin America which will record a 2.3% growth rate. By contrast, North America's population is growing only 0.9%.

Ford noted that in two of those regions — Southern Africa and Latin America — there has been explosive church growth. He pointed out, however, that churches and Christians in those poorer regions would require substantial financial help to produce scriptures and that churches in developed countries should be prepared to send missionary support personnel as required by national churches.

"It is difficult for us to grasp the dimensions of the global population increase," he stated. "If world population increases by that projected 1.3 billion over the next 14 years, then, the average annual increase of 93 million will exceed the population of Mexico which is the world's eleventh most populous nation. It is as though another Mexico emerged each year!" he said.

(THE AUSTRALIAN BAPTIST)

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Church Growth No. 1

Although being the minister in a large, growing congregation for many years, at the Katoomba Summer School of Ministry Phillip Jensen, Anglican Chaplain at the University of N.S.W., spoke out for the first time on his own experience of and strategy for church growth. The following is a fuller report of what he said.

Church Growth (CD) is a modern concept so there is not really anything in the Bible on it. I am both for CG, and against it. It is an enormous distraction to evangelical ministry. So, I am ambivalent.

It is a hard topic to speak about. For speaking out of your own experience can make you fudge the facts and big note yourself. Further, one of the worries I have about the CG movement is that they keep saying "This is what you should do."

I hope that what I say about CG will help you be selective in what you read. In a recent book the author said, "All those who oppose our movement are in churches that are not growing." Further, there is a general tendency to use statistics to decide what is right or wrong — which of course is irrelevant to questions of truth.

Statistics can be very deceptive. For example, Mr. Wagner states that if over a decade you've grown 25% you haven't grown at all. If it is 50% it is not bad, 100% good, 200% it is newsworthy, if it is over 200% then you should be running seminars on church growth. I took his method and looked at our figures from 1975 to 86, and we grew 1500%. So I should be writing books on the subject!

I must say that I think his statistical method is nonsense! If I had taken the 76 to 86 figures instead of the 75 to 86 ones, then we only grew 600%. There is a big difference is there not!

I think a lot said and written on CG is misleading, and we ought to see it for what it is and not be distracted by it, but get on with evangelical ministry.

However, I am committed to growing churches, and I am all for us learning how to do it.

1. Why I am committed to Church Growth

We must distinguish two kinds of CG. There is *real* CG. I am committed to this because I am committed to proclaiming Christ. And when you do this the power of the gospel is such that people are saved. And when people are saved they are brought into fellowship with God's people, and so churches somewhere grow.

Some churches somewhere should be growing out of the people who are saved. Evangelism must lead to the growing of some churches. It may not be your church but some church will grow. There is an optimism about the New Testament. The NT does not write of our age, the last days, as if it is an age of small things. But rather it is the age of the universal conquest of the gospel as the name of Jesus Christ is proclaimed to the nations, that the nations have been given to our Lord and the gospel needs to be proclaimed throughout the world. The power of God in the gospel is at work in the world. Paul Prays in 2 Th. 3 that the word of God will go on in triumph. There is a note of optimism in the NT.

"an enormous distraction to evangelical ministry"

Although it is not without opposition.

When you preach the gospel you are a "stink". The smell of salvation to some and death to others. Gospel preaching is something that will bring persecution as well as salvation, it will bring damnation as well as rescue. It will bring scorn for its folly and stupidity, but for those who are being saved, transformation. We are to be expecting that. Certainly the age is now in which people have itching ears, unwilling to listen to sound teaching, that is part of it.

But one thing the NT is not expecting. It is not expecting that the gospel will be met by apathy. I can't see that anywhere. It is going to have its effects whether

"Church growth:



Phillip Jensen

good or bad. And the basic thing we see in Australia is apathy.

Now that may have something to do with our gospel preaching may it not? — with the way we are and are not communicating. If no one even notices we are alive or that we are saying anything anywhere we ought to start stretching our heads and say 'what gives here!'

Real Church growth comes from evangelism.

The second kind of CG can be called *numerical* growth. It is just numbers in the churches. I am committed to this too, for several reasons. 1. The more people hearing the Word of God the better. And the best place to do this is in the community of God's people, for there they can hear the gospel and be pastored more easily.

The thing about evangelism outside a congregational context is that you then have the problem of linking them up with a church. Often people can see why they need Jesus, but church? — that's another thing entirely. It is a lot easier if they are converted in church. 2. There are lots of wandering christians who should be in church, and they should be in a good one, not a bad one. These are the weak ones who need special help. 3. Larger churches have more resources for the work of evangelism (Printing presses, staff etc).

2. Warnings against Church Growth

1. Church growth is not the absolute criterion for judgement about what to do in church. More important is glorifying God, being true to the gospel. Sometimes in preaching truthfully no Church Growth will occur. Some evangelism will not produce growth, even if successful in terms of converts. A lot of ministry grows churches other than 'my own', which is still good ministry. Geriatric evangelism won't grow churches for they keep passing on to that better expression of church called heaven. What about the people we should be sending on to other ministries, to the mission field and to Moore College? Such export 'ministry' will not grow your church.

2. Practically there is confusion over numerical and real CGG. Everyone says they want real growth but when they talk they talk about the numbers. Real growth is impossible to measure.

3. Numerical growth tempts you to a triumphalist mentality, and confuses you about the real spiritual work. You begin to think people become christians because of the impressiveness of the thing. It is a temptation to think that we are getting somewhere simply because of the numbers.

4. Our sinfulness gets involved in it all. We try to get our identity from our job. If our work is a pastor numbers in church become all important to us, therefore there is a very powerful motivation that

the CG people can have over us. Statistics can be used as a lever to turn us aside from evangelical ministry, to what 'will work' in terms of numerical growth. Then my church will grow, my reputation will grow, and I will get an invitation to a North Shore parish, where I will die. In our status seeking this is the direction we go. It is a powerful distraction, a powerful Satanic distraction.

5. The statistics given out by the CG people by and large are balderdash. Sociology and urban geography were my fields before I went into the ministry and most of the stuff on CG that I have read is not worth the paper it is written on. You can shoot holes in the method. Take the 300% one that makes me the world expert. We've got one church that, not in 10 years, but in 5 years has grown 725% and last year I closed it down because it was a failure. It only had 33 members. It had grown from 4 to 33 all by transfer growth. We had taken them out of the main church and put them in the branch church. It wasn't going anywhere. It hadn't seen a conversion in 5 years nor was it likely to. The reason we kept it going was to help the older members come to terms with closing down their church — they had been there for 80 years! After 5 years of relationship we were able to show them there was no future. On the criteria of church growth it was a brilliant success, but it had nothing to do with church growth — it was all about church closure.

"an optimism in the New Testament"

Statistics can be played in any way you like! Usually they reflect the cycle the suburb is going in at the moment, or the ethnic-historico background to it. The statistics you get from say Leichhardt or Auburn have got nothing to do with the ones you get from Chatswood or St. Ives. Any comparisons between those suburbs include factors that are far too varied. We are not running experiments where we control some factors and observe others. Most statistics are nonsense if you take into account the methodological questions.

Take the denominational thing. There is a big charismatic church in the eastern suburbs that is held up as a model of church growth. It draws people from all over the southern part of Sydney. However if you compare it with all the Anglican churches in that area its church growth is no better than theirs. It has concentrated it all in one place whereas they have remained scattered. You only need to think critically about the statistics and they fall apart on you. But because we are number conscious if you can attach a number to it it must be true. I am sad about this because it is frequently untrue.

6. Especially, when people identify single factors. People say 'conservative churches are growing'. Well, loads of conservative churches aren't growing. Same with the charismatic issue, people say that they are growing. Well I did a little survey amongst a sample of Anglican churches. I found that across the board the Anglican church grew something like 200% as did the churches in this area. I then looked at the 8 evangelical churches: they grew 300%. The 3 charismatic churches: they grew 100%. In fact the liberals grew 200%. The only group that didn't grow were the charismatic Anglican churches! Now I could guess why — the non Anglican charismatic churches fleeced them out! But you can see what I mean the statistics can show anything, once you start fiddling around with them. You can't identify single factors as the cause.

7. People move from the descriptive to the prescriptive. That is the great problem.

how to be for it when You are against it."

"Growing churches we have investigated are so and so and therefore ... " Nothing! Therefore "nothing". You still have to weigh up what is the right and godly thing to do. You mustn't jump on the train "therefore we should do that."

I know two men who adopted a soft approach to charismatic things. Both churches have grown since. But, both have also been split down the middle over the charismatic issue. Both have filled their church with all kinds of pastoral problems. That is not the way to go. You must weigh up whether something is true or not — wrestle with it, investigate it. It is not easy to know, what is the right thing to do, but that there are statistics from a church from elsewhere is an irrelevancy.

8. Another factor often given in the CG material is that you ought to involve people in a task pretty quickly. I have found over the years that giving people a task can be one of the worst things to do for them spiritually. You involve all kinds of people in being 'church' members before they are fully committed 'christian' members. So you have people doing tasks who are not in the same theological/spiritual direction that you are, maybe not even converted.

Some of them get burn out. I warn our members who leave that if they go to a church and they are immediately asked to teach Sunday School then look for another, because any church who is that undiscerning about their Sunday School teachers is fairly undiscerning about the word of God. That is one of the signs of being a phoney church, of being a user of people rather than a carer of people. I don't like it — but I know it works! It works in growing a church numerically, but I think it is a mistake spiritually.

9. Numerical growth tempts you to be 'Mr. Nice-Guy' in which you must spend time in PR rather than the word of God and prayer.

3. How to grow a Church

There are some lessons we can learn however.

1. **Real church growth:** comes from preaching, teaching, and obeying and through persistence in it. (1 Tim. 4:11-16) Note that he says 'let them see your progress' not success. And it is God who gives the growth. It may not be so in our church, however. This kind of ministry is essential fundamental, non-negotiable, and non-flexible.

2. **Numerical church growth:** can come from real growth. When it doesn't we usually blame the people not our churches. But our churches are the problem. Are our churches geared up for real growth?

Factors in church growth:

1. Leadership: must be i. godly — we must be servants, but not wimps. We must also be ... ii. effective: we must minister in aggressive business-like ways.

2. Must be attractive to newcomers and maintain them. How do we do this? We must have a clearly defined product and a market segment. People must know what they are in when they get here. When they come they must see exactly what we are on about.

We must have structures that involve and incorporate people.

"no apathy expected"

Our church meetings must be firstly godly, then they must be pleasurable (aims at fringe people), and profitable (long term maintenance)

The churches that do it most easily and naturally are the younger churches, for you can adapt to the market so quickly with no worries about sacrificing something in order to move ahead. In an older church the idea is to keep the

wheels ticking over without much effort while you start up something new.

4. Objections to Church growth

1. "God calls us to be faithful not successful." This is true, especially if you are talking about real church growth. But not to be faithful to a dwindling, declining nothingness. That is not faithfulness, it is pig-headedness, stupidity! We are to be faithful in reaching out to others. We shouldn't cover up our inactivity or our lack of courage with such talk. It is faithfulness to do, not to not do.

2. "The Lord adds to our numbers daily." Yes in real growth, but doesn't mean you sit around — preach and pray! Yes, also in numerical growth, but again don't be inactive. Cf. Paul. He adds to the numbers through his servants. Also in Rom. 14:15 and 1 Cor. 8-10 we are challenged to welcome one another especially the weaker younger brother.

3. "Homogeneous group" or "Market segmentation". "Our fellowship must be based on the gospel alone, we are not to

"statistics reflect the suburban cycle"

have a group of one type of people." But, we have been doing this for centuries! In our denominational titles, our church polity, our mode of baptism, our suburbs. We all do it unconsciously, why not do it consciously! This does not mean you create an exclusive church, it is still open. Anyone can be a member but you aim at a certain group.

4. "Triumphalism". We confuse the wrong spirit of triumphalism, the abuse of numbers. But we must reach more people.

5. "Pragmatism". This is not a dirty word. Inflexibility is a dirtier one! 1 Cor. 9 enables you to do many good things for the sake of the gospel. Our problem is we change the inflexible gospel which we should never change, and we are inflexible about the changeable things which we should be changing!

5. Where do we go from here?

1. We must have a gospel ministry.

2. We need to look with dissatisfaction at where we are in Australia. We must be taking opportunities for evangelism.

3. We need to reform the church meetings and structures. We need a reformation desperately, not only the Anglicans but all denominations. We all need a reformation:

Going to church is a crashing bore!

Every Sunday there is a thousand sailboats on Pittwater. I'm envious of

"being a user of people rather than a carer"

them! "I'd rather be sailing" should be on the back of every christian motor car! What we are doing is just dreadful. We need a total reformation. Not away from evangelical ministry, but on our whole 'product'. It is dreadfully unattractive. And why are we doing that? So as to include the weak, so as to save some. Now it may lead me into awful fights with

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old Mrs. McGillucuddy — so be it! I'd prefer to fight with her because if she hasn't got the message right in the first forty years she won't in the next thirty either. I'd prefer to fight with her and see some other people saved than go on looking after her in her rut — which is no good for her spiritually and seeing people coming in and out of our churches voting with their feet. Mrs. McGillucuddy may have voting rights at the AGM but I am more concerned about those who vote by walking out. Totally unhelped by what we are doing.

For this reason it is easier to start something new, rather than keep the old things propped up. Keep the old just ticking over until it dies off, but start something new — church services at a different time, or place. Do something that will bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to people. But on the last day, if people are not hearing the word of God because we have kept only to statutory services during the peak periods when they were more likely to hear the Word of God do you want to answer God for that? Do you want to be like the Pharisees? Will you be no different to the blind leaders? Whose insistence on things of no consequence prevented people from hearing the word of God? That cannot be right. We need a reformation desperately. And while the CG people shouldn't be followed blindly we ought to listen to them for it is part of what we need to make this reformation.

Questions

Q1. What about services outside Sundays?

I may have a different Sabbatarian position than others, but we've lost the Sabbath a long time ago. 24 hour shopping is the way that Sydney is going.

"a clearly defined product, and market segment"

that is the future, there is no such thing as a weekend. Now, we can tear around, beat our breasts and say the shops ought to be closed etc. Or we can say "Ripper — let's have church every day of the week!" Because people have different days off. My wife pastors a church on Thursday mornings. Now you can call it a bible Study if you like but I actually think it is church. Today is a new ballgame, there is no weekend, so let's get cracking with it.

Q2. How can a successful minister like you share your experience with churches at large?

Australians have got a big problem, for we don't like tall poppies. Frankly this is

Phillip Jensen

the first time I have spoken like this, for I generally wind up with such negative reactions that I feel, it is not worth it. People won't listen to me, they won't come and look. They keep on saying 'Oh Phillip you are in a unique situation'. Garbage!

You could do exactly the same in any situation — you'd have to do it completely different, but the principles are the same wherever you are. You look at your market groupings and you tailor your meetings around the market you are going for. And you go for it with aggression — and service!

"going to church is a crashing bore!"

We might have grown more slowly in one situation than another. But we have founded a Vietnamese church, a Greek church, an Asian church, a family church, a student church and a city worker church in ten years, and people say 'oh, but your situation's unique' Well, how many more situations do you want us to try? It has not got to do with being unique!

Then people say 'Oh but you've got a special relationship whereby you don't have to do all the things the rest of us Anglicans have to do' Garbage! I do not break the law of the Church of England in one point. Anything we have done you can do. And yet people keep on saying, "It is different here!"

Q3. Shouldn't we aim to build up mature Christians, than to engage in Church Growth?

There is an intellectual arrogance that says that the 'more mature' christians want to be built up and stretched, etc. Whereas it seems to me that real maturity leads me to loving service of the weaker.

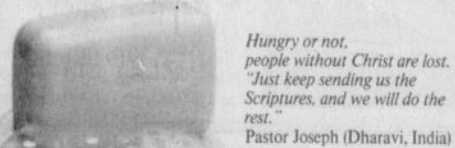
"easier to start something new"

Love builds up, knowledge puffs up. So if you really are mature in your thinking you can read a book yourself. But when we are in church we are to minister the gospel to those who are here.

However, I am against problem centred ministry. I am not talking about ignoring problems. We deal with more problems now than we have ever, because we ignore problems. We haven't set up a counselling network etc, what we have done is taught normal people to go on in Christ. And if normal people are going on in Christ, they can carry a lot of problem

continued back page

If we want to see the lost "washed in the blood," we better send them more than soap.



Hungry or not, people without Christ are lost. "Just keep sending us the Scriptures, and we will do the rest." Pastor Joseph (Dharavi, India)

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Archbishop of Sydney on Church Growth

Principalities and Powers in the Heavenly Places.

When Archbishop Donald Robinson officially opened the new VISION FOR GROWTH church at St. Clair late last year (as reported in A.C.R. issue of February 2, 1987), he threw down some strong challenges to the fledgling congregation.

VISION FOR GROWTH is undoubtedly the strongest initiative taken by the Archbishop since his appointment. It has involved a mobilisation of the resources of the diocese of Sydney in a concept of mission to the newly developing outer suburban areas where a high proportion of the residents have never heard the Gospel clearly explained.

After reminding the St. Clair people of what the Gospel is all about, the Archbishop turned to Scripture to give the congregation an understanding of the part that they must play in building up the church within the splendid new building that they now have.

"the real message. . . 'Come back, Christ loves you' "

Archbishop Robinson told the congregation that they should start with Jesus and reminded them of the words of Jesus to Peter and the disciples, 'I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH'.

"The building of the church was central to the thinking of Jesus before the resurrection. Jesus was virtually saying that he would gather, form, establish and consolidate His congregation. He was saying that he would form a community where God dwells", the Archbishop said.

"The gates of Hades will not swallow it up. It will last.

"Can you see that happening here?", he asked.

The Archbishop told the St. Clair people that he had a great fear about erecting buildings like this one.

"We may be tempted to think that the Church of the Risen Christ in St. Clair is just this big and no bigger, accommodating, say, 200 people

"If it is Christ's church, it has to be His design and He alone is the builder. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain. . .

"The reaction of Peter to Jesus was: 'YOU ARE THE CHRIST'. Is this your faith?", he asked of the St. Clair congregation.

"Do you stand where Peter stood? Are you the only people who have this faith? If this is to be the Church of the Risen Christ, your faith must be shared", he said.

Then, taking his listeners to the third chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Archbishop Robinson told them that part of God's eternal plan was that 'THROUGH THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD MIGHT NOW BE MADE KNOWN TO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES'.

"This is star wars stuff", he said.

The Archbishop is right. This is mind boggling to any Christian, let alone some of the Christians in the VISION FOR GROWTH areas whose faith has yet to mature.

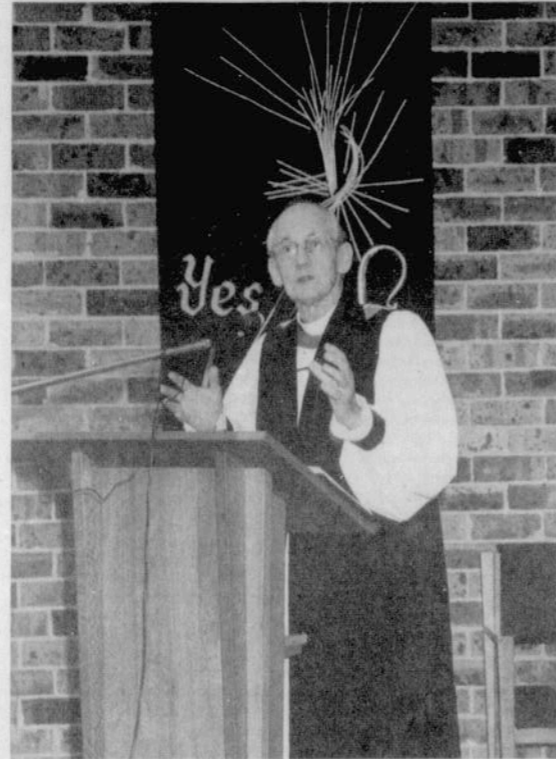
Well may the Archbishop ask the St. Clair folk how they are going to go about demonstrating the wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

Archbishops seldom ask rhetorical questions without also giving the answers.

"How can the church do that? It is because the church is His new creation — the bridging instrument that will bring together all things that keep us apart. There are divided elements in our society — slave and free, male and female and so on.

"This St. Clair congregation is the local manifestation and expression of Christ Himself. It will fail unless its members demonstrate by love and unity the manifold wisdom of God to this neighbourhood. It must also make the same demonstration to the principalities and powers in this neighbourhood which are also to be found in every neighbourhood.

"The church is a community of grace, of forgiven sinners who put Christ first", Archbishop Robinson said.



The Archbishop then told the St. Clair folk that he had a special concern for them and their new building. It was this: "How can we", he said, "make it clear to the local people here that the Church of the Risen Christ is for the people who do not have formal links with the church?" He reminded the congregation of the words of Pope Paul when in Australia in

his words to lapsed Roman Catholics: "Come back, the church loves you".

"The real message", Archbishop Robinson said, "is 'Come back, Christ loves you', but they may not get that message unless the love of God is demonstrated to them by the Christians of St. Clair".

LETTERS

Tutu and ANC

Dear Sir,

Re your front page article by Archbishop David Penman on Bishop Tutu (2.2.87).

Is it possible that Bishop Tutu has pulled the wool over David Penman's eyes? Bishop Tutu is for the A.N.C., which is a Communist front organisation and responsible for acts of terrorism (e.g. necklaces). Is Bishop Tutu a dupe or a fellow traveller? If he is, is he such

a wonderful man as Archbishop Penman makes out? Archbishop Penman speaks of "almost libellous attacks" on Bishop Tutu. But maybe some of the language used about Bruce Ruxton is similar.

Incidentally, Bishop Tutu speaks for a very small percentage of black South Africans.

Yours faithfully,
N. T. Baker
Mortdale, NSW

Infection and the cup

Dear Sir,

The comprehensive article by Dr. Broughton Knox (ACR 15-12-86) on "The sin of the common cup" will be commended by all clear-thinking readers not blinded by Pharisaical tradition. Dr. Knox has systematically and with impeccable logic demolished all existing grounds, historical, theological and legal, for the continued use of the Common Cup in Holy Communion.

The medical aspects of the risk of infection have been authoritatively stated by Dr. Benjamin in her letter of 2-2-87, which stands in stark contrast to the views expressed by the Rector of Scone. The question of the aseptic properties of fortified wine is irrelevant, as the wine in the cup does not come in contact with the outside rim of the cup which is smeared with the saliva of each communicant. To attempt to eradicate active viruses with a "purificator" is, on a microscopic scale, rather like trying to mop up Argentine ants with a shark net.

Your helpful comments under the heading "Way Forward", adjacent to Dr. Knox's article, will be appreciated by all parishioners who are at present agonising over this problem.

Yours sincerely,
J. Ernest Benson, D.Sc.Eng.
Denistone, NSW

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Editorial

Flexibility is God's will

The Bible commands us to be flexible in the practice of christian ministry. The vast changes we see in Australian society make the need for innovation both plain and urgent. But for psychological and other reasons we find it very difficult to do so. **How** can we be flexible?

In dealing with question of meat offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8 to 10, and in Romans 13 and 14 the question of vegetarianism, or more accurately, the question of the weaker brother who has scruples, Paul lays down a fundamental and non negotiable principle of ministry:

"Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself." (Romans 15:3)

"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible." (1 Corinthians 9:19)

A close reading of these passages, as well as attention to Paul's overall missionary strategy makes several principles clear. First, outside the dictates of morality and the true proclamation of the gospel, a Christian is completely free to do whatever he likes. Secondly, a christian is responsible for the effect of his actions on the minds of other people. If eating meat offered to idols will cause a brother to misunderstand the christian message, to conclude that it sanctions intercourse with demons, then it is better for the maturer christian to eat veges. When the Apostle Peter tried to force traditional Jewish-Christian eating practices on Gentile converts, Paul withstood him to his face, for by his actions Peter asserted that "Christ died for nothing" (Galatians 2:11-21). Thus, the bible does not just suggest, but **commands** that we be flexible in things which in themselves are non essential. It is not one's own traditions and preferences, but the reality of relationships which is to determine our behaviour towards others.

However, the sad situation in our reformed churches is that there are enormous barriers against being flexible, even though it is for the sake of clear and effective communication of the gospel of life. For example, in the Anglican denomination many bishops state that their role is "to preserve Anglican traditions for future generations." Why is it that this idea is even able to gain currency amongst reformed ministers, and what can be done to overcome the problem?

It is partly due to a misunderstanding of church history. The sixteenth century reformers spoke of *adiaphora*, "things indifferent"; things which the bible leaves us free in. Martin Luther interpreted this to mean that he could do anything by way of church practice unless it was explicitly prohibited by Scripture. So, many lutheran churches kept the medieval mass vestments, altars, and ornate fabric. The reformers of Switzerland and Suth Germany in effect denied that there was anything "indifferent" in church practices. Of course, they agreed that God leaves us free in most things, and they certainly did not embrace the later idea that you needed an explicit warrant in Scripture for everything done in church. That which made compulsory things which were otherwise free was the pastoral needs of the congregation. Drinking deeply from St. Paul, they concluded that if something promoted wrong ideas about God, it should be rejected. The reality of relationships dictated what was appropriate, not tradition. Flexibility was a command of God.

Unfortunately, since the seventeenth century many heirs of the reformed tradition have misunderstood "things indifferent", and either embraced the earlier understanding of Martin Luther, or demanded explicit verses in Scripture to license absolutely every congregational activity.

Usurping Bishops

There are three other barriers — usurping bishops, ignorance and wilfulness, and courage.

It sounds like "bishop bashing", but the false claims of

episcopacy can produce inordinate tension in the discharge of a ministers responsibility to his congregation. It is now a commonplace to state and act on the assumption that the licensed pastor is in fact only sharing in the bishop's ministry to the local church. He is a surrogate for the bishop, who in turn is to be regarded as the "unseen head and uninvited guest" at every meeting. This claim is of course a nonsense, not only on the grounds of common sense, but also in church law. If any central body or institution can be said to have the ministry to local churches it is the lay dominated English Parliament, or in Australia, the Diocesan Synod which makes the rules governing denominational life. In the Prayer Book and the canons the stated role of the Bishop is as the administrator of these rules, and the personal encourager of the presbyters in his diocese. Anglican formularies give actual responsibility for Parish ministry, and the authority which goes with it, to the man on the ground, the one in the Parsonage. Church laws are there to protect him from interference in the discharge of this ministry, or to remove him if he should become apostate or immoral.

This tension is exacerbated when bishops make false demands about non essentials, often the very things which a minister observes need changing so that his people as far as possible be kept from untrue notions about their relationship to God or each other. Thus pressure is exerted to wear clerical collars, cassocks, clerical scarves, not use individual cups in the Lord's Supper, use "opaque" induction ceremonies, and the like. When this pressure does not come by way of illegal directives, it is often so couched that polite refusal is regarded as personal discourtesy, or disloyalty. The emotional strength of this kind of traditionalism cannot be overstated. Witness the song and dance over the proposal, passed on the second reading by Sydney Synod in 1984, to make surplices optional, and the ferocious opposition aroused by the possibility of lay presidency at Holy Communion.

But the demand for flexibility in ministry is from God, not man. When obedience is likely to cause upset with traditionally minded denominational structures, quietly do what is helpful for the congregation, and as opportunity comes, gently explain your reasons to anyone on the outside who would falsely claim your responsibility and authority.

Wilfulness and courage

A minister's own ignorance and wilfulness can also make it difficult to be flexible. Just what one needs to change in any given situation for the clear ministry of the gospel can be a difficult question to answer, especially under the pressure of traditionalism which is exerted by lay people as much as by clergy. Further, voices for retaining traditional practice within a local church cannot be ignored, unlike external ones. Gospel ministry does not proceed by bossiness, but by persuasion of the Word. A wilful exercise of ministerial office is out of tune with the New Testament's view that authority is exercised through service. It is not complete consensus that the bible demands of us, but a leadership style which is informed and loving in its decision making and implementation.

Sanctified commonsense makes plain any beneficial changes which need to be made. An aid to commonsense is discussion with one's own lay associates in the church. Further, being part of a peer group of fellow ministers and their wives can be a good way of testing ideas, sorting the serious from the merely eccentric, and encouraging winsomeness of presentation.

Finally, because it involves risk, and especially where radical change is needed, it takes courage to be flexible in our church practices. The support of lay members and ministerial peers can strengthen resolve, but in the end, we need the courage which comes only from the realization that Jesus Christ is the one true bishop of our flock, and it is he who commands, "Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up."

Quick Cuts

The Problem of Guilt

An article in the newspaper some time ago was entitled 'How to Survive as a Working Mother'. It focused, quite understandably on the subject of guilt. It pointed out that the feeling of guilt is one of the chief causes of anxiety, fatigue, depression, sleeplessness and procrastination. It suggested that the working mother is particularly vulnerable to guilt feelings because other people are prone to blame her for real or imagined wrongs in her house and family. Non-working mothers, grandmothers, half-hearted husbands, doctors, teachers, people in authority, and men in general combine to nag the working mother about her neglect of duty. The article suggested four main areas of guilt.

1. You think the children are suffering.
2. You think your husband is suffering.
3. Your work is suffering.
4. Nobody is actually suffering except you, either because you think somebody ought to be or it's been suggested to you that they are.

Now I'm not going to offer a general comment on all this. It seems to me that each case of a mother working must be examined on its own merits. It would be as foolish to condemn the idea as it would be to commend it. If the motives for going to work are simply that of an attempt to raise an already satisfactory standard of living, it would be hard to justify any neglect of children such as that described by one woman who reported 'Last winter I had to leave the little one vomiting in the sink and it nearly killed me.' Indeed, it's hard to justify that on any grounds. So, too, if the motive is self-fulfilment, it is very selfish and impossible to accept. On the other hand, there can be no doubting the very real need some families have to achieve two incomes, and also the possibilities in some families that children will not in fact suffer.

However the main interest in the discussion for me doesn't lie there. Rather, the chief question is what to do about guilt. There is no doubt that the feeling of guilt is just as destructive as the writer indicated. The problem is what we should do about it.

In the article, the advice was summed up in one sentence: 'kick guilt under the carpet'. But is this a wise procedure? Can we cope with guilt like this?



In fact, the problem of guilt must be faced squarely. We must have some standard of right and wrong to help us decide what we should feel guilty about. It is perfectly possible for our conscience to give us wrong information here, and for us to feel guilty for something of which we are totally innocent, or which is not wrong at all. We all need to be better informed about God's standards so that we can judge ourselves appropriately and acquit ourselves of imaginary wrongs. Actually the article does help here by giving some information about the effects of working mothers on the intelligence and maturity of children. Whether this information is correct may be disputed, and whether it is relevant, too; but nonetheless it is the sort of information we need to base our decisions on.

But what if our properly informed conscience tells us that we are guilty in fact? Our guilt must not be averted. Action must be taken. We must abandon wrong behaviour, and we must seek to put things right. Most of all we must seek forgiveness from God, for guilt harms our relationship with him. Unfortunately, like Adam and Eve we are more prone to hide our guilt, to 'kick it under the carpet'. This will not rid us of it either within ourselves, or more importantly, with God. 'Guilt can destroy you', as the article said — what action are you taking?

Peter Jensen

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

C of E Church leaders discuss 'Authority'

The key issue in current debates

The authority of the Church of Christ is far more important than the authority of any particular church or denomination, Prof. Stephen Sykes told delegates at a conference of the Open Synod Group at High Leigh, Hertfordshire, last weekend.

The title of the conference — "By what authority?" — had been selected because of the present climate of unease and conflict within the Church of England on a variety of issues. Over a hundred delegates were present. Many different groups were represented among those attending — including the General Synod, the Church Union, the Church Society, the Federation of Catholic Priests and the Movement for the Ordination of Women.

"There are lots of issues of conflict or potential conflict within the Church of England at the present time and, in the end, these become questions of authority," the Rev. Michael O'Connor, the OSC's chairman, told the conference at the start of its deliberations.

Prof. Sykes, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, was the main speaker at the conference, which looked at many aspects of authority within the life of the Church. Responding to his initial lecture were Prof. Adrian Hastings, Head of Theology at Leeds University and a leading Roman Catholic scholar; the Dean of Durham, the Very Rev. Peter Baelz; and Miss Ruth Etchells, Principal of St John's College, Durham.

"A conjunction of a variety of

pressures" was Prof. Sykes explanation of the present disputes within the Church of England. But he also reminded the conference that disputes had been a feature of the Church since the earliest times.

"The rhetoric of crisis and imminent catastrophe deflects us from the real question of the authority of the Church of Christ," added Prof. Sykes, who returned to the theme of Christ's authority as the real and only authority several times.

Concerning the authority of the Bible, Miss Etchells referred to what she regarded as the paradox of Scripture — "opposing truths mysteriously bound together in a larger whole."

Miss Etchells said that the paradox of the Bible was that its authority rested on the combination of the work of the Holy Spirit with that of a fallible, controversial religious, community. The authority of the Bible, therefore, depended on Christians' understanding of the mystery of God and the humanity of the believing community.

Prof. Hastings took a bird's-eye view of the Church of England in his lecture on the authority of the Church. He believed that the Church had its own authority; and he appealed to the Church of England (a "local," not a "universal" Church) to be a pilot Church in its missionary response to the needs of the community it was seeking to serve.

(CHURCH TIMES)

WORLD

The year of Mary

Mary's Centennial of Immaculate Conception dogma

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul has announced that a year devoted to the Virgin Mary is to be observed by Catholics around the world from June 7, 1987 to August 15, 1988, this is the first "Marian year" since 1953-54, when Pope Pius XII announced the observance to mark the centennial of the Immaculate Conception dogma.

In announcing the upcoming Marian year, the Pope said it will be observed in preparation for the start of Christianity's third millennium in the year 2000. The celebration begins on Pentecost this year, and concludes in 1988 on the Feast of the Assumption of Mary in 1988.

(EPNS)

Baptists grow in Italy

New church building for Naples

NAPLES, Italy (EP) — Conservative Baptist churches in Naples, Italy, have experienced great growth over the past three years, attributable to annual evangelistic crusades, according to Missionary News Service. Now a group of believers has successfully petitioned the local municipality for land on which to build a church building. No Protestant church has been built in the Naples area during the last 50 years.

Since 1984 nearly 500 conversions have taken place during evangelistic meetings, including 130 during the October 1986 crusade. Among those converted have been the president of the Mormon church in the area, the son of a nearby town's mayor, drug addicts, gang members, and members of a broken family.

When the Christians in Casoria petitioned the mayor for land, he donated property and commended the church for its work with drug addicts and gang members. Now the church in Soccaro is asking government officials to contribute money toward a building project that would house a church as well as day care facilities, youth ministries, and programs for drug addicts. The local municipality's Naples Reconstruction Commission (created after the 1981 earthquake) is considering helping the building program.

(EPNS)

World Muslim growth

Exceed christians by 5 times

The magazine "Arabia" which is the Muslim's answer to Time/Life, has recently published statistics, October 1986, in which claim is made that growth in the number of Muslims between 1934 and 1984 has exceeded the growth of professing Christians by 5 times.

Given a massive increase in Muslim population in the world, there is even more reason for the Christian world to commit its personnel and finances to evangelising Muslims.

At the same time there is a great conviction amongst those working with Muslims that there have never been so many openings to preach the gospel. A new interest and awakening to the claims of Christ can be seen throughout the Muslim world. To quote one source working in the Middle East: "The Arab world of Islam was never open to the People of the Book as it is today."

(THE ENGLISH CHURCHMAN)

Black South Africans against sanctions

Zululand Council of Churches voices opposition

The Zululand Council of Churches (ZCC), a regional ecumenical organisation in Kwa Zulu, the 'black homeland', took a stand against any form of economic sanctions or disinvestment in October. The Executive Committee of the ZCC said it would announce a plan of action to counter sanctions, including strategies for encouraging overseas business groups to increase their investment in the country.

Canon P. Ntombela of the Anglican Church, explaining the resolution, said that millions of black people had already suffered because of unemployment and that it was people in safe jobs who pushed for sanctions. He said that an overwhelming majority of blacks oppose even selective sanctions.

This decision is the first time a mainline anti-apartheid church group in South Africa has expressed itself strongly against sanctions. The action is also in conflict with the pro-sanctions stance taken by the South African Council of Churches and in agreement with the anti-sanctions stance taken by Chief Buthelezi, the political leader of Kwa Zulu.

90% of Americans believe in God

According to a Gallup survey

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va (EP) — About nine in 10 American adults believe in God or a universal spirit and three-quarters of all adults believe God has a plan for their lives even if they don't know what it is yet, according to a Gallup survey commissioned by the Christian Broadcasting Network.

The study showed that 94 percent of the people surveyed believe in God or a universal spirit. Most of those believe God is a personal God. Of those surveyed, 84 percent said "God is a heavenly Father who watches over us and can be reached by our prayers." About 74 percent of all American adults believe God has a plan for their lives. That figure rises to 87 percent among those who see God as a heavenly Father. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of all people in America believe that at some time in their lives God has led or guided them in making a decision, according to the survey.

About three in 10 adults (31 percent) said they were born-again or evangelical Christians.

More than one in three American adults (36 percent) say that God speaks to them directly. About four in 10 Americans believe that during the time of the Bible, God Himself spoke out loud to people. Almost that many thought that God spoke through other people. Approximately half of all respondents in the survey believe God speaks today through the Bible or Scriptures. About 48 percent believe God speaks through an internal feeling or impression, while nearly a quarter of those polled said God speaks through another person and 11 percent said God still speaks audibly.

Pollster George Gallup Jr. suggested that the poll indicates that there may be little point in attacking or ridiculing a political candidate (such as Pat Robertson) on the ground that he says he is being guided by God, since many Americans have felt the same divine guidance. "The public understands when a leader says God has spoken to him or guided him to take a specific course of action," said Gallup.

REVIEW

Famous London spiritual landmark in trouble

All Souls' "falling apart"

All Souls', Langham Place, London, which was opened in 1824, is making an urgent appeal for funds to enable restoration to go ahead.

The Rector, the Rev. Richard Bewes, in launching an appeal for £700,000 says, "This familiar old building on Regent Street, which has been a spiritual landmark in the lives of thousands, is crumbling, this is not an overstatement to get your attention. For many years now we have been putting off the day when we have to restore the outside of the church."

"But now that day has come. If All Souls has given you anything over the years, please consider making a contribution."

"All Souls is the only surviving church designed by John Nash, architect of so many buildings in the capital. We are therefore entrusted with the maintenance of a famous London landmark."

"As a rule, we spend as little as possible on the running of this church—preferring to help support the work of our 26 missionaries presently serving, or giving to deserving Third World development projects and inner city needs."

"But in the end it boils down to housekeeping — we have to maintain the building we enjoy otherwise there simply won't be an All Souls in the future".

(THE ENGLISH CHURCHMAN)

Full Lausanne Committee holds Tri-Annual meeting

More internationalization plea

Atlanta, Georgia, USA — The 75-member Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) held, at the end of January, its first meeting in three years.

The Lausanne Committee is composed of persons from 45 countries.

The meeting heard a preliminary report on plans for an International Congress on World Evangelization to be held in 1989 at Lausanne, Switzerland.

During the meeting, the new International Director, Rev. Thomas Wang, was installed in his new position.

During his inaugural address, Mr. Wang called for more emphasis on internationalization in LCWE.

In preparation for the 1989 Congress in Lausanne, the Committee adopted a budget of US\$1.8M for 1987, an amount almost three times larger than the 1986 budget.

Among the many issues considered, said Mr. Hogue, were urbanization, poverty and wealth, the women's movement, the breakdown of Christian morals, international terrorism, changes in Catholicism, the relationship between evangelism and social action, the Gospel and culture, strategies for unreached peoples, cooperation and unity in world evangelization, and celebration of what God is doing in the world.

'Missionary kids' conference

Will have impact on future planning

QUITO, Ecuador (EP) — The second International Conference on Missionary Kids (ICMK) held Jan. 4-8 in Quito, Ecuador, will have a definite impact on the future direction of missions, according to one of the event's organizers. Grant Cathro, co-chairman of the conference's Quito planning committee, says the 533 delegates from 48 countries who attended the event are in a position to effect changes in world missions.

"There were a lot of MK teachers, mission administrators, counselors, parents and MKs themselves who attended — people who do affect the MK world," Cathro explained. "The long-term change in people's thinking will have an impact on colleges, churches, missions and international schools."

ICMK Chairman Dave Pollock says his greatest concern is that delegates put into practice the theory they learned in nine plenary sessions and more than 80 seminars and workshops. "We still need to find that balance between 'ministry at any cost' and dropping ministry because of its impact on MKs."

Several major speakers spoke of the painful emotions they experienced as they grew up on the mission field — mainly pressures of separation from family members and having to continually shift between two cultures.

Dr. Ted Ward, dean of international studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, emphasized the advantages of growing up overseas. He cautioned MKs and those who work with them against falling into the trap of self-pity. "It is that pity that produces guilt and paranoia," he said.

Ward, who has lived in 42 different countries, clarified use of a relatively new term that is coming into vogue — 'Third Culture Kid' (TCK). TCKs have the benefit of living in "three cultural contexts," he explained, including their base culture, their adopted society, and the worldwide Christian community.

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Growth against all odds



Lesley Hicks

The current visit to Australia of the Rev. Michael Bourdeaux of Keston College, with his young wife Lorna, gives their audiences the opportunity to ask constant variations on the question that is exercising so many minds throughout the Western world:

"What is the significance of the moves by Mr. Gorbachev to relax controls in the USSR, releasing notable detainees like Dr. Sakharov?" But the Bourdeauxs, despite their particular expertise on the ideology and events of the Communist world, can no more fully answer that question than the rest of us. We are all still waiting to see what the outcome will be.

Hope for the Christians?

These recent events may be starting to overtake and outdate the story they tell in their new book *Ten Growing Soviet Churches*. (Pub. Marc Europe, Keston College Book No. 17, 1987), which forms the substance of the Moorhouse Lectures Mr. Bourdeaux is to deliver in Melbourne. It would be thrilling indeed if the wind of change in the USSR meant real liberty for the churches and for individual Christians to worship, to teach and to witness without the fearful penalties they have incurred for so many years. But Michael Bourdeaux cannot realistically encourage hope of fundamental change in the Soviet policies on religion, although there may be a welcome lightening of punishments and relaxation of restrictions.

In a recent meeting I attended in Lindfield, he explained that though the superstructure of oppression may alter, for better or for worse, over the decades and regimes of the Communist Party's rule in the Soviet Republics, the substructure of Lenin's doctrines on religion remains unchanged and unchallenged. The laws based on these doctrines remain, and continue to justify suppression of Christianity and other religions, as well as of most political dissent.

Church Growth, Soviet-style

The Bourdeaux' book is an inspiring chronicle drawn from the records of Keston College of the growth against all odds of every type of Christian denomination in the USSR. The ten selected groups are Methodists and the Lutherans in Estonia, the Pentecostals and the Orthodox in Siberia, the Mennonites in Central Asia, the Baptists and the Uniates (Catholics) in the Ukraine, the Lithuanian Catholics and the Baptists and the Orthodox of Moscow. These include both registered and unregistered churches — both are oppressed, and both persist in growing.

Imagine if our churches were forbidden to organise any meeting or club for children or youth, to hold prayer meetings, to meet for study of the Bible or other religious literature, to set up any kind of welfare programme, hospital or school, to produce or distribute any religious literature, including Bibles, without official permission. All we would be permitted to do would be to attend services of worship in a church or building registered for that purpose, and to use church funds only for the maintenance of that building. I, for one, would find most of what I do illegal! And yet the gates of hell are not prevailing against Christ's church — it grows despite persecution, or because of the quality of commitment forged in suffering.

A jubilee history of the unregistered Baptists of Kharkov in the Ukraine, a heroic group, highlighted its rapid growth and concluded that "there had never

been a time in the history of the Soviet Union when there was a greater thirst for the Gospel. Great as the growth of recent years has been, it is nothing compared with what it would have been had the believers been allowed even their most elementary rights to literature and open evangelism." (P. 129).

Gorbachev's Speeches

Having read this book, it was ironic to skim through a volume of the speeches of Mikhail Gorbachev reporting to the 27th Party Congress, 1986. A young friend travelling in Russia received it as a propaganda handout. I looked in it for clues to Gorbachev's attitude to religion, there are hints as to the new emphases in the Soviet scene — the fight against alcoholism, against inefficiency and bureaucratic corruption, the drive for 'peace' and disarmament, but the no doubt worrying survival and resurgence of religion is ignored.

"We have built a world free of oppression and exploitation", Gorbachev claims. "We, patriots of our homeland, will go on safeguarding it with all our strength . . . fortifying its economic and moral might. The inner sources of Soviet patriotism are in the social system, in our humanitarian ideology . . . Socialism is a society with a high level of morality. One cannot be ideologically committed without being honest, conscientious, decent and critical of oneself. . . . Stagnation is simply intolerable in such a vital, dynamic and multifaceted matter as information, propaganda, artistic creativity . . . in the entire sphere of ideological, political, labour, moral and atheistic education." No — Comrade Gorbachev, for all his charm and intelligence compared to his predecessors, is not departing from the fundamental lie that undergirds his world.

Yancey — a fine writer

Philip Yancey is an author I seek out eagerly ever since reading his splendid books written in collaboration with leprosy surgeon and thinker Paul Brand, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* and *In His Image, and Where is God when it Hurts?*. A new book *Open Windows*, (Thomas Nelson, 1985) a collection of essays and articles, is no disappointment, and some have a bearing on this present subject. Yancey writes on Lessons from the (Concentration) Camps, quoting Solzhenitsyn in particular. He also writes searchingly on music, art and literature, on Mahatma Gandhi, the late Francis Schaeffer, and on the phenomenon of Christian TV. In the US, relevant to us because our own Sunday morning screens at times are graced with the same shows — Robert Schuller et al.

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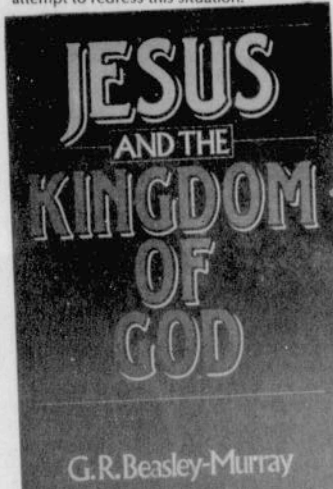
THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH RECORD, Editorial and Business, First Floor, St. Andrew's House, Sydney Square, Sydney 2000. This is a National paper issued fortnightly on alternate Mondays. Subscription is \$24.00 per year, posted. Printed by J. Bell & Co. Pty Ltd., 13 McCauley Street, Alexandria, N.S.W. 2015.

THE GOOD READ

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

G. R. Beasley-Murray, Eerdmans/
Paternoster, 1986 — 446 pp.

Fifty years ago R. H. Lightfoot wrote about Jesus, "for all the inestimable value of the gospels, they yield us little more than the whisper of his voice." However, even amongst such sceptics there is at least agreement on one thing: the central theme of Jesus' preaching was the kingdom of God. At the same time there is, according to G. R. Beasley-Murray, a lack of clarity in explaining the significance of the kingdom of God for interpreting Jesus. This extensive treatment of the topic is the author's attempt to redress this situation.



The book begins with an investigation of the Old Testament and intertestamental background to Jesus' teaching on the kingdom, paying particular attention to the concepts of theophany and the coming of God.

The bulk of the work is given over to the exegesis, most of it detailed, of over 120 synoptic texts on the kingdom of God. In brief, Beasley-Murray argues that "the general thrust of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God... implies that in his word and work there is an initiation of the sovereign action of God that brings salvation and is to end in a transformed universe." (p. 74) Beasley-Murray uses 'sovereignty' and 'kingdom' interchangeably since God's rule is "his sovereign activity in the world.

manifested in deeds of judgement and deliverance, and in terms of man's coming under that rule or entering its sphere of saving grace." (p. 101).

The exegesis of gospel texts begins with an examination, respectively, of the sayings and parables of Jesus on the coming of the kingdom of God in the PRESENT. For Jesus the eschaton has dawned in him; the promised time of salvation is now, though at the same time Jesus' ministry anticipates the revelation of its fullness in the future. The next section examines Jesus' teaching on the coming of the kingdom in the FUTURE. The book closes with a discussion of the discourses of Jesus on the Parousia in Luke 17 and Mark 13.

This book is not for the scholarly illiterate. Beasley-Murray is defending and enriching the conservative interpretation of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God. Consequently much of the exegesis involves interactions with a wide range of scholarly opinion. For some, his comments introducing the exegesis of the parable of the wise and foolish maidens may serve as a more general summary: "For the innocent this well-known parable of Jesus is straightforward and contains a simple message. For the scholars it is a battleground of contending interpretations." (p. 212) Nevertheless, the research ultimately produces rich and helpful analyses. One may not find all his interpretations satisfying. For example, his discussion of Mark 9:1 is inconclusive and succumbs to the desperate measures of the critics who can only make sense of the verse by removing it and isolating it from its context.

This book is explicitly an examination of the teaching of Jesus on the kingdom. At the same time Jesus proclaimed the coming of the kingdom in both his preaching and his miraculous activity. I would have liked more discussion on how Jesus' miracles bear on his understanding of the kingdom, present and future.

The value of the book is enhanced by the addition of extensive notes helpfully arranged for easy reference, and an extensive bibliography.

This important book is designed for scholars and students, although at the same time it is a valuable resource for preachers and all who wish to come to grips with what was the very heart of the mission and message of Jesus.

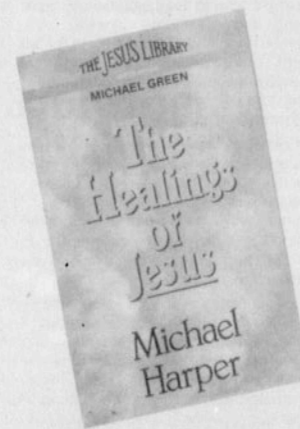
M. Raiter

The Healings of Jesus

Michael Harper, Hodder and
Stoughton, 1986 194 pages.

This book is disappointing. Though it is part of the usually excellent "Jesus Library" series, it fails to handle its subject at all well.

In his first chapter Michael Harper notes "the detailed accounts (of Jesus' healings) are given to encourage our faith, and provide some simple models to help us develop our own healing ministry" (p. 12). Having described how he came personally to believe in the priority of healing ministry, he devotes five chapters to drawing out what he sees as principles of healing ministry from the Gospel accounts. Later chapters (less than one third of the book) deal with some of the issues raised by Jesus healing activity: the person of Jesus, some apologetic, the Bible's teaching about health, and the nature of the Kingdom of God.



The miracle stories of the Gospels are an integral part of those books, and like every other part of them their purpose is to help us penetrate the mystery of Who Jesus is, and the demands He makes of those who follow Him. The Gospels thus first acquaint us with Jesus' Person so that we may grasp the significance of His Work. They are simply NOT 'models to help us develop our own healing ministry' and when Harper treats them as such he imposes on them an alien structure. I am surprised that less than forty pages of

the book are specifically devoted to discussing the Person of Jesus, the proper subject of the miracle stories.

Further, I am uneasy about the constant tendency to make Jesus a Proto-type Charismatic Christian Who healed because of the Spirit's endowment, and Whose deeds any of His followers might emulate, 'if the Holy Spirit is invoked' (p. 165). This low Christology is clearly seen when we are told that in saying 'Go, your son will live' (John 4:5) Jesus uttered a 'word of knowledge' and that through the Spirit any believer might do the same. (p. 27, 106). Quite apart from reading a great deal into 1 Cor. 12:8, anyone noting the great significance John gives to the word of Jesus could hardly believe this!

Harper maligns Evangelicals frequently for their conservatism; a pity he did not note that we also seem to read our Bibles more carefully than he!

I find the chapter on "Health and healing" difficult to follow. On the one hand he speaks of "the primary concern of God, which is the healthiness of His people". Whatever that, with all its talk of 'peace' and 'wholeness' means, it does not involve him on the other hand in any discussion of either Paul's thorn in the flesh, or Job's suffering. In fact, there is no reference in the whole book to the book of Job, or to 2 Cor. 12:7-10! Nor do I follow the paragraph on page 82 entitled "Are the dead raised today?" After telling of a Church Army Captain who was raised (and has his Death Certificate to prove it!) he continues "If the answer is 'yes' and particularly if we are agreed that Jesus was himself raised from the dead, can we really limit God to one generation?" I don't find the Apostles speaking like this! Paul had excellent opportunities in 1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15 and 2 Cor. 5, and missed them all!

Harper insists that our concept of the Kingdom of God is not adequate if it does not include the gifts of the Spirit. What he consistently fails to do is to relate the gifts of the Spirit to the Will of God or to explain why even in the New Testament, there is not a constant flow of miracles. Because he only tells us to invoke the Spirit, his presentation of New Testament Christianity which he sets before us is lopsided, and in the end untrue.

Not recommended.

Tom Milton

Church Growth No. 3

Are clergymen good managers?

Eddie Gibbs

International Authority on Church Growth visits Sydney.

About 80% of the problems arising in local church situations are management problems and the main reason for this is that ministers are not trained to manage.

This is the view of Dr. Eddie Gibbs, the internationally recognised authority on church growth whose recent visit to Australia was sponsored jointly by the Anglican and Uniting Churches.

Dr. Gibbs is Assistant Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary at Pasadena in California, U.S.A. Born in Nottingham, England, his ministry began as an assistant minister in the Anglican parish of Wandsworth, South London. After missionary service in South America, he worked for the Bible Society in the U.K. where his lectures on church growth were enthusiastically received.

The 'Australian Church Record' was present at Dr. Gibbs' Sydney press conference. It was a pity that there was not a better response, particularly from the religious press. The only others present were a representative of 'Uniting', the Uniting Church journal, and Mr. Alan Gill of the 'Sydney Morning Herald'.

It would be interesting to know whether the clergy themselves agree with Dr. Gibbs in his view on their role in management.

Dr. Gibbs sees leadership as a crucial factor.

"We need quality leadership. The management of volunteers within the parishes is as highly technical as the management of union labour", he said.

"Christians must grow together within the context of a quality of leadership. Each individual church must draw up its own agenda on a biblical basis. We must look carefully at the resources that God has given to the church", he said.

"Ministry is shaped by the gifts that God has given to the church", he added.

"few team ministries have worked effectively"

About 250 delegates attended the church growth conference in Sydney at which Dr. Gibbs was the keynote speaker. Under the theme of BUILDING A CHURCH WORTH JOINING, the sessions included:

- Defining and measuring church growth
- Diagnosing church ailments which retard growth
- Identifying signs of health which stimulate church growth
- Managing change and minimising crisis

* Planning for growth.

Touching on some of these themes during the press conference, Dr. Gibbs said that each Christian congregation should clearly define the kind of church it wants to become.

Past performance, he said, is clearly an influencing factor. He believes that churches should examine the pattern of church attendance and identify factors which can be seen to be working against church growth.

The 'Australian Church Record' columnist TIMOTHY has recently strongly emphasised the danger of being 'maintenance' oriented (which means keeping things going) as distinct from being 'mission' oriented and reaching out in realistic and deliberate ways.

As would be expected, Dr. Gibbs strongly supports this view, and points also to the 'failure syndrome' as an element working against church growth.

Another is 'people blindness', or the failure to recognise that the people inside

"an agreed agenda in terms of 'we' "

the church are different to those outside where those who he terms as 'rank outsiders' need different strategies.

Dr. Gibbs, a warm, outgoing and friendly man, is interesting in some of the terminology he uses. "Secular humanist" is a favourite phrase.

The secular humanist must be met on his own ground.

"You will never win the secular humanist by saying 'Come to us and listen to what we have to say'. It does not work", he said.

"In communicating the Gospel we must address issues of secularism using understandable terms and the church must go out to the secular humanist and meet him on neutral ground away from the ecclesiastical trappings of a church building."

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Rev. Richard Morrison, 118 Lindsay St.
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Indian Govt. acts against churches

Foreign grants attacked

(From a report in a recent issue of The North India Churchman) The Ministry of Home Affairs of the Indian government has recently taken two actions which will seriously hamper church work in India.

The first was a circular letter addressed to agencies receiving foreign grants asking them to close down any newspapers they run. This includes most Christian magazines. The letter advises

agencies wishing to publish a newspaper to form a separate body (these would not be able to receive foreign donations).

The second action was to tell some agencies who received foreign grants that prior permission from the government is needed if they want funding from outside India. This could cause considerable delays and hardship to many institutions and churches and might be the beginning of further action on all agencies.

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Moore Theological College



Spring School of Theology 1987

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8th-9th September, 1987

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Church Services

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CANBERRA: St. Matthew's Wanniasa (Cnr. McBryde Cres and Laurens St.) Services: 8.15 a.m. 10 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. All welcome. Rev. Paul Watkins.

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