





# MARANATHA

## Faith and Life (1)

James 1:1-12

FAITH AND TRIALS

No-one is immune from difficult situations and quite clearly the first century Christians found themselves faced with the same sorts of issues as us. That is why the intensely practical nature of the letter of James has so much to offer Christians today.

The bulk of evidence suggests that the author was James, the brother of our Lord, who wrote in about AD 60 to various Christian congregations scattered throughout the Roman world. The 'twelve tribes' of v.1 can be seen as Old Testament terminology, symbolically applied to the New Israel.

Have you ever found yourself guilty of separating your faith from the realities of life? James seeks to show the total connection which ought to exist between the two, and in Chapter 1 he deals with faith in relation to trials and temptations.

What sort of trials are implied? — Those which come not only from without but also from within — the original meaning behind trials suggesting this double sense.

Trials that you and I face may come from circumstances beyond our control — perhaps they are more personal relating to mental, physical or spiritual confusion.

James looks at:  
(1) Our attitude to trials;  
(2) The availability of wisdom;  
(3) The ultimate outcome.

### (1) Our attitude to trials

v.2 "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds."

Now many of the trials of many kinds I experience can be pretty traumatic and it seems at first glance a rather trite comment by James to consider it "pure joy". However, he is not alone in such a view. A look at Habakkuk 3:17-18, Acts 5:41, Hebrews 10:34 and 1 Peter 4:12-13 will illustrate a variety of circumstances in which believers were exhorted to rejoice.

One thing we need to do is define "joy" in relation to this. So often joy is expressed as 'bright', 'bubbly' and 'carefree' with self-satisfaction uppermost in mind. This is not what James implies. He seems to be saying, when faced with a trial, instead of being pessimistic and complaining, the Christian should look at the situation calmly and securely confident that God will help.

Now, in a practical sense any other approach is foolish and futile, because trials will not go away regardless of how despondent we become and self pity will only make matters worse! Instead we need to face them front on, with a firm hold on our faith, in the knowledge that such a trial can, in the end be the means of spiritual growth, and that is a cause for rejoicing. So James says in v.3,4, "you know that the testing of your faith

develops perseverance and perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

So, there is a positive outcome to the trials of life — calm, confidence, and a quiet sense of joy and peace are possible if we look beyond the immediate circumstances to the ultimate outcome.

However, James seems to have been fully aware that we cannot do it alone, and he goes on to remind his readers of —

### (2) The availability of wisdom

v.5 reads "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault; and it will be given to him."

Trials of any sort can be very perplexing and if we are to cope in a positive manner we need help. The wisdom of God is promised in assisting us with an understanding of the best way forward. This verse presents a wonderful profile on the nature of God, as a generous God who gives to those who ask; who gives liberally and ungrudgingly; who isn't out to find fault; One who longs to keep us in life.

However, one stipulation is laid down in v.6 "when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."

In other words, God requires that, when faced with the need for wisdom, we approach him trusting him to be true to his word. For if in the midst of trials we hesitate about whether to seek God's wisdom or we approach with any sense of uncertainty, we can't expect his help. Vs. 6-8 indicate fairly strongly that God is not prepared to assist those who approach him in a half-hearted, doubting way with no confidence in his promises.

So then, the Christian who faces trials with a calm and confident assurance, looking to God in prayer for all the wisdom needed, can look forward with joy to —

### (3) The ultimate outcome

v.12 reads "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."

What a wonderful hope before us. Happy, to be envied, is the one who is patient under trial and stands firm in the wisdom of God — such a person can look forward with joy to the "well done" of God himself.

May this be our experience as we continue to marry our faith with the trials of life.

Ken Foster.

## Sydney veto on women lifted

It is the silly season in England. There is a lack of news for the church press to print. For that reason *Church Times* recently published a front page story on Sydney and women. They wrote:

"After several months of refusing to authorise women as preachers in his diocese, the Archbishop of Sydney, has reversed the policy, it was revealed this week.

The Most Rev. Donald Robinson has also abandoned plans he was considering for rescinding the licences to preach which are held as a matter of course by deaconesses in the diocese.

The Archbishop, who has been attending a conference this week, was unavailable for comment; but a spokeswoman for him told the *Church Times* that he was now administering the diocesan ordinance which authorises the lay men and women to preach and to conduct services, and that he would be giving women such permission.

### St. Paul cited

However, she added, Archbishop Robinson had personal misgivings about allowing women to preach "in view of Pauline prohibition" — presumably a reference to the fourteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, in which he says that women should not address meetings of believers — "They have no licence to speak, but should keep their place as the law directs... It is a shocking thing that a woman should address the congregation."

The spokeswoman confirmed that women who had previously been refused a licence by the Archbishop would now receive authorisation to preach if they applied again.

Deaconess Margaret Rodgers, Principal of Deaconess House, the training centre for deaconesses in Sydney, who heard about Archbishop Robinson's change of policy at the end of last week, told the *Church Times*: "I am very happy that the Archbishop has said that he will continue to license women to preach."

### Change of mind

It's thought that one of the reasons for his change of mind was the fact that overwhelmingly the advice of his colleagues and other Churchpeople was that he should restore the permission to preach to women and that on no account should he withdraw the licences from deaconesses.

It is understood that those who have had applications for preaching licences turned down by Archbishop Robinson have included lay readers and parish assistants. Apparently one parish went so far as to ask him to reconsider his decision, but without success.

Some of the women refused licences are said to have found the Archbishop's attitude very hurtful; on the other hand, he is recognised as being very supportive and pastoral in his dealings with individual deaconesses, and he has set up a commission to investigate the whole question of women's ministry and how it can be extended."

## Christian convention at Doomadgee, Qld.



The site of the second dry season gathering of the Northern Christian Convention, was the sandy bed of the Nicolson River, near Doomadgee, Queensland. Over 500 attended, from 10 centres throughout Australia.

A.E.F. Photo

Just outside Doomadgee Township over 500 Aboriginals from 10 centres in Queensland gathered, under the shady tea-trees, on the sandy bed of the Nicolson River, to hear Frank Johnson, Aboriginal Pastor from Tamworth, New South Wales. They camped around a kilometre-long water hole, upstream from Doomadgee, an Aboriginal Community in the Gulf Country of Queensland, approximately half way between Burketown and the Northern Territory Border.

This was the second dry season gathering of the Northern Christian Convention. Last year it was on the Gilbert River, 60 kilometres outside Normanton, where 300 Aboriginals camped and listened to the Bible, simply and practically taught by Pastor Frank Johnson.

What would bring so many Aboriginal people, from so far, over gravel roads, pocketed with bulldust holes? They came at their own expense, without Government assistance.

Primarily it is because these are Christian Aboriginals, wanting to meet together as Brothers and Sisters in Christ. They find the Christian Family a common union, across tribal and language barriers.

But obviously, it is also the indigenous atmosphere that heightens this Christian fellowship. The people "come alive" as they made campsites and fires under the

tea-trees, in much the tradition of the old corroboree gatherings. Shouts, coo-ees, and laughter rang out from the camps as they cooked for themselves between meetings, and Christian songs and hymns, to strumming guitars, continued well into the night, as the people visited each other for a "cuppa" billy tea.

The speaker was indigenous, an Aboriginal like themselves. They gathered on the sand, under shady trees, before a platform hewn from a flood bank, to hear him teach from the New Testament book of Colossians, that was well illustrated in the Aboriginal framework. Each morning and evening other Aboriginal leaders gave devotions and preached. As the night camp fires lit up the river bed trees, like a scene reminiscent of centuries of Aboriginal Tribal gatherings, a new indigenous Christian process showed itself as each centre took to the floodlit platform to share items, testimonies, and messages in English, Kriol, and Language.

The expressions of Christ's life, subtly distinct in each tribal group, was appreciated by the rest of the Aboriginals. This was signified by the numbers and response of those sitting, watching, and listening in the night. The preaching was earnest and a number of people made commitments to Christ and were counselled by Aboriginal Leaders.

Christians from isolated areas returned

Continued page 10

# Church and Para-Church, a history of tensions

Samuel H. Moffett

The tensions between the church and its practical agencies para-church are nothing new in the 20th Century. The tug of war has been going on since the beginning of the Christian Church by the twelve and the missionary Paul. When Paul's authority was questioned, he based the validity of his call and mission, not on the mandate of any Church in Antioch, or even on the sanction of the apostles in Jerusalem, but on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, a commission beyond the power of any human organization.

In the seventh century England, the tensions between independent and church-centred outreach brought Celtic and Roman missions into head-on collision. The Celts were more successful in converting Scotland and England, but the Romans successfully organized the Church.

In the Ninth Century the two powerful Churches of Constantinople and Rome, Cyril and Methodius, kept dangling in mid orbit as they fought for control of the successful Mission to the Slavs. For the Mission's part, they were more interested in carrying on with the project rather than the issue of with what church they were connected.

After a thousand years of trial and error, Rome finally realized that a more flexible relationship might be needed between church structure and mission structure. By the 16th Century autonomy was granted to a whole multitude of missionary orders whose outreach exploded across the world.

### Protestant missions

For the first 250 years Protestants had no missionary ministry and official Lutheranism thundered against the folly of a mission to the savages. In fact, the voluntary mission society, without support from any Church, remained the dominant German pattern up to the 1950s.

Anglicans proved more flexible and allowed two different missionary societies within their one Church; the older society for the propagation of the Gospel for the more establishment-minded; and a new church missionary society for the more independent "evangelicals".

### North American split

The North Americans were even more innovative. Instead of one church with two missionary societies, they formed one missionary society called the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for the two churches, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians and for any others who might have wished to co-operate. However, by 1838 the Presbyterian General Assembly was split over the issue of whether Presbyterian missions could be entrusted to an agency not under direct control of the church.

The liberal wing supporting the parochial society was drummed out of the church. The conservative wing formed a successful denominational Board of Foreign Missions. By the end of the Century mainline church agencies, denominationally controlled, became the standard organizational form of mission.

Around the year 1937, a reversal of the situation occurred. The conservatives broke away from the denominations to form ranks of their own known as "faith missions". Related to this was the emergency of independent denominations with a strong focus on missions.

It is no wonder that tensions have developed when today as much as 90% of the full time United States missionary forces operate outside of National Council of Churches denominations. The heart of the problem centres around the definitions of church, one of the most unprecise words of the Christian Lexicon, and adding the prefix "para" adds more confusion and ambiguity.

### Solution by definition, or Headship?

Church could be defined as a confessional body, denomination, a congregation, a sect and a cult. Para-church as a voluntary society, a service agency, a task force etc., etc.

John Calvin's classic definition of the marks of the Church, i.e., preaching, sacraments, discipline is not satisfactory to every true believer for cases such as the Salvation Army, originally a para-church, is now seen as much a church albeit without the traditional sacraments,

as others which celebrate their sacraments but have lost their moral and theological discipline.

Does this suggest that ultimately there is no difference between church and para-church? No, but it does raise questions as there is much common ground. Perhaps the Church of Jesus Christ is too big to be boxed into a neat definition and like His person and His work, the Body of Christ defies adequate description.

Ignatius of Antioch, on his way to martyrdom, wrote in AD 107: "That wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Church". This sentiment is echoed a generation later by Irenaeus who wrote: "Where the Church is, there is the spirit of God and where the spirit of God is, there is the Church and every grace".

No-one will deny the presence and power of Christ and His spirit in para-church agency; then what is the real difference?

As there is only one Head-Christ, para-Churches are no less parts of the one body than the Church. So can any particular church claim to be whole body?

Other people say the difference is in the recognition and acceptance by some higher authority. What authority? The word Church derives from a Greek translation that means "that which belongs to the Lord", which might equally apply to both church and para-church. For Paul, church meant "ecclesiastic", or "community, a called gathering".

From these two definitions, what organization can accept a lesser role? Would the Protestants accept a lesser role, because as far as the Church in Rome is concerned, the ultimate authority was from Jesus to Apostles and therefore the Pope as the direct descendant of Peter, has the authority. Would a Presbytery consider itself to be a lower governing body than a Congregation? The World Council of Churches is a para-church agency but strangely attaining membership is by authentication of a church.

### Is there room for co-operation?

If history of scripture cannot help us bridge the gap between church or para-church, how can Christians deal with the difference. One useful approach is Ralph Winter's war and wool analogy exposed in the articles "On the two structures of mission". In them he writes that just as a woven cloth needs a warp and wool, so then the church needs the general inclusive formal structure of a church and the voluntary functional groups organized for a special purpose. Winter admits that this does not clear away the ambiguities, as the two categories often merge. In fact humanly speaking the whole church on earth is a voluntary society.

The handbook on church-para-church relations prepared by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization is another extremely valuable survey on the problem.

It identifies and describes five major areas of friction analyzing each area of tension with a careful balance of church and para-church perspectives. Better than that, it goes on to suggest approaches to mutual understanding and co-operation.

No one organizational pattern of relationship will solve all the tensions, but co-operation is necessary.

On the para-church side the committee was "largely in agreement with the statement by John Stott that 'independence of the church is bad, co-operation with the church is better, service as an arm is best' ". For the churches, until they take para-church ministries more seriously they will not grow.

Perhaps the churches need both Christian councils and councils of churches with the two in constant

contact, one focused on outreach, the other on relationships.

There are no final solutions but a few suggestions are proffered. Each suggestion has two parts, one speaks to the church, the other to the para-church. First that, although absolute power corrupts, absolute freedom also corrupts. Second, churches don't grow; their parts do. But only the relation of the parts to the whole prevents growth from becoming deformity. This is the law of

the body and the cells. Third, there must be clearly defined lines of responsibility between the two groups. Finally, the law of love cannot be divided into two parts. Like the Spirit who gives it, it holds the parts together.

(This is a summary of an article in a new publication called "Together" published by World Vision International. "Together" is published as a service to those who minister to the poor and needy. It is intended to bring them inspiration, encouragement and practical help.)

## Lightning blamed for Minster blaze

After three weeks of investigation, North Yorkshire Fire Brigade believes lightning was the most probable cause of the fire which devastated the South Transept of York Minster.

A report published on Tuesday said computer print-out pictures from a radar weather surveillance system showed a "weather cell" over York at the approximate time of the strike — an isolated cloud formation of a kind known to produce lightning bolts.

A "weather cell" of this type, which produces no rain or thunder, is associated with the hot, dry weather York was experiencing at the time of the blaze.

But there were other factors to be taken into account, such as the possibility of a delay on the Minster's auto-detector system, Deputy Chief Officer Mr. Stan Phillips said on Tuesday. Tests are still going on to discover whether the detectors themselves were affected by the lightning strike, Mr. Phillips said.



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## Church growth fellowship formed in Victoria

A group of church leaders — from almost all major Protestant denominations — has formed the "Australian Fellowship for Church Growth (Victoria)".

The Fellowship for Church Growth has been set up to "facilitate the growth of the Church of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in Australia". The Chairman of the organizing committee is the Rev. Dr. Peter Moonie (Box Hill Uniting Church); the Secretary is the Rev. Phillip Saunders (St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Glen Waverley).

The goals of the fellowship include:

- To create an awareness of the importance and need of Church Growth in the Australian Church.
- To arrange national, state and local conferences for purposes of inspiration and training of church leaders, pastors, theological students and church members.

In the next 12 months it is anticipated that a Newsletter will be initiated (edited by Rev. Rowland Croucher and Rev. Dr. David Price). Initially this Newsletter will appear as part of GRID, a free leadership publication by World Vision (to subscribe, write to Rowland Croucher, Box 399C, Melbourne, 3001).

Several "Church Growth Breakfasts" are being planned. The first of these, at 8 am, on October 27 at Chateau Melbourne Town House, 701 Swanston St., Melbourne, will feature Pastor Frank Houston, from the fast-growing Christian Life Centre in Sydney. The cost will be \$10 per head, \$18 per married couple. For reservations, phone Pastor Phillip Hills (429 4655). It is also projected that a Victoria-wide State Conference for Church Growth will be held in 1985.

— Rowland Croucher



# English christianity

## (1) By Searching

Our roving reporters have recently cast their eyes over the English scene.

Sunday, March 1984 — a cold, dull day in London and some weeks before Mission England with Billy Graham and supporting speakers.

How would an average married couple stirred to enquire about Christianity fare in average Parish Churches in England? And so the search began! First Sunday morning to the closest church building in outer London. Formal, middle class, comfortable — the only discordant note was "the Peace" — suddenly, without explanation a minor explosion of matey greetings just as quickly ended with a muted explosion from the organ! In due course the preacher shared his ideas on human suffering. We could, he assured us, dismiss the writings of Paul (no reason given) and just as surely throw doubt on the early chapters of Genesis. In conclusion we must be grateful for our happier world now that diphtheria and pneumonia have been conquered. As we walked "home" we wondered as to the joy of the nuclear age and our present unhappy world.

That same night we went as "Searchers" to a large modern building to meet with a large, enthusiastic company — Church of England but with a mighty difference. Vibrant chorus singing, clapping and swaying, uplifted arms. Tugged emotionally this way and that. The sermon was racy, full of stories told with wit and vigour — but left us with more questions than answers. But here was mention of Jesus.

Another Sunday — so cold and raw in a building just as cold inside as out. A handful of people who sat huddled to themselves while wax candles looked just as pitiful. The Service was cold and irrelevant and the Sermon died with a whimper. We read in the Service sheet that "the Holy Spirit is received at Confirmation through prayer with the laying on of hands by the Bishop" — we were advised to turn to Acts 8:14-17 for proof, but remain unconvinced.

Other Sundays and other places resulted in 4 months of searching. That is, we met in Christian buildings and listened to accredited representatives — what answers came?

The most basic discovery was that the Bible so often quoted could be made to mean so many different things! We heard more sermons on the subject of "worship" than any other issue. But even so we were not told what worship was nor why we should worship. By far the most thought provoking address dealt with heaven and eternity with a most telling reference to Judgment. This and one other sermon were preached with a believable enthusiasm and concern. We learned more about the Christian community and social issues than we did about Jesus Christ.

In the midst of our endeavours the controversy about the new Bishop of Durham hit the papers. We had also watched the TV series "Jesus the Evidence" and we were interested to be handed the following in one church:

Is There To Be No End To It All?

"We had just begun to get 'Jesus — The Evidence' out of our systems when along comes the Bishop-elect of Durham who has said, on television for all to hear, that he does not believe that our Lord Jesus was truly, actually and historically born of a virgin (though the Bible says he was) nor does he believe that the Lord Jesus truly, actually and historically rose from the dead (though the Bible says he did).

'The Virgin Birth,' he said, 'is a story told after the event in order to express and symbolise a faith that this Jesus was a unique event from God.' And, as for the resurrection 'it does not seem to me . . . that there was any one event which you could identify with the Resurrection.'

After the programme, I wrote to the Prime Minister as the person responsible for nominating this candidate to Her Majesty for the appointment to Durham because it seemed to me that the consecration of a person holding these beliefs could only be a charade. After all, in the Service he is asked whether he believes 'the doctrine of the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it'. The Prime Minister's Secretary for Appointments replied that 'within the Church of England there may be more than one way of interpreting credal statements'. But is this the point? Is it sufficient that candidates for the episcopate believe just what some others believe? Such may be the 'faith as some within the Church of England now receive it' but it is not the faith 'as the Church of England has received it'. The Secretary for Appointments also said that 'for obvious reasons . . . it is not open to the Prime Minister . . . to reach judgments on matters of this kind'. The reasons are by no means obvious to me. Everyone who makes an appointment is responsible for the appointment and has a bounded duty to 'reach judgments' in the case of Bishops (who are appointed as guardians of the faith!) on precisely these matters. And if the Prime Minister is not willing to perform this duty then it is high time appointments to the episcopate were committed to someone who will." (Alec Motyer, Christ Church, Alamehurst Rd. June 1984).

In May we listened to Billy Graham at Ashton Gate, Bristol. It was Youth Night and the location was so different, but at least we listened to a statement that sought to tell us about Jesus and place us in a position of necessary response to His claims. It is said that there are 40,000 places of Christian assembly in Great Britain used each Sunday. In our time of searching we managed less than 40. Our reaction is that while there was much to encourage us toward the Gospel, alongside this we wonder why it is that if it be true that Jesus is God's provision for our eternal salvation — why do we hear so little of Him?

### SURVEY OF VOLUNTARY WORKERS

The NSW Baptist Homes Trust wishes to appoint a person for about 6 — 8 weeks to survey the activities of its voluntary workers with a view to better co-ordination and extension of their activities in the caring of guests in the Trust's establishments.

The position would suit a retired person with management and/or social survey experience and an understanding of Christian outreach work, but other applications are welcome.

Written applications would be sent to the Director of the Trust at 153 Epping Road, Marsfield, 2122 by 31st August. Initial enquiries may be directed to the Administration Officer, Mr. Alan Smith on (02 888 1600).

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# WORLD

## Christian Reformed Church opens Diaconal office to women

Following intensive debate and parliamentary manoeuvring extending over three days, the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America decided here to open the office of deacon to qualified women, provided their work is distinguished from that of elders. The synod also left the door ajar for women eventually to occupy other offices.

The debate and decision making followed a circuitous route. The synod was faced with a majority report and two minority reports from the study committee appointed in 1981 as well as with a majority and minority report from its own advisory committee.

In its first major action the synod decided 81 to 76 "that 'the headship principle,' which means that the man should exercise primarily leadership and direction-setting in the home and in the church, is a biblical teaching recognized in both the Old and New Testament." A related motion that there is insufficient evidence to hold that headship is a creation norm extending over the whole of human life also passed.

Then synod defeated the recommendation of the majority report of the study committee that the headship of the man in the church implies that women should not be admitted to the offices of minister, elder, or evangelist. When the motion to allow consistories to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon was adopted, applause burst from the galleries.

In other moves the synod decided to ratify the amended form of the Church Order adopted in 1978 and rescinded in 1979, bringing it in line with the decision to allow women as deacons; however, not before there was added to the adopted motion: "provided their work is distinguished from that of elders."

Synod gave local consistories the option whether or not to implement the decision. Synod also declared that no minister can be compelled against his conscience to participate in the ordination of women.

## Giving thanks for the life of Dr. Francis Schaeffer

Recently, people from all over England gathered in memory of Francis Schaeffer, who died in May of cancer at the age of 72. The memorial service was held at All Souls Church, in London's West End on Wednesday, July 25.

This was an unusual memorial service, because of the sheer charisma of Francis Schaeffer. Three speakers in particular — writer Os Guinness, moralist Raymond Johnston, and journalist poet Steve Turner — gave their grateful impressions of the man.

True spirituality, preached Jerram Bars of L'Abré, is the offering of our whole selves to God in worship and service. A thoroughly Christian mind was necessary in order to avoid accommodation to the pattern of this world, the relativising spirit of our age.

Central to Francis Schaeffer's ministry, he reminded us, was the authority of God over the whole of life in grateful and thankful response to what He has done for us.

## Anglican Voice Heard in Uganda

The assistant Anglican bishop of Namirembe has thanked Australians for their prayers and love following the recent massacre at the Martyrs Seminary, near Kampala.

Bishop Misaeri Kauma told World Vision that the death of the Rev. Godfrey Bazira and others at the seminary was a tragedy for the church. However he said that the Lord has taken advantage of the situation and blessed His Church.

The Anglican sponsored Mission 84, which began in May has continued successfully despite the violence. Bishop Kauma told World Vision that the Mission has had a big impact on school students and young people. "There are many who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, as the way, the truth and the life for themselves", continued the bishop.

Meantime, the Anglican church is trying to get the Martyrs Seminary back into operation. Most of the equipment and books were destroyed during the military raid.

At the same time, the Anglican church in Uganda has called on the government to commence dialogue with opposition parties, including guerrillas, in an attempt to find peace for their troubled country.

Last year the Catholic archbishop of Kampala Emmanuel Cardinal Nsubuga made a similar appeal to the government, however President Milton Obote rejected the idea.

In a powerful editorial, the New Century, the official Anglican newspaper in Uganda, states that its country has been ruled by successive governments that have been cushioned in power, not by popular support but with the barrel of a gun.

The editorial said that Ugandans with guns had turned their fellow countrymen into beast of prey. These victims had been hunted and killed in their beds, in prisons and on the streets. It said that since the present government of President Milton Obote came to power in 1980 it had been the military and not the politicians that had actively led the country. This had led to a worsening of the nation's security and the intended reconstruction of Uganda had not come about.

"The real issues", said the Century, "were murder of the innocent, robbery with violence, rape, torture, starvation, undisciplined army and guerilla warfare."

## Mission to London is £155,000 in the red

Luis Palau's Mission to London is still in the red by £155,000 and not even Luis Palau himself has yet been paid anything.

Yet the Mission to London team, who are this week appealing to London churches, as well as individuals, for help, are confident that the money will soon be found. And they hope that very soon now, they will be able to send Luis Palau "a love-gift" of thanks.

When Luis Palau closed his final meeting on Saturday, July 13, the campaign funds were £200,000 short. This was in spite of several appeals for money in the last week of the campaign. The team's initial statement that they needed £30,000 a night each night of that last week to break even had by the middle of the week risen to £50,000. In reality, considerably less than £10,000 came in each night, and sometimes less than £5,000. In all, only £60,000 was collected during the last week of the mission

# REVIEW

## Hong Kong's Religious Freedom

Many questions are being asked about the future of Hong Kong, including the future position of religion under the government of China. LI CHUWEN, a Vice-director for cultural affairs at the Hong Kong bureau of the New China News Agency addressed himself to this issue when he spoke to a group of Catholic youth organisations on 15 July at the Catholic Diocesan Centre. According to a Catholic official, this was the first time that an NCNA official had entered Catholic premises in Hong Kong. However, no senior Catholic officials were invited to attend.

Li repeated the assurance that had already been given that the Churches would remain independent after 1997, and that relations with the Vatican might be maintained. Li, however, added that no fanatical religious groups would be tolerated, citing as an example Jones' "People's Church" and their mass suicide. When asked how conflicts that arose over such issues would be settled, Li replied that such things would not happen.

According to a report from the Chinese Church Research Center in Hong Kong, Li is a Communist Party member who served for a number of years as Deputy Director of Foreign Affairs in the city of Shanghai; now he is Peking's main go-between and spokesman on religious affairs for Hong Kong; in this capacity he has already met with other groups of Hong Kong Christians.

Keston College comments that if the utterances of Li represent official policy, they cast a shaft of light on the quality of the religious freedom to be enjoyed by Hong Kong citizens after 1997. The example of the People's Church as a "fanatical group" is being commonly used in China as a weapon against the followers of Witness Li (the so-called "Shouters" or "Yellers"). In official journals the distinction is often drawn between "normal religion" and "superstition"; only the former is entitled to the protection of the law, while every effort should be made to exterminate the latter. Broadly speaking, the characteristics of a "normal religion" is that it has (a) an organised body of doctrines and (b) a governing body which is recognised by the Socialist regime and which accepts the authority of that regime.

## Bibles air lifted into Cuba

Cuban Christians have received 10,500 Bibles and Latin American mission publications, 1500 study Bibles, and 900 Bible dictionaries, following the Cuban government's authorisation of their importation.

Donated by the Bible Society, the Bibles will be given to pastors and leaders of the country's evangelical churches, according to their needs. This is the fourth shipment of Bibles accepted by Cuba since 1970, although there is still a very great need for more.

The books were air lifted in by the Cuban airlines, Cubana de Aviacion, which gave a 50 percent discount of freight costs.

The cost of the Scriptures, plus some car parts, amounted to almost \$38,000

## Korean centenary

It is one hundred years ago this year that the first Christian missionary shared the gospel with Koreans on their own soil. Dr. Graham is visiting Korea at the invitation of Koreans to share in their Christian centenary.

## Church of Scotland Called to Evangelism

The 1983 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland adopted a document called "The Urgent Call to the Kirk." It is a ringing summons to the re-evangelization of Scotland.

The "Urgent Call" diagnosed the causes of the Church's predicament in one sentence: "Erosion of fundamental belief has sapped its inner confidence, discarding of great Christian convictions has bereft it of vision and curtailed its mission, detachment of preaching from the control of biblical Revelation has undermined its authority as the Church of Christ, neglect in teaching the truth of the Gospel has allowed the general membership to become seriously ignorant of the Christian Faith."

The consequence of that "loss of evangelical substance," it added, was that the church had lost contact with the people. It pointed out that although eighty percent of Scottish people profess to believe in God, only one-third were on the roll of any church, and less than twenty percent were on the roll of the Church of Scotland. Over the past two decades, membership in the national church has declined by over one-third.

The answer, according to the "Urgent Call to the Kirk," is repentance and recommitment to Jesus Christ and His gospel and the evangelistic mission.

"Jesus Christ and His gospel must be brought back into the centre of the Church, and all its life, thought and activity, for He is the sole source of God's incarnate self-revelation, the unique way to God the Father, the only ground of salvation and the one foundation and norm of the Church. The Spirit of Jesus Christ alone can quicken and renew the Church and make it one body with Christ," it maintained.

The document did stir up some opposition over the past year. In its final paragraph, the "Urgent Call to the Kirk" described itself as "unashamedly evangelical and theological." Some ministers rejected it offhand, and one presbytery reported that it refused to be diverted from its "normal missionary outreach."

The general response, however, was extremely positive. Several presbyteries held conferences, and the church's office received requests from kirk sessions and individuals for 10,000 additional copies.

## Olympic athletes find God in LA

Carl Lewis, winner of four gold medals at the Los Angeles Olympics, said last week that "everything I do is to glorify Jesus Christ".

From stories coming out of the Games, it seems he is only one of many athletes who have a deep commitment to Christ. In fact, 55 of America's track and field athletes, about half the team, are said to be committed Christians, many of whose conversions have been very recent.

BBC Radio 4's Sunday Programme reported that the devoutness of the athletes surprised even their church leaders, Catholic priests, who normally work on the university campus, said they'd heard more confessions in the past two weeks than they had done in the past four years from students.

Lay Witnesses for Christ was only one among many Christian organizations at the Games. While its main purpose is to support young Christian sports men and women, other Christians shared their faith among the many thousands of sports enthusiasts who'd come from all over the world.

## Religion, Idealism and Marriage



Alan Craddock

Over the last ten to fifteen years several research studies in the U.S.A. have shown that highly religious persons tend to express higher levels of marital satisfaction compared to those who are less religious. This finding doesn't really surprise Christians and comes more as a reinforcement and an encouragement rather than anything else. However, some research workers have sought to explain these findings in ways that can cause Christians alarm if their explanations are correct.

For example, Edmonds et al (*Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1972, 34, (1), 96-103) argue that the relationship between marital satisfaction and religious belief is largely due to the tendency of highly religious and conservative persons to distort their appraisals of their marriages in the direction of what is seen as socially desirable.

That is, religious persons have high ideals and tend to distort, either intentionally or unintentionally, their responses to questionnaires measuring marital satisfaction in line with what could be impossibly perfect views of how their relationship ought to be. Edmonds presented data in 1972 which appear to support this viewpoint.

In the early 1980's a series of studies has been published which casts real doubt upon Edmonds' interpretation of the relationship between religion and marital satisfaction. W. R. Schumm is the chief investigator in these series of studies all of which indicate that religious commitment is an important and reliable predictor of marital satisfaction and is not simply an outcome of a strong relationship between a tendency to give socially desirable responses and religiosity as claimed by Edmonds and his coworkers. (Schumm et al *Journal of Psychology and Technology*, 1982, 10, (30), 236-241).

But what of the Australian scene? I have recently analysed the associations between satisfaction scores and attitude/belief scores for 100 Australian pre-marital couples. The results support Schumm's findings rather than those of Edmonds. The relationship between a measure of idealistic distortion (or social desirability) and religious orientation was not significant for males or females. Nor were there significant associations between traditionalist role expectations (a measure of conservatism) and idealistic distortion for males or females.

There can be little doubt that idealistic distortion can be a problem for investigators, but more importantly it can be a problem for young couples beginning their marital relationship. The Australian data indicate that persons high on idealistic distortion are also very low on their degree of realism concerning their relationship.

The kind of person who is high on idealistic distortion and low on realism is something of a "tender-minded romantic". They have high ideals but a very fantasy-orientated view of what they are doing and how their relationship is functioning. They can all too readily deny or evade issues which require attention.

For example, conflict might be seen as "less than ideal" and as always negative and destructive. Differences between husband and wife are thus more likely to be denied or evaded rather than dealt with constructively. Issues are postponed and tensions allowed to build up. When the conflict does emerge it is highly likely that it will be handled destructively and will lead to a poor outcome.

Thus, idealistic distortion can be a problem. It is an exaggerated form of idealism in which there is a significant

gap between the values and the actions which can best achieve the goals associated with those values. To have ideals is one thing. To have appropriate ideals and the means of putting them into action is another matter entirely.

There has been, as noted earlier, an unfortunate tendency to link idealistic distortion with conservatism and religiosity. To make this link is simplistic and not consistent with the bulk of research evidence to hand at this point. The person who expresses a high degree of idealistic distortion is not necessarily a highly religious and conservative individual who therefore expresses an invalidly high level of marital satisfaction simply because this is the socially acceptable response to give. The religious and the non-religious can have ideals, they can both be conservatives and are both equally capable of being tender-minded romantics out of touch with the reality of their relationships to their ultimate cost.

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# LETTERS

## Obvious pitfall

Dear Sir,  
I was interested in the announcement of two economic sessions in the advertised "School of Christian Studies" to be held from Sept 1—9, 1984. For a quarter of a century or more, I have wondered what our Lord meant by "Sell that thou hast and give alms" (Luke 12:33). Also I puzzle over His direction, "Give he them to eat", rather than letting hungry people go to shops in the way of ordinary economics (Matt 13:14, Mark 6:37, Luke 9:13). In both cases, He was speaking to His intimate friends, of course, a very small group.

The first is a command, but there is an obvious pitfall, if it is taken to mean, "Sell all that you own". I think it must mean "extra possessions". As I see it, a balance must be kept, so that the Christian is able to go on giving alms. As long as giving alms is the purpose of making money, and this purpose is carried out, making money (profits) is a good and useful thing. Not so, otherwise.

Giving to the person in need is, of course, meant to be the Christian's purpose in making money (Eph. 4:28). He is, however, expected not to make money to the disadvantage of other people, but to proceed, considering their progress as well as his own (Phil. 2:4). This is also borne out in the second part of our Lord's summary of the decalogue — "Love your neighbour as you love yourself" (Matt. 22:39).

A great deal is being said about legislating for justice. Christians have to "do justice" whatever happens to be the legislation. In

selling their possessions to give alms, it is clear to me that they must not do injustice to themselves or to others. When I was travelling in Israel, the guide pointed out an orthodox Jew who was giving money to another man. "He calls that 'doing justice'", the guide explained. God requires us to do justly. (Mal. 6:8).

We cannot all be rich, but we can all, without exception, become poor. Our Lord became poor for our sakes (2 Cor. 8:9) and He said "Follow Me".

As we make money in Christian ways, we can go on becoming poor by "doing justice" to those in need. There are warnings about becoming rich, both from our Lord and St. Paul (Matt. 13:22 and 1 Tim 6:9), so it is really a worse condition than becoming poor. We must keep close to Jesus to be safe.

Constance G. Knox

## God and Caesar

Dear Sir,

When Jesus said render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's, He really meant it. Sadly, we Christians often reason with an 'either/or' mentality.

Our duty to Caesar is our citizenship in the nation God has placed us. As Christians we are expected to be exemplary citizens, concerned for our neighbours, our community and our government. How many Christians are thoughtful and concerned about local, state and federal government? How many have made it a matter of Christian duty to know how to cast a vote formally, how votes are counted, who the candidates are and what they stand for and what their opinions are on the moral issues in legislation.

Just as the church made it its business to teach the poor and needy how to read and write in times past — and still does so in underdeveloped countries — so it might make up the short fall in education today, by teaching its members how to cast a formal vote.

Since governments have been legislating on moral issues many Christians are awakening to their responsibilities. However, to be heard as a force for good in our society, after thinking and praying through the issues it is essential Christians be trained to cast a valid formal vote and not throw away our hard won privilege by voting informally.

Yours sincerely,  
Muriel R. O'Neill

## Not voting labour

Dear Editor,

Looking back in retrospect upon the ALP's National Conference, it is now clear that Prime Minister Hawke's victories on uranium, Timor, Anzuz et al were dearly bought. They would have been expensive at a fraction of the cost.

The price tag now stands disclosed — the lives of innocent children in the womb. These were infamously bartered by the Prime Minister as quid pro quo for his victories.

By way of appeasement of the secularist Left, he linked arms with the likes of Senator Ryan, initiator of the motion adding the two fatal words "including abortion" to the Party's platform, in support of a mother's "right" to kill. He was even prepared to repudiate his own Deputy, Lionel Bowen, who expressly argued that abortion was a crime because it terminated life.

Overall, it was an exercise in offering up the eternal as purchase price for the merely transitory. Important as they are, uranium, Timor, etc. are here-today, gone-tomorrow issues — all unheard of a few decades ago, likely to be uncontroverted again a few decades hence. Human life, on the other hand, is sacred — of value for always.

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Any continuing pretence that Bob Hawke is really another Christian fellow-traveller beneath his agnostic exterior is no longer possible. At the Conference, he irretrievably chose Satan and the death lobby in lieu of God and the pro-life cause.

Who can tell how many unique, irreplaceable infant human personalities — conceivably of the same cast as Beethoven, Schweitzer, Shakespeare, Einstein — will be consigned to the incinerators of abortion chambers as a result of the ALP Conference's decision?

Voting at the Conference, especially its support for abortion, confirmed the finding of Professor Mol (see "The Australian" 23.5.84) that today's Labor Party is a captive of secularism. Its membership is made up primarily of non-church-goers or irregular church-goers, whereas regular church-goers — Catholic and Protestant alike — tend to favour the conservative cause.

Yours truly,  
(Jim Cameron)

## CMS unashamedly conservative

Dear Sir,

Under "Review", in your current issue, you quite properly quote the Church of England Newspapers on some matters in connection with the C.M.S. of the United Kingdom. We of C.M.S. Australia, however, would like to make it perfectly clear, through the hospitality of your columns that, while we trust that we are not sectarian or bigoted, we are an Evangelical Society: indeed, that is specifically laid down in our Constitution.

Where the Gospel is at stake, we in C.M.S. are certainly not "an open Society". If we are "perceived as oriented towards the evangelical parishes", that is only because their understanding of the Gospel is also our understanding of the Gospel: their heart is as our heart, and so they support us in the task. Frankly, without this understanding of the necessity of the Gospel, we wonder whether there will be any urge to preach it at all. This is not a matter of churchmanship, or detailed beliefs about the Bible: it is a full acceptance of the Bible's authority, and therefore of the imperative of its message. We, in C.M.S. Australia, are, in these senses, unashamedly a "conservative Society".

With thanks for the courtesy of your column.  
Yours sincerely,  
Alan Cole  
Federal Secretary,  
Church Missionary Society of Australia

## Depends on the man

Dear Sir,

If I was asked what I thought about the HEADSHIP OF MAN, I would reply it depends on the man. The word "head" (11 Cor. 11:3) should not be taken too literally. No intelligent man would wish to do the thinking for his wife. It is not God's will that a woman's mind should atrophy through lack of use, yet in many cases it has happened. Throughout history, those who dared to do their own thinking were called "blue-stockings" who men avoided instead of sharpening their own minds with the mental stimulus of an equal partner. The HEADSHIP OF CHRIST is not wielded in domination. God gave humanity FREE WILL to make its own choices for good or for ill. Not as the animals with inborn instincts.

Alan Barron asks why, if women were meant to be equal, did not the Church make them so from the beginning? (8/8/84). I ask him a question. Why, when God willed monogamous marriage, did He permit David and other patriarchs to have more than one wife as well as concubines? Because "the times of this ignorance God winked at" (Acts 17:30). The custom was of such long-standing that in New Testament times, Paul had to stipulate that a bishop should have only one wife. Custom alters but not God's will. In His own good time, He is moving today to reinstate women in His scheme of things.

But the devil is not idle. He has got in first with his bogus Anti-Discrimination Act which is a shocking parody of the Divine Plan and damaging to man's esteem. We abhor it. Women, however, are destined to her rightful place in the Church, and there she will be tested. Will she help sweep away the canker of unbelief infecting the Christian faith? If not, she too will be part of the break-up of this once honoured institution, just as the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in AD 70. But if she joins those faithful bishops and clergy who are presently holding the fort, then we may witness a Second Reformation greater than the first.

Come the day when the 18th century German theologians are put to flight by the brilliant Reality of the One who alone "is worthy to open the Book and lose the seals thereof" (Rev. 5:2).

Yours sincerely,  
Phyllis Creasey

## Vital Gospel in Fun Cassette for teens

Scripture Union has released for Australian teenagers a series of DISCIPLE audio cassettes produced in its London Sound and Vision studio.

The presenter is Garth Hewitt — the "rock cleric" who visited Australia several years ago for Scripture Union's centenary and who regularly sings for TEAR Fund aid agency. He is supported by Footprints Theatre Company who contribute their own brand of zany humour and by the group Crown Agent. There are vox pops, jingles, and what Garth Hewitt describes as a 'totally ridiculous series called: Garth Hewitt Starship Trooper'. Christian teaching in question-and-answer form is presented by the Director of Evangelism at All Souls', Langham Place, London, Roger Simpson.

There are six complete programs presented on three cassettes. These programs are entitled: Is there a God?, Who is Jesus?, Heaven and Hell, Talking with God, The Cost of Living for God and The End of the World.

The Anglican Youth Department Diocese of Sydney

is seeking to appoint a

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For further information please write to: The Director, Anglican Youth Department, St. Andrew's House, Sydney Square, 2000.

A fourth cassette in the series presents a collection of sketches by the Riding Lights Theatre Company with were previously released on an earlier series of DISCIPLE Cassettes.

## Entertain and teach

'Our aim in these cassettes', said Garth Hewitt, 'is to entertain people and at the same time to tackle the deep issues of life and to get across some of the vital and main points of Christianity.'

'These DISCIPLE Cassettes are aimed mainly at teenagers, though they'll probably be listened to by a much wider age range. They will be good discussion starters for youth groups, camps, clubs and school groups.'

## Not boring religious image

'We're aimed at teenagers, continued Hewitt, 'particularly because a lot of what the media do religion-wise immediately seems sombre and boring and does not relate to a teenage audience. Yet, teenagers are particularly interested in the great issues of life.'

The cassette jackets include discussion questions and activity ideas. The cassettes are available from Christian bookshops and Scripture Union resource centres — RRP \$6.95 per cassette.

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## STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

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# Editorial

## Depression

Spiritual depression is not an uncommon experience amongst Christians. It may be said to be an aberration or fungus that grows on a sensitive conscience. Some people easily sink into morbid guilt feelings, a sense of inadequacy and spiritual depression. This is not God's purpose for a Christian, rather as St. Paul says, we should rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4).

How do we overcome spiritual depression? There is a right and a wrong way. The wrong way is to urge sufferers to think more highly of themselves, to love themselves and to tell themselves that they are not as bad spiritually as they think they are.

This is the wrong way for two reasons. First of all, we are worse than we think we are. Jesus told us that when we had done everything we are to say that we are unprofitable servants and St. Paul, that great Christian character, said that he knew what within himself dwelt no good thing. The fact is that we are worse spiritually and morally than we think we are, so it is no cure to say that we ought to lift up our own estimates of ourselves. Untruth never helps. But there is a second reason why this suggestion is wrong, and that is that we ought not to think about ourselves at all.

The solution to spiritual depression is to take our thoughts off ourselves, and to look away to God and to keep in the centre of our thinking His views of us. He sees us as perfect through our relationship with Jesus. He sees no fault in us. He has forgiven us completely, so that the things which depress us are not there, as far as He is concerned (Rom. 4:7,8). We stand in His presence as His dearly loved sons and daughters and have His full approval because of our relationship through faith with Jesus Christ, our Lord, the one with whom the Father is always well pleased. This full approval of God and enjoyment of His presence is a tremendous privilege and one which every Christian at the present moment enjoys.

If we remember this fact we will be able to rejoice in the Lord,

knowing that our sins, which are real, are completely forgiven so that God does not see them; and it is God's view that counts, not our own sense of spiritual deficiency.

Nor can we overcome spiritual depression by striving to be better. None of us can ever be approved by the adequacy of our life or our endeavour but we do not have to strive for approval. We already have the full and complete approval of our Heavenly Father because of our relationship to Jesus if we have acknowledged Him as our Lord. We know Christ and we stand in God's presence as His fully accepted and much loved children. He cares for us.

So if you have a bout of spiritual depression do not be depressed by your shortcomings, real or imaginary, or do not try to increase your love for yourself, but accept yourself for what you are, whether it is good, bad or indifferent in your own judgement, (in reality it will be much worse). Turn your thoughts to God and to His love and to the tremendous privilege you have been given of forever being His accepted child.

God gives us this favour freely, and gives it to all of us equally for Christ our Saviour's sake, so that our hearts should be full of thankfulness to God for His free forgiveness for all the shortcomings we can see and all the ones we do not see. They are all forgiven, He sees none of them and we stand fully accepted, fully approved in His presence, so that there is no reason why we should not rejoice in the Lord always. This is a tremendous gift if you will think about it and be thankful. When the heart is full of thankfulness there is no room for depression.

This three line poem sums it up.  
"Look without and be distressed"  
Look within and be depressed,  
Look to Jesus be at rest!"



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## Lesley Hicks

A friend of mine who reads a great many Christian books calls some of them "comforters". By this she means not that they are cushions to fend off the harsh realities of life — there are books like that — but that they impart strength and encouragement, especially to those who suffer.

For both writing and preaching, it is a good aim "to comfort the disturbed, and disturb the comfortable". The Bible itself does both. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings both conviction and comfort, and it is important in any Christian ministry that both elements are present. But good comforter books, I am told, sell well and go on selling. The need for them never lets up. The right book at the right time, lent or given with discernment, can lead a needy person to Christ in the first place, or minister deeply to the need of a troubled Christian.

### Fear No Evil

David Watson's last book *Fear No Evil*, subtitled *A Personal Struggle with Cancer* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1984, \$4.95) is one such book. The evil he confronts is not merely cancer, but the fear of cancer and of death. Reading is a poignant experience, knowing that he died in February this year; the last chapter was written just a month before.

Yet David Watson wrote most of the book in considerable conviction that God was healing his cancer, despite the gloomy prognosis caused by the fact that, at the time a cancerous ulcer of the colon was removed, secondaries were detected in his liver. No-one could have been more prayed for, more loved and supported. A Christian celebrity, one of Britain's and the world's best-loved evangelists and writers — it seemed unthinkable that he should be taken at fifty, at the height of his career of service, leaving a wife and two teenage children.

But taken he was. Is it therefore a depressing book, and one which negates the value of healing ministries? In no way!

### A Special Case?

David Watson tackles the issues and problems with courage and honesty. He writes: "I have been acutely conscious of the unusual privileges I have received, perhaps because of my writing and preaching around the world. Not every cancer-sufferer will have pastors flying over from California to see him. Not everyone afflicted will have the benefit of many thousands praying. Why should I be a special case?"

The flat answer, of course, is that I am not. God is no respecter of persons, and loves each person equally with his steadfast, immeasurable love. In human terms, that love will naturally vary in expression. But God's unfailing love is the one constancy that everyone of us can trust. . . . We may never find a satisfying explanation (of suffering), and the danger

## Comforter Books

is that we may end up blaming someone, either ourselves or God. There are seldom good reasons for suffering, but there can be good responses." (P.136-7)

To show those good responses was obviously a struggle for Watson, but a triumphant one. That is one reason it is such a strengthening, comforting book. It could also be valuable as an evangelistic tool, setting out clearly the way of salvation, a theology of suffering, what happens at death, and why, whether healed or not, he could trust so completely in God's love.

### Canon Glennon's New Book

After reading Watson's book, I wondered whether I would find "How Can I Find Healing?" by Jim Glennon (also Hodder, \$4.95) in any way incongruous. Canon Glennon, as most will know, has for the last twenty years led the Healing Ministry at St. Andrew's Cathedral here in Sydney. On the whole I was reassured. It is a most helpful and balanced book, which I would be happy to share with a person in need of healing, whether physical, spiritual or emotional. It too could be a means of introducing an unbeliever to Christ. Pastors need to read it too, and to ask themselves whether their ministry needs a healing service component, or whether, if in Sydney, they should encourage parishioners in need to attend the Wednesday evening services at the Cathedral.

### Healing Ministry

Few clergymen could afford the time for the sacrificial commitment to praying for the sick that Canon Glennon and his co-workers spend. For example, he tells the story of an appeal from uncommitted but desperate parents for him to pray for their year-old infant daughter critically ill with leukaemia. He and a prayer partner visited the baby in hospital to pray over her, though at first with great misgivings, every day for a month. "For some time Angela hovered in the balance, and then very, very slowly began to improve. By the end of the month she was in remission, and was discharged from hospital. Five years have gone by with no recurrence of the disease." (P.84)

He quotes many written testimonies to the value of the Healing Service set down in answer to a questionnaire. He also deals honestly with cases where the outcome was death. "Far from the healing ministry being destructive when the person concerned subsequently dies, it enables blessing to be there that transforms death into Christian victory. Surely there is healing in that too!" (P.96)

### Gift Books

I would like to recommend too some other "comforter" books providing less demanding reading, perhaps suitable for sick people, or those who for any reason find sustained reading difficult. The World Home Bible League publishes attractive booklets combining meditations and Scripture passages entitled *Who Cares when I Hurt? God Understands, and Someone Cares*. At \$1.25 each, or \$10 for 10, they would be good value as gifts when visiting the sick or bereaved.

Another more general book of short pieces is *Richer Every Day*, a selection of one-minute spots from Radio 2CH, the Council of Churches station. Some are comforting, others challenging and thought-provoking. Each page includes a Bible verse and a prayer. At \$3, its attractive format and low-key approach would make it acceptable to many not-yet-Christians, especially those who consistently make 2CH Sydney's highest-rating commercial station.

## Church Missionary Society reports

The Anglican Church Missionary Society at its Federal Council in early August made an immediate grant of \$5000 for famine relief in East Africa, channelling the money for distribution by three bishops in the worst-hit areas of Tanzania. This is in addition to \$70,000 worth of medicines and other relief goods sent to Tanzania last year by various CMS women's auxiliaries. CMS has decided not to mount a special appeal itself in order to avoid multiplying separate funds and confusing the issue. Instead, the Society will encourage all its members to give as generously as they can through one or other of the existing African famine relief funds (The Archbishop's Overseas Relief Fund, TEAR Fund, African Enterprise, and the ACC Appeal).

### Budget Met

The Church Missionary Society, with a hundred and forty missionaries working in fourteen lands, heard at its annual Federal Council in early August, that its federal budget of \$1,256,000 has been completely met by gifts from churches and individuals by the end of the financial year.

### New Outreach

At its Federal Council Meeting in early August, the Church Missionary Society resolved to respond to the appeals of the Bishops of Zaire, in Central Africa, and Peshawar, in Pakistan, to send personnel to support them in the outreach of the Gospel. It further decided to explore vigorously the possibility of assisting in evangelism in other parts of East Africa where the church is either weak or non-existent. Everything possible will be done to meet the request for missionaries received from the Archbishop of the

Sudan, in spite of the political difficulties at the area at present. The Missionary Personnel Secretary will be visiting Pakistan in November, to pinpoint these invitations and plan in advance.

### Indonesia

The tenth Assembly of the Indonesian Council of Churches will be held at Ambon, Indonesia from 21 to 31 October. CMS, as a missionary society that has a dozen missionaries working with mainline churches associated with this group, has been invited to send a delegate. The Rev. Kenneth Frewer, at present on leave in Australia, will represent CMS on this important occasion. A fluent speaker of Indonesian, Ken Frewer has been serving with CMS in Indonesia since 1976, most recently as a youth worker with the Evangelical Christian Church of Irian Jaya (GKI), and is at present awaiting relocation. CMS resolved at its recent Federal Council meeting to do everything in its power to continue to assist the Christian church in Indonesia, our nearest neighbours, by sending personnel.

### Missionary Recruits

At its Federal Council meetings in early August, the Church Missionary Society confirmed the acceptance of some twenty missionary recruits for this year. Within the next few months they will be leaving for Tanzania, Nepal, Pakistan, and Arnhem Land. Next year, it is anticipated that an equally large number will enter St. Andrew's Hall, Melbourne, the Society's training college, where they will be joined by the New Zealand recruits, for six months orientation and training, including cross-cultural evangelism, missiology and linguistics.

## Stepping out in Style

A modern day "Mary Jones", dressed in Welsh costume, stepped out at 10.00 a.m., Saturday, August 18th, from Sydney Square, on a 950 kilometre trek to Melbourne, via Canberra, and commented, "This would be the longest walk I have ever taken!"

All was part of the commemoration of the Anniversary of the birth of a Welsh girl, 200 years ago. That girl was Mary Jones. For six years she saved and at the age of 16 walked a round trip of 80 kilometres (50 miles), to buy her very own Bible. That act of determination led to the formation of the organization known today as the Bible Society.

With a similar determination, 25 year old Mary Hughes, the National Youth Officer of the Bible Society in Australia, is aiming at providing 12,500 Bibles for distribution throughout South East Asia, especially in Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. At a cost of four dollars each, the target of \$50,000 is hoped to be raised through sponsors for Mary's walk; individuals organizing their own "walks" and groups participating in organized walks, sponsored by the local community.

At each town along the route, Mary Hughes will address meetings, school groups and participate in specially arranged gatherings. This is not an attempt to any record-breaking walk in the shortest possible time. It is a Trek to finance Bibles.

In radio interviews heard over several Sydney radio stations on Sunday night, Mary Hughes encouraged people not to



just look and watch her make her way "down the track" to Melbourne, but to actively support the project and to give generously to the Trek for Bibles

Supporters for Mary Hughes, and those wishing to join in the project, are invited to contact The Trek Line, in Sydney (02) 267 7136; in Melbourne (03) 63 8600.

The anticipated arrival in Melbourne will be October 6th, for a young lady named Mary Hughes, who is determined to do something about the need for Bibles in the world.

Ramon Williams

### CLASSIFIEDS

Classified advertisements may be left at the office or phoned to 264 8349 up to noon 14 days before date of publication. Charge is \$4.20 per column centimetre.

### Church Services

NEWCASTLE: St. Andrew's Mayfield Church Street, off Maitland Road) Sundays — Holy Communion 7.30 and 9.30 a.m., Evening Service 7.15 p.m. Visitors welcome. Rector: Paul Watkins.

MELBOURNE: St. Jude's Carlton. Near city centre, cnr. Lygon and Palmerston Streets. Sundays 10 a.m. Holy Communion, 7 p.m. Evening Worship. Minister: Peter Adam. Visitors welcome.

COORPAROO: St. Stephen's, Brisbane, Cnr. Cavenish and Churchworth Roads. Visitors welcome. 7.30 am and 9 am Holy Communion. 7 pm Sunday at Seven. Rector: Rev. Ken Baker.

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WANTED FOR NORFOLK ISLAND (in good condition) — 150 copies Book of Common Prayer and 150 word copies of Book of Common Prayer (large print), also 6 music copies. Will pay postage. Confirm numbers and description with Rector before sending. P.O. Box 14, N.I. 2899.

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WOODEN BOOK display unit double sided 8 shelves ideal for church library or bookshop \$150 for details Phone 269 0642 Extn 270 Geoff Giles.

## A Report on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry

The World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission has recommended for world-wide study its Report on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. Not all the responses have been euphoric, in spite of the historical nature of the BEM release. As a service to church groups studying BEM we publish the official biblical and theological response of one denominational group, the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, tabled at its last Synod.

### A. Overview

The Paper consists of three statements with annexed commentary, on baptism, eucharist and ministry, with a view "to overcoming doctrinal division on these three" (p viii). The Paper is an ecumenical document which is presented as "the fruits of a fifty-year process of study stretching back to the first Faith and Order Conference at Lausanne in 1927" (p viii).

By way of preliminary evaluation, the Paper is to be commended for its many fine summary statements of biblical teaching and church belief. In this category are passages like B4 (p2) on the themes of conversion, pardoning and cleansing depicted in christian baptism, 13 (p 20) on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church, and so on. Much in the sections on the practical outworking of the three doctrines in the life of the church is sensible, and where provocative, irenic, and should be cordially received in the Anglican Communion.

The greatest strength of the Paper in our view lies in the Commentaries made from time to time on the text. These Commentaries expose some of the sharp differences in church tradition that lies behind the text. Without endorsing all that they say, their careful questioning and effort to show a satisfactory theological ground for softening these differences is thought provoking and commendable.

However, by way of critical evaluation, the Paper contains fundamental defects. The three statements are controlled, and consistently so, by two assumptions and an associated goal explicated in the Preface, and which are open to serious questioning.

First, the Paper is written against the "accepted obligation to work towards manifesting more visibly God's gift of church unity" (p vii). Its goal in theological statement is "consensus" (consentire) (p ix). That is, in its theological purpose, despite the avowal of the opening paragraph, its norm and organising principle is not the revelation of God in Jesus Christ enscriptured in the canonical books, but what the churches have thought about this revelation. It aims at a consensus of opinion, not a conciliation and measurement of the church's doctrinal agreements and differences against the standard which God has supplied in his Son, Christ clothed with his Gospel.

Secondly, it works from an assumption about the significance role of the sacraments, viz: "As the churches grow into unity, they are asking how their understandings and practices of baptism, eucharist and ministry relate to their mission in and for the renewal of human community as they seek to promote justice, peace and reconciliation" (pp viii-ix). That is, the Paper consistently takes the position that sacraments should become significative of changes in world politics and culture, and not just of what Jesus Christ has done for us in his life and work, and what our consequent life together is. Church tradition and our own Anglican formularies have rightly restricted the sacraments to signs of the latter two realities.

These two assumptions and the goal of consensus in their consistent application are, in our opinion, responsible for much of the Paper's exegetical weaknesses and unacceptable theological formulations. For example, Jesus and his mission are given a title and status as "Liberator" (p 4), which is more in line with the interests of liberation theology than from the Gospel. The sacraments and the doctrine of Christian ministry are unacceptably pushed in this direction again and again — so on the Eucharist, para 20 and 24, p 14, and in the statement on Ministry, para 4 p 20. It is not that these sentiments might not be true on other grounds, it is that they are portrayed as basic to the Gospel and the sacraments.

Moreover, it is the guiding emphasis on liberation theology which makes the

study guide, *Growing Together in Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, by W. H. Lazareth tendentious. Each study is introduced by a short story pre-setting the agenda towards the social and political question. This means that the Paper is studied from the view-point of its basic assumptions and not against the external criteria of church tradition and the biblical teaching. It is a study guide that reinforces the Paper's own prejudices and precludes critical analysis.

### B. Baptism

In general, as to individual statements there is little in the section on Baptism to which one could not give assent. There are some aspects of the report which might appear to be over emphasised, or require further substantiation. There are also aspects of Baptism, such as the emphasis made by covenant theology, which one would wish to see more fully emphasised.

However, "consensus" as a controlling factor is apparent in the statement on Baptism. There is no clear delineation between the reality of salvation displayed in baptism as an historically completed action in the life and work of Jesus Christ and our present use as significative and participatory by faith of that reality. Some felt that this leaves the way open for an *opere operatum* interpretation of baptism which Anglican formularies exclude.

### C. Eucharist

In a similar way, difficulties may be raised about the Eucharist being seen as primarily a sign of the Kingdom (p 10) and not of the Cross — Jesus death. This may serve the goal of ecumenical theology, but it is not the focus of the gospel. The role of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist, the central place given by the Paper to invocation, is another case in point. This emphasis may well serve Catholic and Orthodox consensus, but it is not sensitive to the traditions that were re-shaped in the Reformation where the role of the Holy Spirit has been tied closely to Christology, and therefore, *epiklesis* omitted or muted as inappropriate to a true understanding and practice of Holy Communion.

More precisely, from the point of view of the Anglican tradition, two things would need to be borne in mind. Distinctions would need to be made between that which the Bible has to say about the Eucharist, and that which the Christian community has continued to say about the Eucharist, within its own traditions. Some of these things may be in addition to what the Bible has said, though not contradicting it. Some would present us with a view of the Sacrament that contains so much further material as to give a different balance of views to the Eucharist than that which comes before us in the New Testament.

Within the report itself on page 10, "The meaning of the Eucharist", the essence of the Eucharist is set out. Reading this section, it would seem that care needs to be taken as to the exact meaning of the much-debated word, "anamnesis". Is this simply a memorial, or is it something else? Second, does the New Testament present to us a view of Holy Communion as "a great thanksgiving to the Father for everything accomplished in creation, redemption and sanctification, for everything accomplished by God now in the Church and in the world"? This may be an unexceptional way of thinking. But it is an integral and essential part of the Holy Communion as such?

Further, one would wish to comment on the phrase on paragraph 4 on page 10, where it is stated, "the world which God has reconciled is present in every Eucharist in the bread and the wine, in the persons of the faithful and in the prayers they offer for themselves and all people?" This does seem to entail a confusion of categories. To what extent is "the world", in the theological sense, present in the bread and wine? Whereas rhetorically, one might say that "the world" was present in the persons of the

faithful, surely in one sense a gathering around the Lord's Table, is something which signifies the Church's distinctiveness in the world. The "world" in the New Testament is primarily that which stands in opposition to Jesus. And Jesus can axiomatically say, "My kingdom is not of this world."

In the same paragraph, the vexed question of the offertory of bread and wine is mentioned: "For the world which God has reconciled is present at every eucharist: in the bread and wine . . ." (p 10. 4). However, in the New Testament the bread and wine represent, not the world, but the crucified body and blood of Christ — and that, a unique and non repeatable event.

In section 13, the question of the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is dealt with. The words in the commentary on that section need to be borne in mind, and set out unresolved difficulties within the Christian community. But, because of the presence of the glorified humanity of Christ at the right hand of the Father it is entirely unsatisfactory to say that "Christ's real presence in the eucharist does not depend on the faith of the individual" (p 12-13). It is doubtful whether the words in section 13 are really going to satisfy those who hold differing-views on the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist as related to the elements thereof.

The next section, C, "The Eucharist as Invocation of the Spirit" is again a vexed area. There does not appear within Holy Scripture any invocation to the Spirit associated with the designation of bread and wine in any celebration of the Lord's Supper. This procedure and viewpoint had very early liturgical support, but was seen to stand clearly outside the canon of Holy Scripture, and the Australian Prayer Book continues to avoid any *epiklesis* of the traditional kind.

W.C.C. Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (for Ecumenical Affairs Committee, Diocese of Sydney).

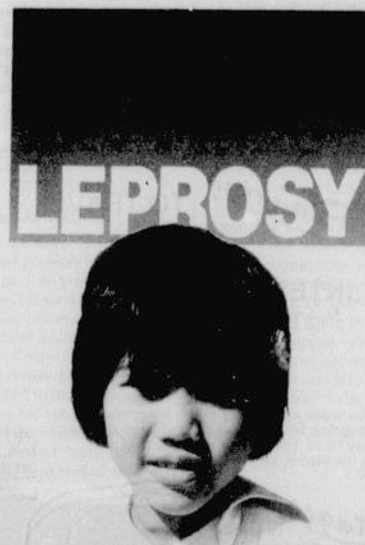
In section D, "The Eucharist as Communion of the Faithful," there is much that is said here which one would not necessarily wish to dissent from. However, one wonders just how far away some of the statements which are made here move away from the essence of the Communion as such. We note, "the Eucharist . . . is a representative act of thanksgiving and offering on behalf of the whole world." Can one legitimately say this?

Further on, we note "all kinds of injustice, racism, separation, lack of freedom, are radically challenged when we share in the Body and Blood of Christ." This may well indeed be so, but other things also may be challenged along the lines of thought set out in the traditional confessions in Eucharistic liturgies. How is the order of priority of challenge to be determined? Also how is the participating in the ongoing restoration of the world's situation and human condition? Many answers could be given to such a question, and not all such answers would be in agreement. As has already been stated above, the eucharist is not primarily a sign of the Kingdom, but of the Cross. It is redemption that is on view in the Eucharist (and that christologically conceived), not a doctrine of creation.

The latter part of paragraph 20, it would seem, move over into rhetoric. In section 21, the statement about "the ministry of deacons and deaconesses" as related to the aspect to the Eucharist there dealt with, would seem to need some substantiation.

The points dealt with in the final section, "The Celebration of the Eucharist," are substantially a rehearsal of things which have gone before. The question of who should celebrate is touched on in a traditional manner. The

Continued next page



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# THE GOOD READ

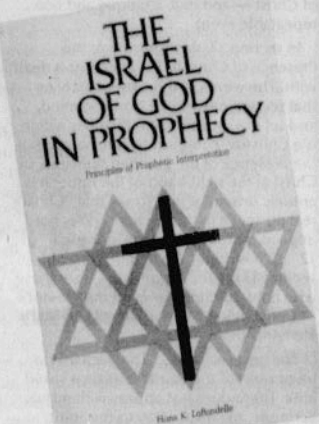
**The Israel of God in Prophecy,** by H. K. La Rondelle, (Andrews University Press: Berrien Springs Michigan, 1983), ppb, pp. 226, No Price.

This book provides a very detailed examination of traditional dispensationalist views which customarily drive a thorough wedge between the two Testaments on a two covenant basis. On these views the church does not form part of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants which were established only with Israel. The church will be subject to a secret rapture after which the years of tribulation would follow before the coming of Christ and the restoration of Israel in Palestine. Characteristic of dispensationalism is not only the disjunction formed between Israel and the Church but the extreme literalism with which much of the Old Testament is treated by dispensationalist exegesis. The author, however, is able to point to many inconsistencies in this literalist structure for dispensationalism indulges in its own category of allegorism (cf. Song of Songs) and moderate typology. Though it ostensibly rejects the latter and thus the continuity in progressive relations to which the system much of the historical sections of the Old Testament to typological treatment, while rejecting any notion of covenantal continuity. Not only is there this inconsistency but there is the loss of the thrust of promise and fulfilment relationship between the testaments which virtually demands an acceptance of typology.

While there is not a ready transition between Israel and the New Testament church there is the communality of purpose which binds both together and this is precisely what dispensationalist thinking loses sight of. The Old Testament Israel was a uniquely constructed political entity, a worshipping community, and meant to exhibit this relationship nationally. To this extent the emphasis of dispensationalism is correct. But as the author points out the gospel accounts make it clear at all points not only that Jesus fulfills the commission given to Israel but what with the ministry of Jesus the role of national Israel has come to an end.

We need not recite here the many

references in the New Testament to the construction of an undivided people of God (cf. Eph. 2-4) nor the witness that the Old Covenant has given way in the death of Christ to the New. The problem with dispensationalist thinking is its failure to ask the underlying meaning of the history of Israel and the institutions with which it was equipped. What was the ultimate significance of the temple, land, priesthood, messianic expectation etc.? New Testament fulfilment of this material makes it clear that the Old Testament institutions spoke of relationships which would be ultimately fulfilled in the New Creation.



La Rondelle's book is a carefully researched patient examination of the material. It successfully exposes the fallacies of the movement it attacks, but it must be finally said that the ultimate defence against error of this type is the presentation of a well rounded biblical theology which moves us from Creation to the New Creation. This book will be a very helpful aid to those for whom Schofield bible thinking has been a problem but it needed to be complimented by a more thorough going presentation of a biblical theology which bound both Testaments together.

W. J. Dumbrell

## Sharing the Gospel

— Department of Evangelism & Anglican Radio, Diocese of Sydney \$24.00

"Sharing the Gospel" by Donald Howard, the Rector of St. Stephen's, Lugarno, is a set of six half-hour talks on tape with an accompanying study booklet jointly sponsored by the Anglican Radio Unit and the Department of Evangelism. They are attractively packaged and sell at \$24.00.

These six bible studies are described on the study booklet as being "designed to teach the nature and content of the Gospel, give an assurance of salvation and assist confidence in personal witnessing". They will certainly do that.

In 1982 the Department of Evangelism

invited the Rev. Dick Lucas from St. Helen's, Bishopgate in London to conduct a series of lunch-time meetings in the Chapter House. Donald Howard who was at that time working with the Department trained counsellors for these meetings over a six week period of six (½ hour) sessions. It was here that the "Sharing the Gospel" course had its beginning. The six lectures are entitled 'Share it Round', 'What is the Gospel?', 'What does it mean to be Saved?', 'What must I do to be Saved?', 'God does save Sinners', 'We can be sure that we are Saved'.

They are vintage Donald Howard with careful handling of the bible and liberally sprinkled with appropriate quotations and telling illustrations.

They would be ideal for use in small study groups and I hope they find their way into the tape library of your church.

John Chapman

## Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, continued

Paper's handling of the question of reservation which has concerned the Reformed Churches overlooks the emphasis of An Australian Prayer Book which sees reservation as inappropriate. Note instruction 14 at the end of Second Order, the long introduction governing Communion of the Sick, and Article 28.

## D. Ministry

The section on the Ministry requires the same careful attention as the previous two sections. There is much which can be commended, as fully in accord with the teachings of Scripture and our Anglican confessional statements. For example see paragraph IIA 13, and the paragraphs relating to the development of the ordained ministry. The commentary (18) on the matter of the ordination of women handles that subject efficiently.

It is, however, necessary to question the apparent sustained presentation of the ordained ministry as the focus of the unity of the church. It appears to portray the ministry as the esse of the church of Jesus Christ, a view which is open to much debate (see for example, para. IIA 8). One must also question the mediatorial role attributed to the ordained minister — see para. IIA 14.

The section on Apostolic Succession is one further area where the traditional positions are treated sympathetically. The section on Ordination is less successful, with its over-emphasis in the epikletic character of ordination. The acceptance of ordination as a sacrament, though delicately inferred, is introducing another matter which must be seen as open to

further debate (see para. V.B. 43(6)).

The plea for the mutual recognition of the ordained ministries of the differing denominations and traditions can only be applauded.

## E. Response

In conclusion, and in reply to the request on p. x for an official response to the text, notwithstanding the positive comments we have made, the defects, both in the assumptions behind the 'Paper and in its consequent statements makes it, in our opinion, an unacceptable attempt to reflect the teaching of Holy Scripture and the confessional position of the Anglican Church in Australia. For these reasons it is severely limited as a basis for dialogue with other churches. Our advice to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches is broadly, two fold. First, instead of the basis of theological statement being "consensus", it needs the more adequate principle of conciliation and measurement of doctrinal agreements and differences against the standard which God has supplied in his Son, Christ clothed with the Gospel. Secondly, and more specifically, although not exclusively on the Eucharist, the Commission needs to adumbrate more carefully and explicitly the christological foundation which has been determinative in the Reformed Churches' position. Finally, we do however commend the Paper to the Anglican Communion for critical study, which commendation we cannot extend to the study guide *Growing Together in Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.

## Doomadgee Convention, continued

home impressed by how many believers there are among Aborigines. They had a renewed awareness of "Family in Christ". Leaders left challenged by what they saw God was able to do in other Aboriginal Leaders. Missionaries departed, encouraged by the development of indigenous leadership.

The groups represented were: Doomadgee, 175 camping and approximately 150 visiting each evening; Normanton 51 camping; Borroloola 27; Mt. Isa 20; Mossman 18; Mareeba 16; Mornington Island 16; Brisbane 5; Cairns 3; Malanda 5; Childers 5; Southport 2; Campsie 1; Camooweal 1; and Tamworth 1. Denominations and Missions represented by the groups were: the Christian Brethren; the Church of Christ; the Aboriginal Inland Mission; the Baptist

Missionary Society; the Uniting Church; the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship of Australia; and the Australian Missionary Society.

The Northern Christian Convention was started last year by the Normanton Christian Centre with the assistance of Mareeba, Mossman, Doomadgee and Camooweal Centres. The conventions are held in the winter because it is the "dry season" in the north allowing travel on dry roads, and easier camping. The 1985 Northern Christian is planned for Mossman, Qld. in September. This will still be in the "dry season", but on the moist tropical green coast, North of Cairns, providing a new experience for many of the Aborigines from the West of Queensland.

A.E.F. Press Release

## H.M.S. WOMEN'S AUXILIARY



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Martyn Newman

# God cares in Sydney from Melbourne

It was Friday night, John Smith had been in Sydney since Saturday night. Martyn Newman had flown up with him. Vic Heyward had ridden his Harley-Davidson up from Melbourne. Martyn had sent his up on the train. John's was being repaired after being wiped out on the road. The "God's Squad" was in Sydney for a local Australian-style evangelistic mission centred on St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Willoughby.

It was Friday night and about five hundred people were sitting in the auditorium of Chatswood High School. Martyn Newman was compere for the evening and spent some time getting a feel of the audience, with jokes, announcements and introductions. There were lots of younger people there, but a great variety of ages too, up to those in their eighties.

Peter Campbell sang a few songs, some funny, some serious. He brought many of us to think of our lives and the world in which we live, and to reflect on the meaning of it all. He sang about El Salvador, he sang about a relationship of submission to Christ. He sang well.

## "Come home, kid?"

Martyn introduced John Smith, President of "God's Squad". In a stirring address John spoke about the state of the



Vic Heyward

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## FREE AD

This service to readers is a form of free advertising. A person wishing to buy or sell anything can place a free advertisement of up to three lines. If the advertisement is successful, the advertiser is asked to pay The Church Record 10 per cent of the value of the sale price, up to a maximum of \$10 per advertisement. The service is known as FREE AD and runs on an honour system. The advertiser will be responsible for forwarding to The Church Record office what is owing.

FOR SALE: Greek-English Lexicon of New Testament by Thayer. Brand New \$20. Phone: 772 3070.

PEEL: ORGAN: Parkard Co. Indiana. Original St. Michael's Pro Cathedral. Wollongong. Perfect Walnut Case. Best Offer. Phone: 44 7812. Bus. or 498 1680 A.H.

world in which we live, and with which he is vitally in touch. He spoke about the futility of a world view and a life based on the kind of humanism proclaimed by the secular prophets of Australia. He spoke about justice, and about the outlaw bike scene. He related his experiences of life on the streets with street kids. In a long address he spoke about Jesus' parable of "The Prodigal Son", and at the end addressed an appeal to any who were not yet "sons" to come back to God. For God was saying "Come home, kid!" And he knelt on the floor at the front, and people came and knelt with him and prayed. Some just wanted to reaffirm their faith in Christ and commitment to God. For others it was the first time. It was so thrilling to see people actually come! People actually became Christians! Evangelism still "worked"! God still calls people back into his family, and calls them "sons". "Come home, kid!"

I cannot tell you all it meant to me that night. I was only sorry I am not more active every day in living in love for God with all my heart and mind and soul and strength, and my neighbour as myself — and so also being more personally involved in evangelism.

The night before had been a quieter night, when a lot of Christian people from the Willoughby-Chatswood area had come to the rally to show their solidarity with this work of the gospel. The night after, Saturday night, was another large gathering, at which John Smith spoke about the world scene and how much we are involved in the sinfulness of the world. He made a plea for those who felt touched by that message to stand, and many did. The next part was a shorter evangelistic address, based on the Zachaeus incident. His appeal this time was "Come out of your tree!" Again a number responded, for which we may only praise God.

The evening rallies were not the only events in the "God cares in Sydney" mission. The team went to seven schools. Some of these were just lunchtime visits at the invitation of the ISCF group in the school. Most of them were seminars for more than an hour with introduction by Martyn, singer, and then John addressing the students on the theme of the bankruptcy of our society and the secular humanism being pushed in so many subtle ways. He urged the students to be critical about the world view being purveyed by the media. He urged students to think! The bad state of Australia, despite the higher living standards enjoyed by our nation, was a pointer to the uselessness of a culture preoccupied with "How?" but not prepared to grapple with "Why?" In other seminars John ended with a personal testimony, or Vic spoke earlier about his own life, that Christ is the one who answers that question and has brought him to God as his Father. John issued a challenge to students not only to examine their own values, but to examine Christ, his life and words as recorded in the New Testament, and see if there at last, truth and right and God could be found.

## "React Cards" at Schools

At the end of most of the school seminars the students were given "React Cards" on which to record their response

and to ask for help by speaking to someone if they wished. Most comments showed that the students appreciated the team's "gutsy" no holds barred approach to their lives and the pop scene and their need for values and meaning. Some stayed behind to talk after it was over.

It had been a long time in the planning. It was part of our Centenary Celebration for 1984 as the present church building is 100 years old this year. We held a Primary Mission with Owen Shelley in March, and Convention in April. The "God cares" mission was originally thought to be a "Youth" mission, but widened as time went on. When John consented to come in 1983, he floated the possibility of a two week mission, and we agreed. St. Paul's Chatswood, in the person of Peter Hobbes and Richard Groscombe were in on the planning. Later the rector, Ken Churchward, added his enthusiasm.

The planning, the design of the mission, the artwork of the pamphlet, the advertising, the making of the logo and all

came. The topic "Crisis of the Australian Male — Stress and Loneliness" was directed to the feelings of men in the age we live in. John's testimony was that the only ultimate answer he had found was "What a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear". And as these thoughts linger in the minds and hearts of those who attended, we pray that God will bring many in repentance to Jesus Christ for the only lasting answer to the deep loneliness we experience without God.

In church on Sunday 12th, John preached in the morning at St. Stephen's Willoughby on Mark 3:1-6, Jesus and the man with the withered hand. With an appeal for response at the end, a number of people came to recommit their lives to Christ — and what an opportunity, in prayer with a Christian friend.

In the evening at St. Paul's Chatswood, John spoke to a packed church, and after a long sermon appealed again for people to come to the front and respond to the



the rest, were almost entirely done by members of the Willoughby and Chatswood congregations. It was a local mission. The three churches, including Holy Trinity, and then to a lesser extent the other denominational churches in the area, were active from the start in prayer and support of the organisation, in encouragement of Christians to bring their friends.

## Ex-Services and Rotary

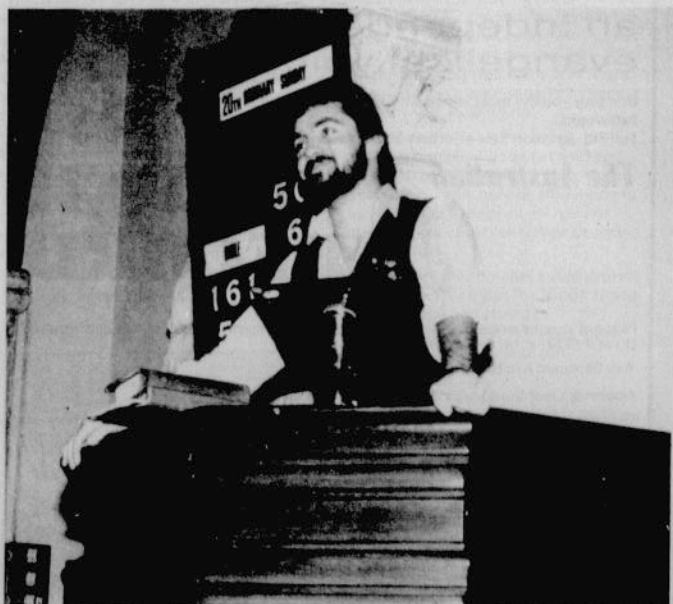
We advertised in the lower North Shore area. We tried to find avenues by which John Smith could speak to groups with no church affiliation. He spoke at a local Rotary club, at the invitation of one of the members, and was well heard as he spoke on the topic "Lessons from Modern Movies", about the dead-end of a godless world view as revealed in the movies in the last twenty years. He spoke to a men's dinner organised by the churches at a local Ex-Services Club, and many guests, friends of Christians, were invited and

message. Many did, and found real strength in faith in Christ for the first time, or just wanting to pray or talk with a Christian.

## "Sex, Identity and Meaning"

But of all the events of the two weeks the one which I will remember most will be the second Friday night Youth rally. The advertised topic was, "Sex, Identity and Meaning". There were a lot of people there, perhaps eight hundred. Robert Timms was superb as singer and clown — no-one could have had a straight face. Martyn Newman was excellent in introducing the team and the night. Robert sang some serious songs about life and meaning, which brought our minds to more serious things. A game which everyone played with a partner and a 20¢ piece settled us down. When John Smith spoke it was about the way in which many people try to find their

Concluded next page



"Come home, kid?"

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