

From Paul, Conference Executive Officer

Christmas Reflection

I recently recorded the following spot for broadcast on Light FM on Christmas Day:

"It's a simple story really: In the beginning, God. And God with love and generosity created the world and people. And the world was good, with 'shalom'—wholeness and completeness, peace and security.

God also fixed boundaries (or best practices) for the world. But wanting to be in control, the world's first people crossed those boundaries, shattering its wholeness and peace. Even so, God continued to love generously, and made ways for people to hear and receive this love, but they didn't (or couldn't) hear or receive. Instead they made their own 'gods' of wood and stone and hard currency and oil and fear and prejudice and hatred. Finally, God put on human clothes, a human body, and moved into our neighbourhood. God became one of us. For those who recognise God-in-Jesus, crucified but risen from the dead, God's love for the world can be seen and felt. At Christmas we tell and tell again this simple story. And in our giving of gifts, big and small, to those we love, and to those we may never meet but who need our love and God's love, we replay this story's deeper meaning: God so loved the world, He gave..."

Mandy joins me in wishing each of you a happy and a holy Christmas, and encouraging you to be inviting others to share in it too!

Conference Gatherings 2010

After a successful visit to Ballarat for the 2009 gatherings, this year we return to the Melbourne metropolitan area. All events will be held at One Community Church.

All-Ministers' Summit*—Friday May 14. This is a must for everybody who is in a ministry role in a church, or as a chaplain. Mission and Ministry are planning a day of storytelling, celebration and encouragement around the theme of 'First Things First'.

All-Churches Summit*—Saturday May 15. As well as the usual AGM reports and reflections, this day will give members of our churches the opportunity to hear and tell stories, welcome newly affiliated churches, and dialogue about what it is meaning to belong together as Churches of Christ in Vic/Tas.

Conference Celebration and Ordination—Saturday evening, May 15. Great music, good stories and positive inspiration and encouragement as people are ordained for ministry.

* 'Summit' is defined as 'a conference or meeting of leaders, usually called to shape a program of action'...these two Summits gather together the people who are shaping and influencing the present and future of Churches of Christ in Vic/Tas.

Indonesia 2009

My 2009 journey to Indonesia was from November 21—December 4. Accompanying me on the trip was Stephen Curkpatrick (CCTC, November 21-27) and Mark and Ben Dainton (Mission and Ministry, November 27—December 4).

The hoped-for outcomes of this year's conversation included taking the next step in establishing a partnership, identifying possible COCOA project/s, planning for a return visit from Central Java around the time of the AGM in May 2010, as well as the gaining of further knowledge of the churches and their systems, and the sharing of our governance and operational shapes. We were able to achieve these goals and more.

It was valuable having other participants in the conversation this year. In itself this helped take the partnership to a new level, Conference-to-Conference, college-to-college, and churches-to-churches.

See page 3 for reflections from Stephen and Mark and for some photos from the trip.

What impressed me again this year about our Indonesian sisters and brothers is their clarity around IDENTITY (we are Christians, followers of Jesus), PURPOSE (we are called to invite others to become followers of Jesus too), and ACTIVITIES (we will first seek to be a blessing to the community in which we are located, whatever that might mean, then build relationships, then appropriately share our Christian faith story).

Current Reading

Every day I am reading a chunk out of *Exploring Ecclesiology* (Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger, Brazos, 2009). As the book's sub-title says, it is 'an evangelical and ecumenical introduction' to current thinking about 'church'. It is exactly that, and as a theological textbook it is easily read, but challenging, provocative and inspiring all at the same time. We do need to re-claim a healthy understanding of what it means to be church in the 21st Century, and this book will be a great help to many.

I loved Donald Miller's *Blue Like Jazz*, and I also enjoyed his latest (*A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*, Thomas Nelson, 2009). Filled with pithy reflections on life and faith and everything, it is both a light and a deep read. As he says, "a good movie has memorable scenes, and so does a good life"...

Paul Cameron

Conference Executive Officer
pcameron@churchesofchrist.org.au

Conference President —Robyn Millership

The 'commercial' Christmas has been around us for many weeks – doubtless the tinsel and toys are good for business. But as I pondered on the extending time of the commercial Christmas it also occurred to me that we the followers of Christ should really be practising the presence and the coming of Christ into our lives every day. The celebration on Christmas day, although important and significant is really the designated time that we collectively celebrate the coming of Christ into our world in general.

What would our world look like if all Christians operated as if it was Christmas day every day of the year? The love and goodwill shared with others on Christmas day does make a difference in the lives of people. I recall reading that during the First World War there was a truce on Christmas day and soldiers from both sides sang carols in their own language and prayed. Each year World Vision and other aid agencies experience an increase in generosity as people use this medium to help others at Christmas time. Families come together and for at least one day of the year there is the opportunity for sharing love and joy, and in some instances reconciliation and forgiveness.

Jesus came into the world to demonstrate how much God loves His people. He gave us a model of what it means to be a servant, to address issues of injustice and poverty, to show forgiveness and mercy, to love each other despite our differences.

We are called to be Christ to others, to bring joy and hope into the lives of those about us, just as the arrival of a new baby brings joy and hope for parents, extended family and friends. The Christ of Christmas provides us with the perfect opportunity to share our joy and hope with friends, family, work colleagues and neighbours, to be bold and confident about how Jesus works miracles in our lives, and that living each day is an adventure to be enjoyed.

I am also very conscious of those people for whom any family celebration is a time of anxiety, frustration and heartache or who will feel isolation, grief and loss this Christmas due to the death or separation from those held near and dear. Although no words can easily heal the hurt, a special note, an invitation to attend a church service or share a meal may make all the difference in the world to those who are hurting.

Jesus calls us to bring hope to the hopeless and share his love with those who need a special touch of his Spirit. This Christmas season is a perfect opportunity to look beyond our families and us and see the need of others, to be prepared to reach out and touch somebody with the love, joy and peace of the Christ child.

As this will be the last newsletter for 2009 I would like to encourage you to join me in intentionally seeking to

be the person and live the life God has prepared for each of us. I am very conscious of the importance of living in the moment. Yesterday with all its concerns and precious memories is gone and cannot be changed, tomorrow's joys or sorrows are yet unknown. This moment is all we have to enjoy or to waste. Waste is sure to bring regret, but if we bring love and joy to others, we, too, will feel God's love, deeper and stronger each day.

As we move into the New Year let us commit every day of 2010 to live in the strong, silent strength, the confirming confidence, and consistent courage of our mighty God.

Robyn Millership

Conference President, rmillership@bigpond.com

A story of mission...

100 bikes have been given away to families and schools in need, just in time for Christmas. Lots of happy children, thankful families, grateful schools, and tired volunteers. Thanks to all the young guys and girls who helped restore bikes, to our program partners and event sponsors who helped make this a reality, and to all the people who braved the crazy weather to attend. If you missed the event you can check out some of the photos on www.thirdplacecommunities.wordpress.com. Here's to all those young people with new bikes, to community goodwill, and to generosity!



Merry Christmas from Third Place Communities, Tas

Surveying Ministers

An important survey for ministers is on the way! Conference Council has initiated a Review of Theological Education and Ministry Formation for. An important part of the review will be a survey prepared by Ted Keating and Dr Ruth Powell (NCLS), distributed electronically in late January.

The survey will give ministers opportunity to reflect on their theological education and to suggest future modifications and improvements. Individual results will be treated confidentially. After survey results are collated Ted will meet with groups of ministers to consider responses and trends.

The survey may take 15-20 minutes to complete, an investment that will make a difference to our future effectiveness in mission.

From Conference Council

Together towards health and growth...in Indonesia

Indonesia Reflections

Mark Dainton (M&M)

Sweet black tea, rambling streets with no names, endless street stalls, motorbikes in plague proportions, the 'village green' at the centre of town that we drove past countless times, mountains, scarily steep and narrow roads in the foothills, the laughter at my attempts to say a few words of Indonesian and never ending supplies of chicken and rice. These are just some of the enduring memories from the week that my oldest son Ben (18 years old) and I spent in Indonesia recently. Along with Paul Cameron, we were visiting some of our very generous and hospitable Churches of Christ brothers and sisters in Java.

We met with their equivalent of our 'Conference Team' in Central Java, preached in some local churches, spoke at a training day for pastors, spent one day with bible college students and another visiting some pastors in the nearby villages, met with the young people from one church and had productive formal and informal meetings with key leaders. Ben and I also had the opportunity to do some 'tag-team' speaking together at a local house-church and at the chapel service for the College students.

The major highlight was the spiritual passion of these wonderful people. During our time with their 'Conference' leaders, Paul asked each of them to share their dream for the future. Three themes were repeated numerous times: a passion to see more people come to faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour; a dream to plant more churches in unreached areas; and a desire to be a blessing to their communities. Despite the busyness, Ben and I returned spiritually refreshed and inspired. I'm looking forward to our ongoing partnership with them. Hopefully, we will have a chance to return the hospitality when some of their leaders visit with us next year. I'd encourage you to take advantage of any opportunities to meet with them – we can learn much from their experience and spiritual passion.

Indonesia Reflections

Stephen Curkpatrick (CCTC)

Two crucial qualities characterise the Churches of Christ ethos of Central Java, Indonesia, as these are expressed in church life and theological education. First, there is clear expression of Christian identity; second, there is a transparent desire to be a blessing to the community. The second is an integral expression of the first; the first clarifies the focus of the second.

Both foci are essential within the world's largest Islamic society as Christian faith is expressed with clarity and compassion. Both foci are at the heart of theological education at STJKI (Churches of Christ Theological College, Indonesia).

The pulse of theological education at STJKI was taken from students, graduates and faculty within an intensive course on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, conversations and visits to urban and village ministries.

Theological engagement occurs primarily through Scripture, the experience of Christian faith and challenges of ministry, which is expressed within a desire, faithfully to communicate the Christian story in word and deed.

Heartfelt and intelligent responses to Scripture are given life-changing expression in diverse ministries, in which the reality of human need and trauma is always present and embraced by students and graduates with tangible and life-giving confidence in the gospel as their crucial point of reference. Intelligent, contemporary theological interest does not need to be endorsed by deference to religion; consistent with the gospel, their conversation is with humanity not religion.

The dignity of human life in genuine *hope that does not disappoint* is conveyed through grace and truth in Jesus Christ. For this reason, two crucial foci—distinctive Christian faith and a transparent desire to be a blessing to others—are characteristic of the Churches of Christ ethos in ministry and theological education within the Lemkersa Conference of Central Java.



An Inconvenient Messiah!

"You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Luke 2:9-18

Last week I watched a dad walk through the shopping centre cradling the smallest of newborn babies. It reminded me of the birth of our own kids; these little bundles; shrivelled, wet, frail, vulnerable – there is something very helpless about a newborn baby.

Of all the babies born, no child seemed to have poorer prospects than Jesus Christ. Yet, paradoxically, while all those babies were expected, no child was *more* expected than Jesus.

The Jewish nation had been hoping for and expecting the Messiah for centuries. They had been looking for him everywhere and any time a likely candidate appeared, for example, when John the Baptist began his public ministry they wondered if he might be the expected one.

Yet, when the Messiah eventually did come, it wasn't obvious. He didn't fit the expected idea of what the Messiah would be like! He was 'inconvenient'!

The Messiah's arrival was supposed to cause a stir and be a national event, *but the arrival of Jesus didn't!* He came quietly with only Mary, Joseph and a few shepherds to look on. The Messiah was supposed to liberate the Jewish people from Roman occupation. Jesus *didn't!* He liberated their hearts and their spirits instead.

The Messiah was supposed to dazzle them with power and majesty *Jesus didn't!* Yes, He cured the sick, fed the hungry, delivered the demonised – but by and large these were the lower castes that no one really took very seriously - Rather than flattering the powerful, he reached out to those on the very fringes of the community.

The Messiah was supposed to preserve the Law and the status quo. Jesus spoke about the law of love instead. He turned it on its head. Adulterers forgiven, tax collectors and sinners welcomed; prodigal sons gathered in; lepers embraced! An inconvenient Messiah indeed.

The Messiah was supposed to make life economically easier for them – to reduce taxes, increase employment, bring down inflation and so on. *Jesus didn't!* He told the people to pay their taxes, to live simply and to help the poor. He overturned the tables of the money traders in the temple; He demanded the rich young ruler sell all he had if he wished to be a follower.

The Messiah was supposed to be a national hero and a huge success. *Jesus wasn't!* He was a dismal failure, head of a rag tag collection of misfits, rejected as a criminal and dying a humiliating death on a cross. Both Roman and Jewish authorities agreeing to his execution.

Call Jesus a Messiah? You've got to be kidding!

The Christmas story shows us how God becomes part of our lives in unexpected and inconvenient ways. God's presence can unsettle and disturb as God meets us. The birth of Jesus that first Christmas foreshadows our new birth – but birth is hard and painful and disturbing for both mother and child. The birth of Jesus marks the moment when God shared our human nature so as to transform it. A peasant birth in a dirty stable – what a place to find the Messiah!

I think that the words of Michael Leunig, sum up the Christmas story well:

Love is born; With a dark and troubled face; When hope is dead; And in the most unlikely place; Love is born; Love is always born.

On behalf of the Mission and Ministry Team, I wish you a very happy Christmas and I pray that you may be attuned to the experiences and presence of God in quiet, inconvenient and unassuming ways, through the unexpected places and people in your life.

Martin Boutros

M&M Executive Director

mboutros@churchesofchrist.org.au

M&M: Community Mission

'FEED MELBOURNE' GRANTS

Congratulations to Peter Los (Minister) and his team at Carnegie Church of Christ who run Open Hands Food Relief, a community food parcel ministry and drop in time. Also congratulations to John Davis (leader) and team at Liz's Kitchen, Bayswater Church of Christ. Each have received a \$10,000 grant from the 'Feed Melbourne' Project run by the Local Leader Newspapers for the storage and handling of food. Both projects involve a large committed volunteer base who minister and serve those less advantaged and struggling in their local community.



Also congratulations to the 'Helping Hands' project at Williamstown Church of Christ who have received yet another grant of \$1500 from the Melbourne Community Foundation for their learning and literacy programs. Next year Community Mission/ CareWorks will be holding grant writing workshops to assist churches in the applications of grants for community and welfare based projects.

Monique ten Hoopen

Director: Community Mission

mtenhoopen@churchesofchrist.org.au

CCTC—Churches of Christ Theological College

Timetable for 2010 on the web site www.cctc.edu.au

University places

CCTC has a number of students studying the Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Theology double degree at the College and Monash University. Some of these students have studied at CCTC and used their results to apply for direct entry to Monash.

Young people in Churches of Christ who find themselves frustrated by the VTAC system may consider studying ministry and theology at CCTC and, at the same time, opening the possibility of a university place in another field of study. Call John Williamson on 03 9790 1000.

Articles

"Between sacred, secular and gospel" - Without faith, the world is "secular"—after the distorted expressions of secular within atheism. Yet atheism is humanity in need of grace not religion. The gospel announces such grace for all, even as it resists religion for the sake of the "irreligious." Within faith, secular implies that creation is not religiously enchanted or divine but is a gift from God before whom we can engage all human life through grace and truth in Jesus Christ.

A recent article by Stephen Curkpatrick: www.cctc.edu.au/secular.html.

Over 100 articles on Christian theology for personal study and ministry posted at www.cctc.edu.au under 'Articles'.

Children's Ministry Intensive

Tertiary level training for people who are serious about children and families, www.cctc.edu.au/kidsmin.htm

Invest in 7 days of training in February 2010:

Mon-Fri 15-19th, 9.30am—4.30pm at CCTC, Mulgrave

Fri-Sat 26-27th, *Ministry to Children Conference* Careforce Church, Mt Evelyn

Calling all Chaplains

Alan Niven (CCTC) and Greg Illingworth (Mission and Ministry, Minister Care) want to meet you. Chaplaincy offers a vital and important arm of pastoral care to too many groups, places, and communities to name.

We want to know who you are, where you are serving, what we can do to support you, what you can tell us about your work, and whether or not you would like to come along to a dinner 6.30pm Thursday June 10 2010 at CCTC, Mulgrave with speaker Dan Murphy [Education and Accreditation Officer HealthCare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria (HCCV)], cost \$16.50.

RSVP for Dinner to Theresa Taylor on 9790 1000.

Contact: Alan Niven aniven@cctc.edu.au 0425 764 462

Greg Illingworth gillingworth@churchesofchrist.org.au 0414 396 877

Please help us develop a database of other Chaplains we should be inviting.

CCTC and Community Care

Focus On the 'Fellas'

A seminar for families, workers and all those who seek to support men with Dementia.

Friday 19 February 2010, 9.30am – 4pm

Held at CCTC, 44-60 Jackson's Road, Mulgrave

Presented by speakers from:

Alzheimer's Association and our Aged Care Chaplaincy team

Register with Theresa Taylor on 9790 1000.

Cost: \$20, morning and afternoon tea provided, BYO lunch, [free for CCTC Students and CCCC staff]

ACOM—Australian College of Ministries

ACOM invites you to embark upon a learning adventure that will transform your life, challenge your ideas, develop your skills and help you to influence the lives of the people God brings into your sphere of influence.

ACOM delivers Certificate IV, Diploma, Undergraduate and Postgraduate study in Christian Ministry and Theology. We also provide the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Check out our website or give us a call for more details.

Diploma / Bachelor of Theology

We will be offering a number of intensives during Trimester 1 for our Diploma & BTh students. A couple of those include Principles of Christian Leadership and Soul Care: Spiritual Maturity in Pastor and People.

Postgraduate Studies

We are continuing to run our Master of Arts with a number of new subjects on offer in 2010. In addition to this we will be offering a number of Doctor of Ministry facilitations across the country in conjunction with Fuller Theological Seminary.

Personal Formation

We continue with our Personal Formation program which delves into character, heart and personal issues affecting your ministry. This kicks off at the end of February with a student retreat. Postgraduate students can also select a Personal Formation optional elective.

Coming up

Mark Conner presents Leading a Contemporary Church from 21-23 June at CityLife Church Knox. The local church is a unique environment that requires a certain type of leader who is able to navigate the complexities of leading, teaching, and managing a variety of ministries while keeping a strong focus on mission.

For application and subject registration information please feel free to contact us. Trimester 1 will commence on Monday 1 February 2010.

184 Surrey Road, Blackburn VIC 3130, 1800 672 692 or 03 8878 2500



vic@acom.edu.au
www.acom.edu.au

Christmas Reflections from John Gilmore

The John Lennon song *So This Is Christmas* is haunting and challenging. The song invites us, at the passing of one year and with a new one coming, to ask a core question – “What have we done?”

When we celebrate God’s gift of love to the world in the baby Jesus, we are taken into the mystery of God in human form. He enters the reality of our experience and we are led to a place of transformation and renewal. Even more we become aware of the need for communities to be transformed – for people to be fed, nourished and educated as an expression of God’s grace at work. It is the Gospel work in the fullest sense. It is the telling of the good news of God’s grace in Jesus and the responding in grace to people in need which are central to the life of the church.

In this Christmas and New Year season I trust you will have time to reflect on the question, “What have you done?” and even more than reflecting, that your response will be one that spurs you to action.

Christmas in Vietnam

Despite Vietnam being a Communist country and Christians numbering less than 20%, there is a traditional Christmas celebration. This tradition stems from the days when Vietnam was a French colony and Catholicism had an influence on the population. Catholic Churches and Catholics around the country erect nativity scenes with figurines of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, Magi and farm animals. Decorated with Christmas lights, they are lit every evening from the first week in December until the end of the year. Christmas day is celebrated with Mass in Catholic Churches and a service in some Protestant Churches, but it is a normal work day for most people. Christmas songs and carols in English and Vietnamese are played in shopping centres, hotels and on public transport. On Christmas Eve most Vietnamese celebrate by visiting friends/family or going into the city centre and having parties. Some young people also don Santa suits and drive around the city. Gifts are given on Christmas Eve.

COCOA Great Gifts

For a gift that will make a great deal of difference this Christmas, why not give a COCOA Great Gift, and someone on the other side of the world will receive something they really need. The cut off date to

guarantee that you will receive the gift cards you order is December 15. Orders can be made on line, by phone or by post. These gifts are also available for birthdays and special occasions throughout the year.

COCOA Christmas Offering

The COCOA Offering envelopes have been distributed to each of the churches. A PowerPoint presentation is also available on request to val@gmp.org.au and may be downloaded from www.inpartnership.org.au.

Asia Pacific Emergency Appeal

The Asia Pacific Emergency Appeal has been responded to with great generosity. We have receipted almost \$175,000 and are in the process of sending out the next remittance to our partners in Vietnam, the Philippines, Sumatra and Samoa.

GMP Office hours

Please note that the GMP office hours are 9am–5pm CST. The office will be closed from 23 December 2009 until 5 January 2010.

The GMP team wishes you God’s richest blessings this Christmas season and for 2010.

John Gilmore

GMP Executive Director, jgilmore@gmp.org.au

I have now enjoyed 8 months in my positions with GMP and M&M. I have the wonderful privilege of meeting with Churches of Christ ministers on a regular basis and have found this experience to be invigorating and challenging as I partner alongside our ministers as we serve Jesus together. I also have the honour in my role with Global Mission Partners to be able to promote the work of mission around our churches and remind all of us of the work of mission that we are called to. A PowerPoint that can be used alongside any Christmas offering you may be considering to do this year is available from www.inpartnership.org.au. So lastly from my family to yours, have a Blessed and joyful Christmas as we celebrate together the advent of our Lord and Saviour coming into the world.

Greg Illingworth

GMP and M&M, gillingworth@gmp.org.au

COCOA Kids 2009 - 2010

This year’s COCOA Great Gifts catalogue includes gifts that kids can select and send to family members and friends. From socks and jocks to books and soccer balls the gifts are fun for kids to choose from and the needs are real.

There is a COCOA Great Gifts card just for kids describing the gift they have chosen.

A gift from the Great Gift catalogue is always the right gift!



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS at Urban Neighbours of Hope will be culminating at the Mission Centre in Dandenong in a free Christmas lunch for 100 people in the Dandenong/Springvale/Noble Park area, who would otherwise be isolated and lonely on Christmas Day. This has become an annual event for UNOH and is only possible because of the generosity of volunteers who donate their time, food or money to bring some joy and friendship into the guests' lives.

Help needed - If you would like to offer a couple of hours on 25 December to help set up, serve or clear up during the lunch, UNOH would love to hear from you. Maybe you can't do that (we realise it's a busy day for many), but you're able to donate some food (specifically – chips, mixed nuts, soft drink, juice, Christmas ham, prawns (3 kgs needed), BBQ chickens, chocolate, fruit or lollies). Or maybe some cash to buy food and gifts. Anything you can offer would be greatly appreciated, and help show the love of Christ to those in need on His birthday. Please contact Catherine catherine@unoh.org, Sharmila sblair@unoh.org, or Lindy lindycroucher@unoh.org to offer your assistance or call the UNOH office (03) 9701 7114.

TRAINING FOR URBAN MISSION - If you have delayed your application for **Submerge 2010** (our year-long, live-in training experience with UNOH), you can still apply - but quickly. Melbourne is full, but Sydney still has room for one or two more, and even Bangkok will consider a late application. Our current student numbers for 2010 are 4 in Melbourne, 2 or 3 in Bangkok and 2 in Sydney. (A couple of people are still discussing and praying.) But there is room for 4 in each location. Contact Jim on jim@unoh.org

A NEW OPTION for 2010 - A Friday morning Bible study at UNOH Melbourne: 'The Scriptures and God's Heart for the Poor'.

For those able to attend, we are going to run a year-long Friday morning Bible study at Factory 2/6-12 Airlie Ave, Dandenong. The study will do a survey of the entire Bible over the year. The studies will begin on Friday morning March 5th and go through till Friday November 26th. The class will not meet during official Victorian school holidays. Altogether there will be 30 Friday mornings together over that time.

The studies will start at 10am and go through till 12.30pm. It is made up of two one-hour long studies, with a break in-between.

The year will comprise of:

- A brief overview of the whole Bible: getting familiar with the big picture story of both Testaments

- and the inter-Testamental period, and
- In-depth study of specific parts of the Bible that deal with God's heart for justice and his love for the poor.
- We will look briefly at all the genres of scripture, but then focus in and do some books and passages in more detail.
- Examples of some of the books we will do more thoroughly: Amos, Micah, parts of Isaiah, the Gospel of Mark, the epistle of James, and parts of Acts and Romans.

The Sub-merge students will be doing this as a part of their year of training, but anyone else can join us for the sessions as well.

Cost: There is an 'audit' cost: \$200 for the whole year, or \$100 for either half of the year. The first half of the year deals mostly with the Old Testament, and it is March 5 to June 25. The 2nd half of the year deals mostly with the New Testament and is July 23 to November 26.

To register to be a part of this ongoing series, contact Jim: jim@unoh.org; or ring UNOH: 03-97017114.

With warm wishes from UNOH for a HAPPY and HOPE-FILLED CHRISTMAS, as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour who was born in the poverty of a stable in Bethlehem.

Kay Hebbard
UNOH Advocacy Coordinator
kay@unoh.org, www.unoh.org

SURRENDER

Even though SURRENDER is a conference, it's also an invitation. An invitation to SEE powerlessness and poverty locally and globally, to HEAR God's heartbeat for justice and to JOIN with the Jesus who pours out his life in loving the lost and least. It's about going on the journey together in unity with His Spirit ... the journey of SURRENDER.

Churches of Christ Vic/Tas are proud to be partnering with next year's SURRENDER:10 Conference being held from Friday-Monday 5-8 March 2010 at Belgrave Heights Convention Centre.

Visit the website to find out more about the growing list of partners, get more info on the lineup or to register!

www.surrender.org.au

Calendar of Events

Planning Ahead for 2010...

Ministry with Children Intensive

runs over 7 days in February 2010

Mon-Fri 15-19 Feb and Fri-Sat 26-27 Feb

9.30am-4.30pm at CCTC and Careforce

'Interim Ministry in Today's Church' Seminars in 2010

March 9-10, April 26-30 and October 19-20

Contact Bob McKay for more information on

0409 68 67 68, or book at www.transmin.org.au

'Going the Distance' - Willow Creek Australia

Friday 12 March, 2010, in Melbourne

Christian leadership can be a lonely, pressurised place that required significant inner resources to do it well and healthily. This seminar with Keith Farmer and Tim Hanna, focusing on Spiritual Leadership, will explore those resources and give some practical helps.

Conference Events May 14-15

Friday May 14—All Ministers' Summit

Saturday May 15—All Churches Summit

Saturday May 15—Celebration & Ordination event

These events are all held at One Community Church, Surrey Rd, Blackburn.

Finishing Well

For Christian Ministers and Leaders aged 50 years plus, and their spouses about the transition from full time ministry to the next phase of your life.

There will be four half-day seminars in 2010.

Book now on (03) 9890 0633 or sue@ea.org.au

For over 60 years the Christmas Bowl has been a positive, proactive way for Australian Christians to work together to make peace around the world. The voices of people trapped by injustice, poverty, homelessness and war continue to be heard. Please help fill the Christmas Bowl this year.



*Robyn Millership—President, and
Paul Cameron—Executive Officer,
Churches of Christ in Vic/Tas*

Churches of Christ Vic/Tas, ABN 26 403 323 495
1st Floor, 582 Heidelberg Rd, Fairfield VIC 3078
Phone—03 9488 8800, Fax—03 9481 8543
Email—cofcvictas@churchesofchrist.org.au

Classifieds

Christmas Festival 'Share a Christmas Dream'

Williamstown
Church of Christ
cnr John St & Douglas Pde

Dec 17-19 and
Dec 21-23
7-10pm each night



Come along and celebrate the real meaning of Christmas with lights, a life-size Nativity scene where you can have your photo taken, stalls, café, memory room, free kids activities and a Christmas tree where you can leave non-perishable food items for those in need.

Enter our Children's Art Competition: details and entry form available on our website.

Entry by gold coin donation
Live entertainment each night at 7pm
Enquiries: 9397 5715 www.willichurch.org.au

Churches of Christ Vic/Tas Centre Christmas Closure

The Churches of Christ Conference Centre will be closed from Thursday December 24, 2009, and will re-open on Monday January 4, 2010.

Properties Corporation wish to remind their depositors that all deposits and withdrawals need to be made in application to the Properties Corporation by no later than Monday, 21 December 2009.

Please note there will be no directory updates Jan-May 2010 as we produce the 2010 Directory.

Editor—Paul Cameron
Production—Claire Egan
Final inclusion deadline—25th/month
Website—www.cofcvictas.org



Churches of Christ Community Care

Arcadia Fundraising for \$11,000 Carendo Shower Chair

Staff and family members at our Arcadia Aged Care facility in Essendon are raising funds off their own initiative to purchase a new state-of-the-art Carendo Shower Chair, which will add to the high quality Christian care we provide to each of our 90 residents there.



In support of this project, on Sunday 22 November, Arcadia staff and family members held a fantastic fundraising sausage sizzle at Bunnings Highpoint in Maribyrnong. Commencing at 9am, staff worked in rosters throughout the day cooking sausages to sell to the public.



Funds still needed

The sausage sizzle proved to be an excellent team building exercise for staff whilst at the same time raising the profile in the community of Churches of Christ Community Care and our Arcadia Aged Care Facility. From a fundraising point of view it was also a great success with \$1,200 raised on the day and a booking has been made to repeat this event in 2010.

The Carendo shower chair is valued at \$11,000 and will enhance the safety and dignity of residents whilst promoting best practice manual handling techniques and therefore improving both resident and staff outcomes.



If any of our Churches would like to assist with the fundraising for this project, tax deductible donations can be sent to:
Joanne Antoni, Community Care, 1st Floor 582 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, Vic 3078. Queries: jantoni@ccare.com.au or 9488 8800.

Vital4kids Children's Books Relaunched—available online www.vital4kids.com.au

The popular Vital4Kids series of children's books has been relaunched to the Australian market just in time for Christmas.

Unavailable since Vital Publications ceased operations in 2008, bestseller 'Where in the World is God?', which has been out of print for the last two years, together with 'Will Anyone Listen to Me?', 'Here, There and Forever ...Where?' and 'Just Like Me' have now been re-released by authors, Michelle and Paul Andrews, in response to ongoing demand.

Aimed at pre-school and early primary aged children, these four bright, fun books use simple language and delightful illustrations to help children explore their understanding of God in their own lives and experience.

Where in the world is God?, the first title in the series, introduces children to the concept of Christian faith by encouraging them to see God in everyday things in their life. It was recommended as a resource for use in CRE classes by ACCESS Ministries for Ages 4-6 and was regularly aired in a Christian TV spot on Channel Ten.

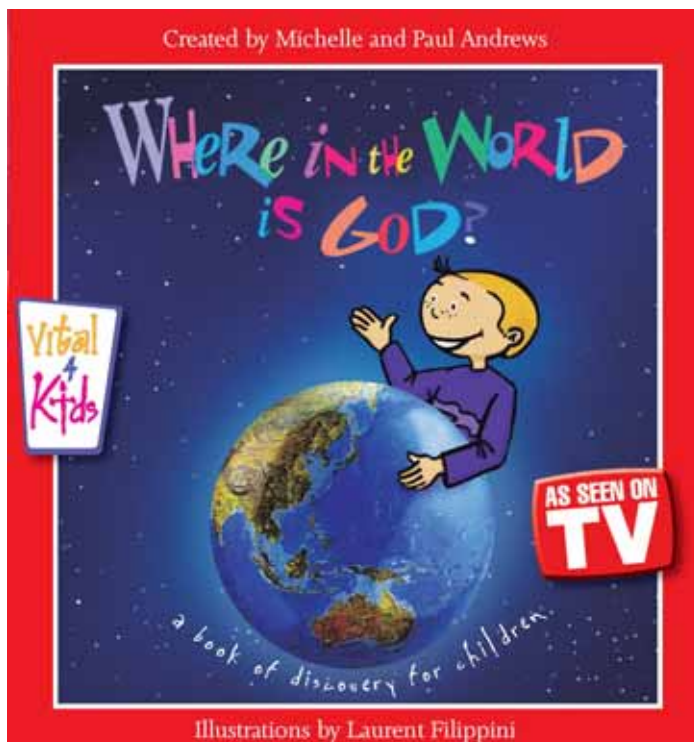
Will anyone listen to me? introduces the personal experience of prayer, reassuring readers that Jesus is always available to listen to us. It also reminds adults of the need to set aside the business of life and 'tune-in' to those often overlooked, yet significant, events of a child's day. It won 'Booksellers' Choice' and was commended for Children's Book of the Year at the Christian Book of the Year Awards.

Just like me! the story of a little girl who sees someone just like her in the mirror, is designed to build children's self-esteem while exploring God's power and love for us.

Here, there and forever ...where? is an unique book written to help children cope with death. Told from the perspective of a child whose father dies, the book helps children recognise the more positive aspects of memories, ongoing influences, and God's promise of life after death. This

book has been provided to families by LePine and Mulqueen Funerals and was commended for the Christian Children's Book of the Year Award.

At just \$4.95 each (plus postage and handling), these books are the ideal choice for award and prize giving, RE classes, Sunday School, play-groups and Kids Clubs, as an addition to your church library...or simply a perfect Christmas gift. The Vital4Kids series is available to order online at www.vital4kids.com.au using the secure PayPal payment system. You can also watch the online videos of all four titles.



Cover art for 'Where in the world is God?'

About the Authors:

Paul Andrews is a graphic designer who runs his own design studio, Adstract Art, in inner-city Melbourne, while Michelle is a qualified primary school teacher who has worked in rural and suburban schools, teaching children from ages 5 to 12. Together with their children, Elise and Zachary, they are actively involved in the Living Faith Church in Melbourne and enjoy using their talents and resources to help children build a positive self image and understand their Christian faith.

The delightful illustrations bring these books to life, and are the work of talented painter, photographer and graphic designer, Laurent Filippini. Born in Paris and trained at that city's National School of Applied Arts, Laurent and his family moved to Australia in 1993 and are now Australian citizens.