

EDITORIAL

The Gospel cannot be made relevant OR The A.B.C. does it better

Listening to religious radio across the dials of Sydney one is struck by the energy exerted to make the gospel seem relevant. Certain trends are obvious. There is by now the old staple of talk-back radio where the minister/preacher/priest deals with listeners' problems varying from fickle boyfriends to state politics. Again, largely on Sunday, the church through one of its representatives will talk about what it does in the way of social work, or ask self-directed questions of the "how to..." variety. One station even persistently tells us that it "cares". Finally, there are throughout the day and night short, pithy statements about self-acceptance in the face of everyday difficulties; religious statements about self and ecological awareness with appropriate musical (often rock) accompaniment.

But all this is largely futile because the gospel cannot be made relevant. The Christian gospel is the message of a holy God who is an alien. The Bible tells us that our sins have cut us off from the true God, completely. We cannot know him, indeed, we do not want to.

So the gospel of the kingdom preached by Jesus comes as a totally strange and devastating word. From us it calls forth a self-shattering repent. "Leave your family behind", "Sell all you have", "Tear out your eye".

Now, we find this all very hard to believe, and the history of the Christian church is littered with scaffolding set up to at least partially create a human landing ground for this message, a certain sort of philosophical or emotional basis of acceptance. But the Bible insists that no one seeks for God, and that all of our human experience outside of the gospel is characterised by rebellion. Thus the gospel cannot be made relevant. There are no half-way houses.

The truth is that the gospel creates its own ground of acceptance, its own relevance. Because the gospel is the power of God for salvation it creates faith and self-abnegation in its recipients. The only way to understand and communicate this sort of gospel is on its own grounds. More specifically, it is as we hold forth Jesus — talk about who he is — that the Christian message is properly put across. Jesus' life and message of unconditional grace calling forth from us an unconditional response is so foreign to our experience that to approach this Jesus on anything but his own terms is to inevitably distort him. The brothers wanting a settlement of their inheritance problem is a case in point.

St. Paul's intensely practical Corinthian letters give us great encouragement here. Paul's order of argument is not what is the church doing in the situation, and then, who is Jesus, but the reverse. Unlike most of our public approach to religion, Paul asks first "who is Jesus?", and then "what should we do?". For example, over the problem of the collection for the hard-pressed Jerusalem church, Paul speaks of Jesus Christ "who for your sakes became poor", and then, "here is my advice about what is best for you..." (2 Cor. 8:9-10).

It is a long-standing criticism of our evangelical Christianity that it is preoccupied with the "what" and the "how" to the detriment of the "who" question. A glance at any evangelical bookshelf will make the point embarrassingly clear. And it can be further observed that not only does this seeking for relevance distort the primary issue of the nature and person of God, but also it fails at the very point where it appears strongest. It fails to deliver the goods on the practical side too.

How much of our churchy attitude to money in a profit based economy is unchristian, for example? And again, many pastors will testify that in their experience evangelism that starts with relevance only produces self-centredness, whilst evangelism that starts with the shocking declaration of who Jesus Christ is and what we should do in the face of such knowledge is the one which produces the converts. If you relied on the ambience of the coffee-house in the 60's, but switched to "The Bridge of Life" of the Navigators in the 70's, you know what I mean.

But back to religious radio. Talking about what the church does in the way of social welfare and solving people's problems are worthwhile exercises in themselves, but as a grab at "relevance", as an attempt to build up prestige for the gospel, the approach trivialises and distorts. That is why the much maligned A.B.C. Department of Religious Affairs, in comparison, does it better. When the A.B.C. forsakes relevance and just broadcasts a Sunday service where unselfconsciously the minister says something true about Jesus, it not only communicates the Christian message without distortion, but also, fosters interest.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

The issue of evolution/creation is not really a hard issue for the Christian to discern.

Elizabeth Knox (A.C.R., 19/4) in her letter takes a middle position, but can evolution and creation be reconciled?

In Exodus 20:11, we have recorded the words of the greatest naturalist and scientist (theologian too!), the Lord God Himself. The Lord declares that He took six days to create all things ("create" in Hebrew means a completed action, not some ongoing process) and rested on the seventh day — for a million years? No! God rested for 24 hours and He commands us to do the same. Hence, the six-day creation is literally 144 hours (6 x 24) in duration.

Exactly when the six-day creation took place is only guesswork. It may have been in 4004 B.C., but was certainly no later than 12,000 years ago, as Luke gives us an account in his gospel of the lineage of the Lord Jesus from the first man — Adam (see chapter 3:23 to 38).

The theory of evolution, both naturalistic and theistic, cannot therefore be made to fit the biblical account. Why do we Christians believe the findings of secular men who, while learned, nevertheless are bound by sin, for the natural man is at "enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." Romans 8:7.

But God, unlike the scientists and humanistic philosophers, was present at the Creation, and He has recorded the "how" of the creation and, more importantly, the "why" — that is, for man to fellowship with Him and worship Him. After the fall this meant man was to turn from his wicked ways and worship His Creator in submission and love through the atoning blood of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours sincerely,
Alan Barron

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your refreshing editorial on Anglo-Roman Catholic relations (A.C.R. 19/4/82). Your view coincides with that of many Anglicans in Britain and this country. Others have not thought out the implications of the power of the Papacy if given an inch. Let there be no doubt they would take a mile. What a shock to discover the Pill was banned as Vatican laws stretched out to envelop Anglicans like an octopus.

Influential Anglicans believe in good faith that their influence would have a purifying effect on Christianised paganism when instead, Scriptural truth would be drowned in a sea of double-talk as at present. If unity took place, it would split the Church of England down the middle, but this could be a good thing (the separation of the wheat and tares) leading to a great Scriptural Revival and the reaffirmation of the 39 Articles.

Where do church leaders get the idea that unification of all the churches is God's will? The Epistles are full of warnings of false teachers who doubtless were preaching some form of the Gospel but not "the Faith as once delivered". The Galatians seemed innocent enough but St. Paul accused them of practising "another Gospel" with their mixing of Law and Grace.

Your editorial refers to this "age of compromise" and peace at any price. How true! This attitude has had the most debilitating effect on the West. Peace cannot exist without Justice. We live in a dangerous nuclear age but our faith is weak if we cannot trust our Creator is working out His Purposes on this little, but precious planet. The Word of God, rightly balanced, does not predict the end of this world with Christ's Return, but the end of this Age. That He will come with vengeance to rescue His Redeemed and rebuke the godless nations (apparently still surviving the holocaust) is sure. So let us stop

huddling together with Rome and its unsavoury history in apparent fright at what's coming. The "Captain of the hosts of the Lord" is with us yet as with Joshua on the eve of battle. Shall we too, at that critical time, remove our shoes knowing we stand on holy ground?

Yours sincerely,
(Mrs.) Phyllis Creasey

Dear Sir,

Next week the Pope will visit a Marian shrine in Portugal "Time" magazine reports. Everyone knows, of course, the power of the cult of the Virgin especially that of Poland's Black Madonna. How does the ARCIC report reconcile this with Unification? Have our highly intellectual theologians never read the classical work of the late Rev. Alexander Hislop "The Two Babylons" with its overwhelming evidence of its origins? And if so, have they faced the question whether there can be salvation in a communion which declares it to be a fundamental principle that the Madonna is "our greatest hope; yea, the SOLE GROUND OF OUR HOPE"?

As Constance S. Knox writes in her excellent letter (3/5/82) "Many Roman Catholics love our Lord... and follow Jesus in spite of the Pope". I, too, have met these individuals but, according to my information, still pray to the ageless pagan Madonna who is so ingrained in their psyche, it does not occur to them to get out of the system of Christianised Paganism altogether.

Instead of the ARCIC Anglican representatives parleying on points of agreement with Rome, they should be searching out God's Will to bring about a second Reformation of the Church of England and that can only come about (in the words of the new Archbishop of Sydney) "The main issue is going to be the method of using and interpreting the Bible".

Madonna worship is Satan's masterpiece and goes back to the worship of Nimrod (the rebel) and his wife. It is the source of all pagan religions in ancient times and continues today in the cult of the supposed "Mary". The English edition of "The Two Babylons" has been taken over by the American publishers "Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, New Jersey". There may still be an English edition published by A. & C. Black. No seeker after Truth should be without it because it gives a greater understanding of what the children of Israel were up against and the lure of these Satanic cults which undoubtedly brought about their captivities.

It is not fashionable today to speak out on these things, but do we follow the will-of-the-wisp of unity with such a system or obey God by examining our own Anglican structure and completing the work of the Reformers?

Yours sincerely,
(Mrs.) Phyllis Creasey

Dear Sir,

Your editorial on 19th April concerning the proposed merger with the Church of Rome is good and timely.

The people now have a right to expect the Sydney Diocese to declare its position on this vital subject. Such a declaration must be without evasion, equivocation or mental reservation of any kind.

Yours faithfully,
Peter G. Smith

CORRECTION

There was a misprint in Elisabeth Knox's letter of 19 April. In para. 2 'completion' should have read 'conception'.

MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE

DIOCESE OF GIPPSLAND
Mr. J. Finlay Patrick was commissioned as Chancellor on 3rd May, 1982.

DIOCESE OF SYDNEY
Rev. R. S. Barker, Rector, St. Thomas'

Moorebank, was elected a canon of St. John's Pro Cathedral, Parramatta on the 5th April, 1982.
Rev. E. Scrivens, St. John's Randwick, will become Rector, St. John's Penrith on 11th June, 1982.

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Not sick — just slow



The mentally handicapped in N.S.W. are treated as having an unacceptable social handicap, and their biggest problem is combating the stigma of their label in the community. Church Record was told recently.

Jean Young Smith is working towards the establishment of a group home for mentally handicapped adults, under the auspices of Careforce, and in an interview with Church Record, spoke of the problems and the hopes for this misunderstood group.



Jean Young Smith

The Stigma — the community

"There is no doubt that during the IYDP, the physically handicapped got the lion's share of publicity. For the intellectually handicapped life wasn't changed much as a result, mainly because their cause is not really accepted in the community. One television station didn't show the part of an IYDP documentary, on the intellectually handicapped because 'the viewers might find it distasteful'.

"The general IYDP slogan 'awareness is our greatest problem' applies to the intellectually handicapped as 'misunderstanding is...'

"In his research on intellectual handicap, Don Grimes said that 'we live in a world where slowness is suspect'.

"One can assuredly say that public attitudes to retardation indicate widespread misconceptions that are at best inappropriate, and at worst frankly prejudicial", wrote Jean in her submission

for funding for her project to the Federal Government.

"The subject is taboo in polite conversation, but once you bring it up, most people admit to cousins, siblings or other family members who were retarded. The immediate family deal with the problem on their own: there is usually no extended family support or little community resources.

"Sydney University's 5 year medical degree course offers 6 weeks in pediatrics, and a 2 hour lecture in retardation. If these are the ones society presumes know the best methods of treatment, what does the average man-on-the-street know?

"A home was purchased by the Sunnyfield Association in Manly to start a group home, but the neighbours didn't want 'that sort of person' in the area, and created a lot of flack."

Government policies not matched by action

"The Health Commission, in a policy statement on the intellectually handicapped, sounded wonderfully supportive, but they're not adhering to it," said Jean.

Church Record then rang the Handicapped Persons Bureau of the Department of Youth and Community Services, and was told, "All the Department's actions are based on the principle of 'normalisation', defined as 'the use of culturally-valued means... (education, peer modelling) to enable societally devalued persons to achieve and maintain life conditions (income, housing, work, health, educational services) which are at least as good as and preferably better than those of the average citizen; and to as much as possible enhance and support people's behaviour, appearances, experiences, status and reputations in the eyes of the public'. We're doing our best to do just that."

"Australia is ten years behind the rest of the world in this area, and N.S.W. is the worst state — although the most populous," Jean said. "The government knows their needs; or if not, only needs to ask. If it did know and understand, it would be morally bound to act."

"The 1981 Anti-Discrimination Board Report 'Discrimination and Intellectual Handicap' states:

"One would wish to see community attitudes change to the point where discriminatory practices are socially unacceptable and inadequate services are not tolerated. But in the meantime strong

government action is required to lead the way. Government at all levels must have the will to initiate and sustain programmes of reform to further the interests and independence of handicapped people. These reforms must be actively promoted and pursued to compensate for many past years of neglect and to overcome negative and paternalistic attitudes from both inside and outside the administrations.

"There has been a long history of failure by governments to develop the services needed by people with intellectual handicaps and their families. The result of discriminatory actions by individuals and the failure of public policy to make adequate provision for their needs and aspirations has been to render people with intellectual handicaps virtually second-class citizens and arguably the most impoverished and under-privileged group of people in our society."

"The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971), says that 'the intellectually handicapped person has the same rights as other citizens of the same country and the same age. However, these rights are useless unless sequential steps are taken in the right direction. Sometimes the deficiencies are hidden under a false assumption that because they are served that all are treated justly'."

A long personal fight

"I wrote to Mr. L. J. Ferguson, then Deputy Leader of the Opposition, about the problems confronting the intellectually handicapped. In his reply, dated February 1974, he said, 'I agree these people have the right to better educational facilities, proper behavioural

pattern programming towards recruitment opportunities for career employment and, above all, acceptance by the community as a whole.

"The former Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, Mr. P. D. Hills, M.L.A., just prior to the last State elections told the people of New South Wales that if the Labor Party was returned to power a programme would be established to provide for the complete education and, where possible, full capacity employment of the physically and mentally handicapped. The foregoing, of course, would require the training of specialist remedial teachers and the setting up of sheltered workshops.

"The handicapped and mentally retarded do need immediate assistance and my Party shall continue to press this laissez-faire Government into realising the present need."

"I wrote in February 1979 to Mr. Kevin Stewart, who replied, 'The Health Commission of New South Wales is aware of the need to provide more appropriate accommodation for intellectually handicapped people and a review of the needs of all regions has been undertaken with a view to providing such accommodation as soon as possible. You may be assured that the needs of handicapped people will not be overlooked when hospital staffing priorities are being determined.' I wrote again in 1980, to which he replied, 'I am only too keenly aware of the needs of this group for an adequate quality of residential care and community support services.'"

Continued on page 4

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"Change the law"

The present Mental Health Act groups the retarded with those having psychiatric illnesses. The problem is quite different. Their care, treatment and training are quite different. Mental illness usually means some abnormal behaviour and thought patterns, and often can be recovered from. Intellectual handicap means slowness in mental processes, and is there for life. The former needs nursing care and skill; the latter, training in life skills and for simple work, so that to the best of their ability they take their place in the community. They do not need hospitalisation, nor does the community need protection against them.

"A new Mental Health Bill has been prepared and is shortly to be introduced in State Parliament but despite continued requests to have it made available to workers in the field, its contents are unknown. It is feared by some that it will preserve the present arrangement.

"Submissions for required changes have been made by the N.S.W. Council for the Mentally Handicapped, and other related groups. Rydalmere Hospital's Parents and Friends Association wrote to Parliamentarians:

"I understand that both a new Community Welfare Bill and a new Mental Health Bill are likely to be introduced into the House in the next Session of the Parliament, and that these Bills will include sections relating to the provision of services for the mentally handicapped. The main inclusions I believe you should be looking for are —

1. That any proposed legislation affecting the mentally handicapped must include, a preface acknowledging and accepting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons.
2. That new legislation must include a definition of a "mentally handicapped person". No such definition is included in the present Mental Health Act, which only defines "mental illness".
3. That new legislation must provide for an extension of guardianship responsibilities by parents or other caring party beyond the age of 18 as the handicapped person would benefit from such extension. As the law stands

at present, parents do not have the right to guardianship responsibilities for their institutionalised handicapped children once they have passed the age of 18, even where such adult children obviously need continuing supervision and care.

4. That new legislation should separate the powers and the responsibilities of any State Minister, particularly in respect of any form of guardianship. Responsibility to provide service should be spelt out in detail and should include accountability measures in respect of such service responsibilities.
5. This contention is backed up by the Anti-Discrimination Board Report which states: 'The main problem with the Mental Health Act (for intellectually handicapped people) is its confusion of the two quite distinct conditions of mental illness and intellectual handicap. This has led to inappropriate treatment of intellectually handicapped people in the mental health system. We recommend that all legislation, and particularly the Mental Health Act, be amended so that intellectually handicapped and mentally ill people are dealt with separately and distinctly; and that a Guardianship Board for intellectually handicapped people be established in New South Wales.'

The two-faced Christian attitude

"Early in the 16th Century, Paracelsus, a Swiss physician, wrote an extended treatise on 'fools'. Aiming to establish their full humanity, he proposed a fundamental Christian argument that man's wisdom is nothing before God, and that all of us in our wisdom are like the fools. He who redeemed the intelligent one, also redeemed the fool. He saw fools as simply one aspect of the way the whole of mankind has lost God's image.

"St. Augustine, on the other hand, had the notion that 'idiots' are a consequence of the evils of mankind; and Luther believed that the devil stole the human (handicapped) child and then substituted himself for it, and recommended killing them.

"Reform in the 19th and early 20th centuries have left us the legacies of the



institutional model, and hence its ultimate failure."

The truth about intellectual handicap The scope of the problem

"At least 3% of any given population is born with an intellectual handicap to some extent. In America, about one in ten families have a mentally handicapped member.

"60% of the disabled are intellectually handicapped. 75% of these are in the mild to moderate range of disability and don't need medical care, and yet are treated as having the same disabilities as the more severely affected, most of whom are in any case better off kept at home, with extra care. All are now in hospital, where 'treatment' is custodial and not training-orientated."

Their potential

"As individuals gradually learn to grow when given opportunity and encouragement, progress towards independent living is possible throughout life for retarded persons," wrote Jean in her submission.

"Early identification and training can result in a child aged five being able to join normal classes. Older intellectually handicapped people can be trained to take their place in the community: they can be taught skills such as housekeeping as well as simple jobs that lead to permanent employment. The present situation stifles their potential, keeps them dependant for life on institutions, and costs a fortune to keep them.

"After 30 years in an institution, one intellectually handicapped man in the U.S.A. was trained in a group home in the ENCORE project, and subsequently got a job as a dishwasher, and is leading a normal life, and paying off his own home. They can be absorbed into many such jobs, and it's unjust that they're not offered them."

The Careforce project

"Most of the intellectually handicapped have no appropriate home if their family is unable to keep them.

"In East Nebraska, a scheme called ENCORE has been established, in which a core training cottage is formed of 6 to 8 mentally handicapped, plus staff. It is a home. From it, they leave for daily work in a (sheltered) workshop, and in the evenings and on Saturday mornings learn 'basic living' skills: basic literacy, budgeting, cooking, nutrition, personal care and grooming, the use of transport, phones, and other community facilities.

"The scheme aims at not whole of life care, but to teach some degree of independency and intergration into the community. Some will be able to move into flats, some will reach only semi-independency. The aim is that they move on and out of the cottage when they are

ready — after six months, or one or five years. Then there is room for others to take their place and to learn basic life skills.

"Careforce hopes to run such schemes here; and I was appointed to start a pilot cottage for Sydney's inner western region.

"But HMS — and Careforce — has insufficient funds, and is considering shelving the project. I estimated that it would cost \$250,000 to set up the first core house, with the most suitable facilities of bedrooms for 6 to 8 persons plus a flat for a live-in social educator, and to meet that person's wage, and in the early stages that of a domestic helper.

"I have written a submission to the Federal Government for aid, and hope that they will fund at a 4:1. Thus, we need to find \$50,000. Careforce has \$5,000.

"I have now requested a Housing Commission house, which would be smaller and less suitable — but much cheaper.

Needed: action

"I feel very isolated, and want the support of other Christians — their interest, their prayers, and their help to get the project started. Politicians and the community at large need to be interested in this cause.

"We can no longer be allowed to do nothing, when we know the needs. I read recently in a social welfare paper: 'The Do-nothings become the nadir of immorality which revives Edmund Burke's statement, "evil only triumphs when good men stand by and do nothing!"'

Informers infiltrate Romanian churches

Baptists in Romania told British Weekly that pressure against them is intensifying. They say that previously it was known that the ratio of believers to informers was 10 to one. The ratio has now increased to three to one.

Every Monday morning pastors are required to submit to the local Ministry of cults office a written report on the weekend church activities including the essence of sermons preached, whether there were any visitors and who they were, and if there were any new Romanian converts to Christianity.

Some pastors have refused to do this and a few have lost their licences.

There are fears that disenchantment with the Baptist Union and interference from authorities may create a situation similar to that in the Soviet Union. There a Baptist movement known as the unregistered church severed all ties with the government-sanctioned body.

Warm welcome for Australian church leaders from "post-denominational church" in China



Mr. Hsu, Mr. Hua and Pastor Ling with group at Sun Yat Sen Mausoleum. (L to R) Mr. Hsu, Ms. Jill Tabart, Canon Kevin Curnow, Rev. Bernie Clarke, Bishop John Lewis, Mr. Graeme Chapman, Mr. Hua, Bishop Gabriel Gibrán, Ms. Jean Skuse, Pastor Ling.

ACC Photo

A warm welcome and the deep joy of being able to meet and share with Christians from afar greeted the nine Australian Church leaders on the recent history making, first Australian Church visit to China, reports the Australian Council of Churches.

"We found a Church which is very much alive, full of enthusiasm and full of the joy of being able to meet together for worship," is how ACC General Secretary Jean Skuse described her first impressions on return to Sydney on May 6.

The 9-member team representing five Australian denominations and led by A.C.C. President, Orthodox Bishop Gabriel Gibrán visited China on the invitation of the China Christian Council and the Three Self Patriotic Movement for 14 days from April 20 to May 4. They visited Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing and Guangzhou (Canton).

For Anglican Bishop John Lewis of North Queensland, there were four key learnings from his experience of the Church in China:

"Firstly, the Church is biblically based. The Bible is absolutely fundamental.

"Secondly, the Church has a certain friendliness about it which we don't always have.

"Thirdly, the church has overcome the sort of cultural barriers that we have locked into our Church life which in a way keeps the Church apart. Instead of the Church being something that is creating harmony, quite often it can enhance divisions.

"And finally, they have shown that Christianity is a religion which can help people be very 'whole' people in their own right wherever they are and whatever their culture happens to be."

In their Sydney airport press conference, several team members made reference to the earnest attempt by the Chinese Christians to become the Church in China.

"They refer to the Church in China as being 'post denominational'," explained Jean Skuse, "meaning that they are not hung-up on the old denominational problems. Pastors have mutual respect for each other and their past traditions."

Resent Bible Smuggling

Another common insight to emerge in the teams press conference comments was the extreme patriotism of the Chinese people and the Chinese Christians.

"You cannot tell the Chinese people what to do in China," commented Bishop Lewis.

"The Christians made it clear that they resent people from outside China feeling that they know what the Church in China wants or needs," explained the Rev. Bernie Clarke, the Associate Secretary of

the Uniting Church Commission for World Mission.

"They are very clear about their understanding of themselves as a Chinese Church and part of the Chinese community," he said. "They are keen to develop friendships with Churches outside China but those who would interfere in the domestic life of the Church in China are not welcome," he continued.

"And Bible smuggling is the kind of interference they don't want," concluded Mr. Clarke.

"They are quite capable of buying their own blessed Bibles," added Bishop Lewis. "This hand-out stuff doesn't go down well. They don't like being treated as poverty stricken and in need of hand-outs. China is a country with vast resources," he said.

Relations with the communists

Christians in China have only been allowed to worship in public and to reopen the Churches in the past 2 to 3 years. This is the first visit of the A.C.C. team to China since the demise of the Gang of Four. Thus for the team, the relationship between the Church and the State was of particular interest.

"From all the conversations I had with Christians, I gained the impression that the Christians are solidly behind Deng Xiao Ping," commented Clayton Bredt. "They think of the current hierarchy as 'their team'," he continued, "the Christians are happy with the idea of a Government which is religiously neutral," he said.

"In fact the Government is bending over backwards to provide paper for the publishing needs of the Churches and providing the materials and skilled craftsmen for the rebuilding and renovating of the Churches," continued Mr. Bredt.

Sydney team member Mrs. Jean Gledhill, a lecturer in communications at the Kuringal C.A.E., added her observation that the Christians had learnt to trust the communists as they sought to help fellow Chinese people. For Mrs. Gledhill, China can be called a just society. Bishop Lewis saw an element of utopia in China in that practically everybody has a job — even the disabled and the blind.

"Lots of the things you hear about China are simply not true. It's not a restricted, limited society at all. It's a remarkably friendly, tolerant and in some ways almost easy going," said Bishop Lewis.

WHAT A WORLD

God and Caesar

Lesley Hicks



This week I finally got to see *Chariots of Fire*, the film I had heard and read so much about. Our children had seen it, and we were all surprised and delighted when it won the top Academy Award. It seemed astonishing in this age that the award should go to a clean-cut film which features as a major theme a Christian man honouring God above athletic glory.

I was not disappointed. The portrayal of Eric Liddell showed no hint of scorn or patronage for his insistence that not even for Great Britain's honour could he betray his God by running the 1924 Olympic Games 100 metres heat on a Sunday. When the Prince of Wales and the British Olympic committee sought to make him change his mind, his refusal came through with attractive dignity, not as grudging piety.

It is marvellous that the scriptwriters resisted the temptation to make him a prig. But the story is a true one, and those who had known the real Liddell were there to advise the film-makers. So we can thank God all over again that then and now it's true that "them that honour Me, I will honour", and Eric Liddell's faithful witness lives on in the film.

The character of Abrahams the Jewish runner dominates the film more strongly. He is tormented and complex, lacking the joyous singleness of mind of running for God that Liddell showed. But he too engages our sympathies.

In technical aspects, we found the film visually beautiful, and loved its music, but thought there was a somewhat excessive use of slow motion that made it at times appear mannered and "arty".

A Christian Manifesto

Also this week I have read *A Christian Manifesto*, a new book by Francis Schaeffer, (published by Crossway Books, Westchester, Illinois, \$5.95), and was struck by the correspondence between its theme and that illustrated by Liddell's story in *Chariots of Fire*. Schaeffer writes:

"When Jesus says in Matthew 22:21: 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's'; it is not:

GOD and CAESAR
It was, is, and it always will be:
GOD
and
CAESAR

The civil government, as of all life, stands under the Law of God." (P. 90)

When it directly contravenes God's Law, as clearly expressed in the Bible, Dr. Schaeffer reasons that Christians must attempt to dissuade it by reason, or, failing that, by disobedience or

resistance, much as some of the early Christians defied the decrees of Caesar when they required that they worship him. The time comes for "not obeying the laws that are contrary to the laws of God, even if it means that you're thrown to the lions", he says.

Civil disobedience

The clash is clearly present now in Soviet Russia. A typical issue is the ban on the Christian teaching of children, and the labour camps take the place of the lions.

Eric Liddell understood the principle clearly, and was prepared to sacrifice all his training and his joy in running. The keeping of the Lord's day has virtually ceased to be an issue on which Christians are now prepared to take a stand for God, and this perhaps weakens our credibility, if the things for which we stand change according to evangelical fashions.

There is a difference between issues affecting only the individual Christian and the Church, such as freedom to worship, or to educate children in a Christian framework, and issues on which Christians take a stand not only for themselves, but for others, and the welfare of society as a whole. If Christians have their way in some of these issues, such as abortion, or pornography or prostitution, they would be restricting the freedom of others to sin.

When German Christians defied the law to defend the Jews or the handicapped (as too few of them did), they were putting God before Caesar to their own grave risk. Because it is a sanctity of life issue, Schaeffer sees abortion in the same category. It is something which Christians might appropriately oppose even at the risk of jail, in the hope of saving prenatal lives. "A Christian Manifesto" should stir us up to some hard thinking, perhaps with considerable argument. I hope to devote my next column to some further consideration of it.

APOLOGY

We apologise for the gremlins which produced six question marks following the reference to the excellent films produced by Word Incorporated featuring American paediatrician and psychologist Dr. James Dobson. As the context would make clear, the films were being highly commended with no query at all about their excellence.

Wetzlar, West Germany (EWNS)

Romania allows legal imports of 500 Bibles

Romanian authorities have approved the legal import of 500 Romanian-language Bibles, according to the West German publication *Idea*. The Covenant of Free Evangelical Churches told *Idea* that an agreement was reached following a visit to Romania by Dr. Siegfried Meurer of

Stuttgart. Meurer is general secretary of the German Bible Society. The Bibles are to be delivered to the 44,000-member Brethren church in Romania.



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BOOK REVIEWS



"Get Me Going Lord — some attempts at praying"

Graham W. Hardy
Hodder & Stoughton

Graham Hardy, (minister of St. Stephen's Uniting Church, Macquarie Street, Sydney) is well known to all who listen to 2CH and 2CBA-FM for his concise "chats". This little paperback (160 pages) has 14 sections on prayer.

Showing the value of his extensive Ministry these "conversations with God" cover such areas as "Learning to Pray" — where Mr. Hardy deals with various problems such as "I don't know where to begin", "Wandering Thoughts" or in the section entitled "Help me Lord" the heartfelt cry of "I am lonely", "I'm worried", "I can't relax" is ejaculated in prayer.

I lent this book to a person who has suffered a great deal, her response was, "I can see a lot of me in this". For those who are spiritually dry or emotionally or physically worn the book would be a help.

The newly elected Archbishop, when asked what was the greatest problem facing the church in the future rightly commented, "How to interpret the Scriptures".

The greatest weakness of Mr. Hardy's book is in this area. I would be inclined to use the prayers but at times pay no heed to the texts preceding each prayer for they are not always faithful to their context in Scripture.

David Tyndall

BEYOND HEARTACHE

By Margaret Johnson
Zondervan Publishing House

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TO BUY: A Concise Dictionary of Christian Mission, edited by Stephen Neill — for teaching purposes, if able to assist, please telephone (02) 516 2016.

FOR SALE: Kodak Tele-Extrale camera and one Tasco microscope 1000X. 53 5370.

The perplexing questions we often ask ourselves are "what can we do" or "what can I say" or "I have never been through the experience my friend is suffering".

The results of living in a fallen world is that we all must suffer at some time or another. Yet some aspects of suffering by the providence of God may never come our way. Thus we cannot truthfully say to

our grieving friend "I know how you feel".

Many people who have not had a great deal of suffering in their own or the lives of their families are called upon to minister to those who are suffering. How can they get a glimpse of what their bereft friends are feeling?

Margaret Johnson's 18 year old daughter was killed in a car smash. She wrote a best selling book "18 — No Time to Waste". Since then she has written other books "Chocolate Malts and Nickel Sodas"; "Home before Dark" and has a growing ministry to hurting people.

"Beyond Heartache" is a collection of stories about people who hurt. In it you will meet Mike the "classic" prodigal son who stormed out of his parents' home one evening and was not heard from for five years.

You can read of the heartache suffered by Barbara the mother of a homosexual son, and Trudi the girl who gave up her child after being raped and who asks the soul wrenching question to which she will not know the answer in this life, "Will I see my child in heaven?"

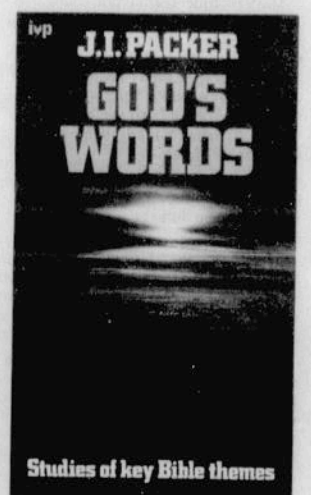
I do not beseech you to become voyeurs of other people's sufferings but if we are to exercise a ministry to one another, especially in times of difficulty I encourage you to read this book.

Margaret Johnson writes imaginatively, interestingly and sensitively but above all with a strong faith in the sovereignty of God. At times wrong texts are used to support Biblical tenets but basically it is a very helpful book.

The book contains eleven chapters and 21 principal characters. Each chapter is complete in itself. It may be best to read the book in intervals.

Having walked the road of many of the principal characters I would crusade for this book to be mandatory reading for every theological student and others who exercise a ministry of teaching, preaching, and pastoring those who suffer loss.

David Tyndall



God's Words

J. I. Packer
I.V.P.

This book takes key words from the Bible and spells out in a practical way some of the main thoughts linked with them.

It is as well that you can't tell this book by its cover — which is most unattractive. So too, is the butcher's paper on which the book is printed.

Those who know J. I. Packer's writings will look beyond the external blemishes and find the solid biblical material which characterises the author.

Seventeen key Bible words are chosen and dealt with thematically from both Old and New Testaments. These include such words as Election, Mortify, The Lord, Fellowship, etc.

Each chapter would provide an excellent Bible Study or provide the preacher basic material for a series of doctrinal sermons.

All Packer's writings are worth buying and God's Words is no exception.

A useful reference book for serious Bible Study.

Philip N. Oliver

TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER

Time: to be used or wasted?

Time is a precious commodity, but time-pressure can become an intolerable problem for many of us. It can be argued that at the heart of many human relationship difficulties is lack of time. We know we need time together if our family relationships are to be satisfying but it isn't always possible to find the right amount of time. Even if we have it there is no guarantee that we will use it well.

In some respects we have more time available at this point in our history than ever before. Work from sun-up to sun-down, six days a week, characterised Australia's agricultural economy in earlier days. Correspondingly, in the industrial sector 12 hour days, six days a week were common work demands. Today such expectations have disappeared and further changes are likely in the near future. We have less time taken up in pursuing our paid employment than in earlier times.

It follows that we should be able to spend more time enjoying our relationships but there is little evidence that this is actually happening. There are many factors which hinder this process. To mention just a few: People living in outer suburbs are having to spend more time travelling to their place of employment. Economic pressures are forcing people to work more overtime (if it is available) or to take on second jobs. There are greater demands upon us arising from those who have an interest in taking a larger slice of our leisure time — clubs and hotels, sporting activities, cinemas and so on. However, the greatest hindrance can be our attitude towards time.

One couple who were receiving marriage counselling discovered these facts the hard way. Their relationship had been stressed for a long time because the husband had been holding down two jobs. They hardly ever saw each other and recognised the need to change their routines and attitudes. The husband stopped working at two jobs. He was fortunate that he was able to find a new job which paid better for fewer hours. But their relationship did not improve despite these changes.

The wife commented: "Once I never saw him because he was at work most of the time. Now, I still don't see him — he's either jogging, drinking at the club, watching football with his mates or working on his car!" The husband rejoined: "I do those things to escape from the dumb and boring things you and the kids want me to do." Clearly, this couple still had a lot of work to do on their use of time. They had more of it but were not using it in mutually helpful ways.

We need more time together and we can probably make more time available if we really want to. We need to assess our priorities, but it is just as important to acquire constructive attitudes towards the use of that time. This raises a set of questions which all family members will need to explore.

(1) When shall such time be put aside? It is possible for a husband to decide that he needs more time with his wife. He might take a flexi-day in order to do so without consulting his wife. The result is that he interferes with his wife's routine and unwittingly creates a conflict for her. She wants to spend more time with her husband but his timing is out and his well-intentioned plans result in aggravation. These kinds of plans need to

be carefully talked out. The needs and interests of both parties need to be taken into consideration.

This kind of issue is not confined to the marital relationship. Well-intentioned parents can decide to spend more time with their children but can frustrate their children if they fail to consult them. Children need time to play with their friends, to play sport or to pursue some other activity which interests them. It is more helpful to work around these needs rather than to insensitively deprive the children of time with others which is important to them.

(2) With whom shall the time be spent? In my earlier example the husband found more leisure time by resigning from his second job. The newly found time failed to benefit his marriage because he didn't increase the time spent with his wife at all. Even if he had spent more time with his children he wouldn't have helped the marital relationship very much. One thing needed to happen more than anything else — he needed to spend time with his wife.

Again, it is a matter of working out our priorities. We need to spend some of our time meeting our own needs, either relaxing, learning or pursuing some other activity which we enjoy. But, if we value our relationships we need to spend time in those relationships. Talking, listening, watching and sharing activities together makes it possible to enjoy our relationships.

Our society today is placing a great deal of value on parents and children spending time together in recreation and entertainment. This is helpful and correct, but we need to recognise the need for husband and wife to have their special times together as well. There are many marriages which have failed even though

the parent-child relationships are in excellent shape. All the effort has been expended for the benefit of the children to the neglect of the marriage. Such marriages face enormous pressures when the children grow older and leave home.

(3) To what purposes shall the time be put? This is a simple but important question. It concerns the kinds of activities which might be entered into and the kinds of goals which they might serve. Time can be wasted. The activities might not be mutually pleasing and they might lead to frustration and resentment rather than the enhancement of the relationship.

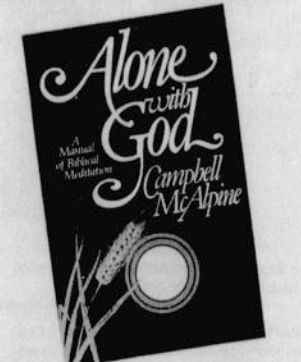
It is important for all family members to feel free to have their say. For all viewpoints to be respected. For all members to be sensitive to the needs of one another. Fair and friendly family conferences should be able to protect the needs of all members as long as flexibility and mutual concern are high priorities.

(4) What are the special responsibilities of Christians in this matter? I began by noting that time is a precious commodity. It is life itself and it is a gift of God. Christians can all too easily become so committed to church and community activities that they fail to use a proper proportion of that time for their relationships. Using our time properly is an important aspect of our commitment to God. We need to use it in a way that honours God.

We need to distinguish between insensitive and unreasonable human demands and the call that God makes upon us. We need God's guidance, for we cannot assume that our instincts in this matter are entirely reliable! It is this fundamental attitude which ought to permeate our exploration and resolution of the first three questions.

Dr. Alan Craddock

More Books



Alone with God — a manual of Biblical Meditation

Campbell McAlpine (Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis 1981) \$4.95 Pb 184 pp. (Also published in England as The Practice of Biblical Meditation, Marshall Morgan and Scott, London, 1981)

McAlpine set out to give us a "manual" written without any claim to literary expertise, or a desire to be known as an "author", but because of a very clear direction by God to put in writing some of the principles of biblical meditation". It is, therefore, a most dangerous book. On a number of occasions we are given examples of how God has spoken to him or others he has known, giving directions about this kind of meditation (Preface, Introduction, pp 35, 57, 90, etc.)

The book is divided into two parts, Premeditation and Meditation, with 26 chapters, moving through such things as Its need, Its purpose, Its means, definition, promises and blessings, then giving a demonstration and helps to begin, and continue in meditation. The first four chapters contain some useful basic principles on knowing God, the Bible, the need for growth. However, the unqualified inclusion of The New World Translation (extensively used by the Jehovah Witnesses) in a list of modern translations when other more orthodox translations are left out, is most unfortunate (p 22).

The method of exegesis used is most unbiblical. From Chapter 5 onwards Bible passages are so "spiritualised" that they lose their meaning entirely. In Chapter 6,

for example, the incident where Samuel went up to Bethlehem to anoint David as King, is used to show us how we meditate. We are urged "Never go to Bethlehem without the oil ... When our lives are like that horn, open-ended to heaven, filled with the Holy Spirit, then we will know what it is to be taught of the Lord, to be Bethlehmites in the house of bread." (p 40). (Bethlehem means "house of bread", he tells us and then proceeds to make much of this fact — and many similarly).

It is a most dangerous book, also because Hebrews 1:1 is taken completely out of context to prove that this system of meditation is God's way of speaking "in such a variety of ways". The Bible is God's Word but the way McAlpine takes it, it is an incomplete word needing continued special revelation to each individual.

I would recommend we stay with present methods of bible study and apply discipline in meditating on what God's word really does say, rather than getting some fanciful notion and calling it "God speaking to me". Stay with your Scripture Union or Navigators methods, or try them if you are having difficulties with other "systems".

Norman L. Fagg

Evangelism Explosion grows

The rapid growth of the ministry of Evangelism Explosion in Australia was demonstrated recently by the attendance of 50 Ministers and Church delegates at a Leadership Clinic held at Mortdale Baptist Church in Sydney. Participants included representatives from Anglican, Baptist, Reformed and Uniting Churches and the Salvation Army. All present tell of a new enthusiasm for evangelism, and a new confidence to go back to their churches and use this unique and sensitive ministry to enable them to train others to share with them in the task of sharing the Gospel effectively in their communities.

Local church central
Many present were impressed with the emphasis on the centrality of the local Church in evangelistic strategy, and were convinced that they had at last found "a track to run on" which showed them where to start, where they were going, and above all, how to gently lead another

person to faith in Christ. It was a real revelation to discover that it could be mastered by ordinary Christians in their congregations.

More caught than taught

One of the exciting emphases of Evangelism Explosion is that the skill of sharing one's faith is "more caught than taught", and many found the experience of observing another "EE-trained" Christian share his or her faith in the homes of people round about a very moving and enlightening experience. Some participants expressed surprise at the discovery that once the basic skill was mastered a wonderful flexibility of presentation was achieved which, while maintaining a logical presentation which was loyal to the Scriptures, was not only sensitive to the needs of the seeker but expressive of the personality of the evangelist as well.

This Clinic was the first of many which have been held in Australia since 1977 where both the teachers were Australians. Mr. Rod Story from St. Stephen's, Coorparoo, Brisbane, who is the National Training Co-ordinator for Evangelism Explosion (Australia), was assisted by the Rev. Canon Reg. Hanlon from St. Mark's, West Wollongong, during the intensive five days of training.

The whole Clinic was characterised by a marvellous sense of unity which flowed naturally from seeking together to be better equipped to carry out the Great Commission.

Further training

Further Clinics were planned for St. Paul's, Wahroonga, September 24-29, and St. Mark's, West Wollongong, October 15-20 this year. It is hoped that a base for training will be opened in Melbourne in 1983.

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2. CENTRAL AUSTRALIA — Christian touring group, visiting all features such as Ayers Rock, Devil's Marbles, Coober Pedy, etc., as well as calling in to visit Bush Church Aid Society folk along the way such as Winton, Coober Pedy, Tarcoola, Port Augusta, Broken Hill and Wilcannia. Motel accommodation, picnic lunches. Inclusive fare \$1,310. Departs July 1st.
3. TASMANIA — Featuring the Centenary of the West Coast and Zeehan. Another Christian Touring group of interest to BCA supporters, as well as a comprehensive coach tour of the "Apple Isle". Features two berth cabins on Empress of Australia. Departs 23rd November. \$1,185.
4. LIGHTNING RIDGE AND WARRUMBUNGLE MOUNTAINS — A nice short mini holiday, departing Sydney 22nd October, including Dubbo, The Ridge (two nights) Warrumbungle Mountains and Coonabarabran. Five days \$220.
5. ADELAIDE AND SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIA — 14 Day Coach tour including Beechworth, Shepparton, Murray Valley, Barossa Valley, Adelaide, Great Ocean Road, Melbourne and Princes Highway. Features also Fairy Penguin Parade at Phillip Island. \$733. Departs 11th September, 6th November, 27th December, 1982.
6. COLOURFUL COUNTRY TOURS — In the peak of Springtime. Rail-Coach Tours that include Melbourne, Beechworth, Bright, Tumult, Chirnbera, Orange and Bathurst. Departs September 25th, October 1st. Features journey to or from Melbourne on Southern Aurora. \$440.
7. REGISTER NOW FOR 1983 TOURS — ● DAWLIN AND THE NORTH WEST COAST — PLANNED FOR BCA SUPPORTERS July 1983. ● NEW GUINEA — 14 Days designed for the 1983 May School vacation.

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Desert Church grows on new translation



Ken Hansen with Pintupi language helpers at Kintore.

The last tribal people to come out of the Central Australian desert, leaving their traditional way of life, are the first to receive the New Testament in their own language through Wycliffe Bible Translators.

On May 2, the Pintupi-Luritja New Testament and abridged Old Testament were dedicated at Papunya, N.T. At the same time the first two Pintupi pastors were ordained into the Lutheran Church.

Wycliffe translators, Ken and Lesley Hansen first moved to a camp west of Papunya in 1966 to live with the Pintupis. Papunya is a settlement cared for by the Finke River Mission, 175 km west of Alice Springs.

They lived in a small caravan with their three small children for 15 years. Living conditions were not easy and interruptions frequent. Whenever a person in camp died, or for some ceremonial reason, everyone moved to another site, often several miles away. This happened every three to six months. The Hansens, naturally, moved with them.

About 30 Pintupis were involved in the language learning and translation process over the years. It was a long exacting

process. "It would take about 14 hours to translate and check just 10 verses of an epistle," said Mr. Hansen.

When asked how the translated scriptures were going to be used the Hansens admitted there were only 30 adults able to read them of the 1,000 Pintupi-Luritja people.

"It is for this reason we are working with the Finke River Mission to train evangelists and run adult literacy classes," say the Hansens.

Ken Hansen works mainly at Kintore, some 500 km west of Alice Springs, almost on the Western Australian border. Here, around 200 Pintupis have chosen to return to their traditional tribal land, mainly to get away from problems associated with alcohol.

The movement is primarily a Christian one under the leadership of evangelist, Smithy Tjampitjimpa.

Seventy people are attending baptismal classes and the Christians gather daily for Bible study and singing. Already the Pintupi-Luritja New Testament is proving to be an important factor in a dramatic new growth in the church in the Western Desert.

but with invalidism had never been able to afford a holiday. A member of the parish staff said that such a break from a confined routine took pressure off a family and helped to keep a marriage together.

Families would choose a reasonably priced small cottage near a beach where they could do their own cooking. Several aged pensioners chose guest houses in quiet spots.

Archbishop of Sydney's Winter Appeal

The Archbishop of Sydney's Winter Appeal was launched by Archbishop Donald Robinson on May 9. Disbursements have already been made from contributions received since the appeal was launched.

In 1981 a number of special projects were undertaken with support from the Winter Appeal in the parish of Mount Drunit. One project helped with a holiday program and more than a dozen families benefited. Most were two-parent families

The unknown Australia

The plight of Ethnic women workers

Sexual harassment, loss of due compensation, developing incurable diseases and insults from bosses were identified as common experiences for migrant and refugee women in the Australian workforce at a recent Sydney conference.

Some 200 ethnic women from around Australia met in March for the first National Migrant and Refugee Women's Speak-Out on employment and health problems. Organised by the Australian Council of Churches and Austcare, the Speak-Out was opened by Mrs. Margaret Whitlam and the Hon. Franca Arena MLC gave the keynote address.

On the second day, several women related their experiences at work.

First there was the Greek woman undergoing psychiatric treatment and with a broken marriage, as a result of being raped at gunpoint by her boss.

Working in a factory at Richmond in Victoria, she was threatened with the sack if she did not accept a lift home from her employer.

On the way he attacked her but she continued to work at his factory in absolute terror for six weeks.

Lack of confidence, both personal and in the Australian legal system, and shame on the family's behalf, stopped her from taking any action.

A Turkish woman, Mrs. Rukiye Savcigin, described how she was sacked from a

Melbourne clothing factory when she failed, along with all her fellow workers to achieve the set quota.

Speaking through an interpreter, Mrs. Savcigin related how "the bosses think we are just automatic machines. They are using computers to evaluate our working rate... the foremen are physically standing over us and timing our working rate".

For Mrs. Savcigin her lack of English put her at a disadvantage to the bosses. Although union officials had visited the factory, the women did not seek the union's involvement because of their fear of being sacked.

One woman at the factory injured her hand by machining over her fingers. She returned three days later and was transferred from an automatic to a manual machine.

"This is just one of the ways they punish us," said Mrs. Savcigin.

Although the organisers of the 'Speak-Out' did not envisage that this conference would adopt resolutions, it being a chance for many women to tell of their experiences for the first time, it became obvious that the women wanted to formulate resolutions.

The three major areas of concern were insufficient opportunities to learn English, the lack of trade union support and the inadequacy of childcare facilities.

Baptists convert a house



Rev. Kevin Smith, the former pastor of the Gympie Baptist Church, with Mr. Will Mawby. Mr. Mawby officially unveiled the nameboard, which he had made himself.

Photo: Ramon Williams

No. 6 Tea Gardens Avenue, Kirrawee will never be the same again. Even its name has been changed! It is now called "RAY LEE HOUSE" — named after the previous owner, Mr. Ray Lee, who left it to the Gympie Baptist Church in his will.

Young and old alike have changed the

stairs into a ramp. Doorways have been widened to accommodate wheel chairs. The interior and exterior painted — all because the church members care about the community as a whole, which includes the handicapped too!

Ramon Williams

Australian visit by two South African women

Two South African women, Miss Daphne Tshabalala and Mrs. Barbara Davies, will visit Sydney and Melbourne under the auspices of African Enterprise from May 15 to 25. They will speak about their ministry among black children with specific reference to the Bonginkosi programme which provides food daily for 13,000 children at primary schools and organises first aid assistance through medical clinics.

Daphne and Barbara are both teachers who have been working closely together since 1971 in developing the feeding and health care scheme known as Bonginkosi (the Zulu word for "Praise the Lord").

This began in Nichols primary school in Edendale, a black township outside Pietermaritzburg, where Daphne was the headmistress. Barbara joined the African Enterprise team in 1977 to establish a follow-up and discipleship department but since 1980 has been full-time director of the Bonginkosi programme, which combines evangelism with social action. Fundamental to the scheme is the principle of co-operation and self-help.



The Bonginkosi programme seeks to establish community centres to meet the food, clothing and housing problems of the destitute. In South Africa society generally overlooks the vast needs of the black children living in townships outside the urban areas, where they are banned from entering the cities where their children must go to find employment.

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Argentine Christians unite in prayer midst international tension



the changes and difficulties facing the Diocese following the temporary withdrawal to Paraguay of almost all English missionaries. Speaking of these missionaries he declared that "they are all perfectly safe and have become involved while there in projects organised by the Paraguayan Anglican Church". Bishop Leake added, "We look forward to their return once the uncertain future becomes clearer."

He went on to say — "You will understand that this inevitably places a heavier load on those who remain, but we thank God that the decision making structures are in the hands of our Argentine brethren including the indigenous tribespeople."

Bishop Leake continued — "We are most encouraged that the temporary absence of expatriate missionary personnel has proved to be the opportunity for the tribespeople and Argentine leaders to really assume greater responsibilities in our work here. We are particularly grateful for our Argentine national missionaries who are working with the tribespeople."

Bishop Leake expressed his deep gratitude to God for the fact that the Rev. Stephen Barrett of S.A.M.S. Australasia has been able to remain and continue his vital ministry of Theological Education especially among the Matak people. Stephen will return to Sydney in August to join his wife and family on furlough.

Present situation

Latest information given to the Rev. Greg Blaxland indicates that of the nineteen missionaries who withdrew to Asuncion, nine have left for an early furlough, the remaining ten are helping in various ways in the local Anglican work including evangelistic and pastoral ministry. The experience of these missionaries removed from their former venue of service and from the fellowship of Argentine Christians whom they love has been likened to the trauma of bereavement.

The most wonderful development from all the apparent tragedy of the international conflict has been the commencement in many Anglican congregations of daily early morning prayer meetings. During the S.A.M.S. Executives' visit to Juarez, the home town of Bishop Mario Marino of the Matak Tribe, he was found bowed with his people in a pre-dawn gathering to call upon God in prayer.

Changes

In the Diocese of Northern Argentina Bishop David Leake explained some of

Confrontation continues: Wran v. The Council of Churches

"For two hours the Premier attacked Council of Churches and me as President, accusing us of being politically motivated and biased against the Labor Party. His attitude was one of extreme anger and hostility towards the delegation," Mr. Bruce Ballantine-Jones reported of the interview he and a delegation from the N.S.W. Council of Churches had with the Premier on the issues of organised crime and of legalising casinos.

The delegation was organised following a forum held last month, reported in Australian Church Record May 17, linking organised crime and casinos. A list of questions had been sent to the Premier with a request that they be answered at the interview.

Wran touchy

"The meeting did not achieve much except that it revealed how much Wran is feeling the pressure of continued questioning about corruption in high places, and the serious political damage it is causing. I consider that Mr. Wran's intemperance and untrue outburst that we are "dupes of political forces determined to weaken the State Government by spreading innuendo and slander" (quoted in The Sydney Morning Herald May 25) indicates the depth of his own concern about the political damage the whole casino and organised crime controversy has created," Mr. Ballantine-Jones told Church Record.

(Continued page 3)

Moore College Library

Billy Graham in Moscow: Who do you believe?

The recent visit of American Evangelist Billy Graham to Moscow for an international religious conference against nuclear weapons is obviously big news. But how should we report it? There are numerous press releases, some from the Graham organisation and some from organisations working with Christians in Russia. And they are sometimes confusing and sometimes contradictory.

Busy schedule

From almost the moment of his arrival on a Friday night, Graham was caught up in a whirlwind schedule. In brief remarks at the airport, he explained that he had come to the Soviet Union at the invitation of Patriarch Pimen. He said he had come to preach the gospel, to address a conference of church leaders concerned about the threat of nuclear warfare, and to learn more about the life of Christians in Soviet society.

Graham met with Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Byelorussia, the chairman of the committee that organised the nuclear peace conference, and other Orthodox leaders. Several of the Orthodox leaders expressed hope that the evangelist could return later for a longer visit and preach in a number of their churches.

There were meetings with Baptist leaders, a visit to the publications department of the Orthodox church, a walking tour of the Kremlin and Red Square, the laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, an impromptu chat on the street with two World War II veterans (Sunday marked Victory-in-Europe Day in the Soviet Union), off-the-record discussions with Soviet government and U.S. Embassy officials, and chat with church leaders who had come from all over the world for the peace conference.

On Tuesday night the evangelist went to the U.S. Embassy and visited six members of the two Siberian Pentecostal families who have been living there for four years. Mr. Graham read scripture, listened to their views, and counselled and prayed with them.

Conference

Earlier Tuesday, Mr. Graham addressed more than 500 participants at "The World Conference: Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe". The speech, which attracted sustained applause from Buddhists, Shintoists, Muslims, and Christians alike, centred on man's alienation from God as the cause of war.

Said Mr. Graham: "From a Biblical perspective, therefore, I am convinced that the basic issue which faces us today is not merely political, social, economic, or even moral or humanitarian in nature. The deepest problems of the human race are spiritual in nature. They are rooted in man's refusal to seek God's way for his life. The problem is the human heart, which God alone can change."

After portraying Christ as the key to peace, the evangelist listed some specific things religious leaders might do to lessen the risk of a nuclear holocaust. They should, he said, call the nations and leaders of the world to repentance, to renewed commitment to peace and justice, to "declare a moratorium on hostile rhetoric", and to cultivate understanding and friendship with each other as individuals.

Also, said Mr. Graham, "We should urge all governments to respect the rights of religious believers as outlined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Pointing out that he does not favour unilateral disarmament, Mr. Graham

called for "meaningful negotiations leading to major arms reductions" that would lead to eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons.

He called for an outpouring of prayer and a turning to God among the world's people to open the way to peace.

Soviet Reaction

The visit of Mr. Graham was "A great event in the history of our church," commented Alexei Bychkov, General Secretary of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. Many Christians were inspired to witness more boldly for Christ as a result of the visit, explained Mr. Bychkov. And because of the evangelist's close contacts with Orthodox leaders, he added, "they accept him as a real servant of Christ", — a significant development in light of any future visit of Mr. Graham to the Soviet Union, according to Mr. Bychkov.

Graham's visit received a surprising amount of coverage by the Soviet press and radio. Some observers called this aspect "unprecedented". Affirming that he intends to remain an evangelist and not become a leader of a peace movement, Graham said he nevertheless will continue to speak out for peace.

In his final press statement, he said: "I realise that I came here at a time of much tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. The strong rhetoric and the basic lack of trust on both sides has led to a very strained atmosphere, and if these trends are not reversed it could have catastrophic consequences for our world. At the same time, I am convinced that both the people of the United States and the Soviet Union want peace."



The other side

The value of Graham's visit has been questioned by both Keston College and the East/West News Service.

Under the heading "Billy Graham Has Betrayed Soviet Christians" the East/West News Service quoted a number of religious leaders opposed to his visit. These included Dr. Carl F. Henry, a long time friend of Graham.

They criticised his whole approach, writing, "after Graham arrived in Moscow, previously expressed concern was turned into alarm as the evangelist made one statement after another which attempted to support Soviet claims of religious freedom."

"While Graham said he had, 'experienced total liberty in what I wanted to say,' Ken Woodward, Religion Editor for 'Newsweek' Magazine countered that, 'Graham proved to be his own most effective censor... he denounced sin and nuclear war... ignoring the plight of Soviet Christians who are not free to worship as they please,' (Newsweek, May 24, 1982).

(Continued page 3)

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