

JACOB'S LETTER

JACOB'S LADDER DROP-IN CENTRE
102 GAWLER PLACE,
ADELAIDE. 5000.

EDITORIAL

This special edition of Jacob's letter attempts to trace the development of Jake's ministry to its present stage and underline the current issues that need to be resolved in its relationship to the Church at large. It is not intended to be an exhaustive document nor is it intended to be a final statement of position, but rather provide a basis for ongoing discussion.

We pray that the Church body as a whole might see the need for the experimental kind of ministry that Jake has to offer as we also see our need to be an integral part of the Church body through our common confession and commitment. We would welcome any feedback, questions, admonitions, suggestions etc. Please do not hesitate to write or call in at Jacob's Ladder - 102 Gawler Place.

Yours in Christ,
KARL BRETTIG.

HISTORY

2...

Several years ago the executive of the South Metro zone of the Luther League (S.A. District) grew concerned at the lack of fellowship which existed between city Luther Leagues, and so decided to set up a coffee lounge somewhere in the city where fellowshippers could meet. Investigations were carried out and since there was a lack of response from fellowships, the idea was tabled. Certain individuals nevertheless continued to look for suitable sites over a period of a few years.

At this point in our history, the Dorian Society was formed, and they took over the vision of establishing such a venture. Gradually the emphasis changed from being a coffee house set up for fellowship purposes to being a mission to the lonely people who frequented such places. The Dorian society approached the zone and requested permission to set up such a ministry. This was granted provided the zone was represented and that the zone be held financially responsible.

Consequently premises were opened in September, 1970, on the second floor of 102 Gawler Place in the city. It was named 'Jacob's Ladder Coffee Lounge'. From this point until the end of 1973 the ministry operated as a coffee lounge with only part-time people involved. Towards the end of 1972 the Management Committee saw a clear need for a full time missionary to lead this work. Consequently, a request for such a person was made to the district Church Council. After much discussion it was decided to call a pastor in conjunction with the St. Stephens congregation, to work as an associate Pastor at St. Stephens and part time with Jacob's Ladder. The Lord led Pastor Doug Kuhl (at the time in Swyn Hill, Victoria) to accept the call, and he was installed early in January, 1974. At the same time we were offered the rest of the top floor of the building we were in, thus doubling the floor area we had at our disposal.

This led to an expansion of the vision of the work to be attempted through Jacob's Ladder. In addition to running a coffee house twice a week, it was envisaged that counselling services, street evangelism, media workshop (arts, crafts, music, drama), resource centre and a Christian training centre for this sort of work should be established. Training nights for the workers at Jacob's Ladder were immediately begun. At the time we thought that this would involve a long process of slow growth. Little could we foresee what the Lord had in mind for us within the immediate future. March 1974 saw us become the headquarters for Kairos '74, a nation wide "Jesus people" happening in conjunction with the Adelaide Festival of Arts. This event proved to be an incredible transforming influence upon the whole work of Jacob's Ladder. Our number of contacts increased by a four score people. The knowledge of Jacob's Ladders' ministry spread out along the street further than ever before. Despite the enlarged coffee house area ($\frac{1}{3}$ larger), our house was packed each night.

This rapid expansion of our work brought with it some problems. There was the difficulty of handling 150 people in the coffee house at the one time, discipline problems with customers, the need to meet new situation with our limited resources, and the need to nurture the steady stream of new converts who came into our midst. To meet these needs we had to establish and cement closer ties of "community" among our workers so that we could help each other survive under these pressures.

And so the situation which existed at the time Pastor Doug Kuhl was called had rapidly become history and new and broader terms of reference were needed for the ministry. Pastor Kuhl found that he had more than enough work at Jacob's Ladder to fill his day, and so fulfilling his responsibilities at St. Stephens became more and more difficult. Consequently, after much discussion, Pastor Kuhl resigned from his call and undertook to work full time at Jacob's Ladder, which he has been doing ever since.

During the last 18 months additional staff have been taken on. Currently we have 5 full time staff and 2 part-time. Jacob's Ladder has developed from being a group of people who gathered together to perform a ministry, to being a Christian community of some 35 core members plus friends and contacts, totaling some 100 persons. As such a Christian community, we seek to fulfill the Lord's call to us to be His visible Body in the midst of the world.

We are finding great joy in being able to share life with each other and those the Lord brings to us. The Lord leads us to share both our spiritual and our material blessings which He has bestowed on us, using these to complete the body of Christ and to build it up into His perfect image. In all things we seek to bring glory and honour to Him who is Lord in our midst.

- Steen Olson.

AIMS FOR...

1. COMMUNITY

Scriptural Basis:- 1 Cor. 12; Eph.4; 1Peter 2:2-10; Acts 2:42ff; Acts 4; John 17 etc.

- To be the people of God, God's family, visible, actively demonstrating our oneness under the Lordship of Christ in all areas of our lives - worship, witness, nurture, material possessions, spiritual gifts.

Introduction

Between the death of Christ and the Last Day it is only by a gracious anticipation of the last things that Christians are privileged to live in visible fellowship with other Christians. It is by the grace of God that a congregation is permitted to gather visibly in this world to share God's Word and sacrament. Not all Christians receive this blessing. The imprisoned, the sick, the scattered lonely, the proclaimers of the Gospel in heathen lands stand alone. They know that visible fellowship is a blessing.

Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.

What does this mean? It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together . SCM Press Ltd. 1972. pp8,10f).

No-one can develop in isolation - it is impossible. For man was created to have a relationship with God his Father; with fellow Christian believers, as members of God's family or house-hold and with the rest of God's creation.

Ultimately our relationship with Jesus and our Father is going to be hindered from reaching any depth if we cannot develop a relationship with our fellow believers. "Everyone who loves God loves His children also". (1 John 5:1). A real loner is usually embittered or suffering from rejection, and is frustrated within.

To fully appreciate and identify with our natural earthly family we need to live with them. Inter-relationships bring an understanding, a concern and a genuine love. Similarly, in the Christian community - family. eg. Eph. 4-6, the Letter of James, etc.

The aims for Community Life in the three basic areas of our relationships are:-

Section One: G O D

To glorify God in the totality of our daily lives presenting our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him which is our spiritual worship (Rom. 12:1).

To recognise the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the totality of life. To make anything else, even the concept of community, the central focus of our life would be idolatry. Jesus is the One we are to lift up, worship and follow.

To seek to obey God in His Word as the only true source and authority for all matter of faith and life.

Section Two: EACH OTHER

This involves WANTING to relate to all others the way Jesus wants us to. His life is the example we must study and apply to our community. John 13:33f.

It involves basing all our relationships on AGAPE love; that is a constant, daily, hourly application of this agape love to our life. We begin to lay aside the things we would like to do, say, think, feel etc. and begin to do what is best for the others and the whole community. Phil. 2:3f; Eph. 4:25ff; Col. 3:12ff; Rom. 13:6ff; Matt. 5-7 etc.

It involves taking RESPONSIBILITY for all members of the community. This means identifying with them; sharing their burdens and problems; bearing with the weak, and ultimately giving totally of yourself. Phil. 2:1-11.

It involves each person coming to the place where he recognises that he personally has something to CONTRIBUTE to the up-building of the others in the community. Eph. 4:10-16.

Section Three: THE WORLD

To care for God's creation.

To seek to be an example of Christian living.

To share with neighbours the Good News, witnessing for peace and justice and confronting evil.

To seek to serve the needs of those around us and stand with the poor and the oppressed.

To be willing to go anywhere for the sake of the Gospel.

2. MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

Of course money will always be needed, as well as property and possessions, if one is to live at all. But what Jesus is emphasising is that the pursuit of these for their own sake, unrelated to purposes of ministry, is out of keeping with the principles and objects of the Kingdom of God. These are hard sayings indeed to those who live in a capitalist society, where the virtues of acquiring the security and status that wealth provides are stressed openly and plainly. But when one sees how much the mobilisation and deployment of the Church's manpower resources are let and hindered by the pressures involved in acquiring such securities, one should be more than ever convinced that Jesus was right, and discipleship for all Christians involves putting Him, and the ministry that He calls us to, before all other considerations.

(Michael Harper, A New Way of Living, Hodder & Stoughton, p.84).

1. The Simple Life.

- a. Christ is central to us as Saviour and Lord, Saviour to us over all worldly influence and bondage, Lord for us in all our areas of life.

- b. The life of discipleship is undermined whenever anything, be it personal piety, the law or the world, is allowed to come between Christ and ourselves. Material possessions tend to turn the hearts of disciples away from Jesus. The question is: what are we really devoted to? The word of Jesus cannot penetrate the hearts of those who have devoted their lives to the accumulation of material possessions.
- c. This means that we cannot live according to greed but according to need.
(What determines our needs? - The propoganda of secular capitalistic society around us? Or the compassion of the Lord Jesus within us for a world in dread darkness and death?)

2. God's Warning Against the Rich!

- Matt. 5:19-34; Matt. 19:24ff; Mark 10:25ff; Luke 18:25ff;
- Luke 12:13-34 : Greedy will not enter the Kingdom of God.
- Eph.5:5 : Greed is idol worship - eliminated from Kingdom of God.
- Col. 3:5 : Greed is idol worship - eliminated from Kingdom of God.
- Hobrews 13:5 : Greed is idol worship - eliminated from Kingdom of God.
- 1 Cor. 6:9 : Greed listed together with idol worship, homosexuality, stealing.
- 1 Tim. 6:9ff : Love of money root of all evil.
- James 2:6ff : 'Woe to the rich!'
- James 5:1-6 : 'Woe to the rich, God's wrath will be poured out upon them.'

In view of the serious statements God makes in Scripture against greed, we have been forced to urgently consider the text of Ephesians 4:28, "Let the man now earn so that he is able to help the poor", noting that this now must be our true motivation to earn money beyond our basic needs.

Scripture constantly hastens to assure us that God will care for us for all we need - so long as we are not slack or lazy concerning our work in His Kingdom.

- a. Jesus does not forbid the possession of property in itself. Earthly goods are given to be used, not to be collected. (cf. Manna in the wilderness). Where our treasure is, there is our trust, our security, our consolation and our God. Hoarding is idolatry.
- b. Thus it is that our motivation has changed from self-seeking to one where we earn so that we may have resources to distribute among the poor, to employ for the work of the Kingdom.

3. This "holding all things in common" is not economic in the sense of a planned communistic economy nor is it legal in the sense of a constitutional socialization of property, nor is it a philosophy. It is the free and spontaneous action of the believers as a result of the Spirit's work in their midst to release through them the material means required for Christ's Kingdom.

4. Our motivation in each and every case is one of love received and felt, because we have been released from the clutches of a materialistic

basis for life; and freed to live out our life in joyous thankfulness to God for all He has done, does and gives. Because we now trust God's goodness for our provision, because we do not require thousands of dollars to meet our most basic needs, because we have learnt to live cheaply, we no longer need spend our energy chasing after the worlds fashions and fads and materialistic illusions of security and happiness.

We are now freed to give ourselves more totally for the Kingdom's sake using more of our energy, time, resources for the work of Christ.

3. Our Mission

"How can the Church convert the world. This is the conventional question many Christians ask. But aside from the pertinent fact that ^{it is} God and not the Church who converts, the real question is not whether the Church can convert the world, but whether God can convert His Church. Can the Church be converted for its mission in the world or is it so ingrown in its pre-occupation with itself, so concerned with its survival and growth, so wedded as a culture-religion to the established and accepted way of life, that nothing can change it The imperative confronting the Church is to reverse the direction of its life; to be converted toward the world that it might there join Christ in His liberating work: to be transformed from the unholy worldliness of caution, fear and retreat to the holy worldliness of boldness, courage and sacrificial love for all sorts and conditions of men".

"For lay folk in the Church there is no forbidden work. There is no corner of human existence, however degrading or neglected, into which they may not venture; no person, however beleaguered or possessed, whom they may not befriend and represent; no cause, however vain or stupid, in which they may not witness; no risk, however costly or imprudent, which they may not undertake.

This intimacy with the world as it is, this peculiar freedom, this awful innocence toward the world which a Christian is given, makes a Christian look like a sucker. He looks like that to other men because he is engaged in the wholesale expenditure of his life. He looks like that because he is without caution or prudence in preserving his own life. He looks like that because he is not threatened by the power of death either over his own life or over the rest of the world. He looks like that because he is free to give his life - to die - imminently, today, for the sake of any one or anything at all, even for those or that which seems unworthy of his death, thereby celebrating the One who died for all though none be worthy, not even one.

A Christian is not distinguished by his political views or moral decisions, or habitual conduct, or personal piety, or, least of all, by his churchly activities. A Christian is distinguished by his radical esteem for the Incarnation.

The characteristic place to find a Christian is among his very enemies."

"It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work. The Kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the Kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses and lilies, not with the bad people but the devout people. O you blasphemers and betrayers of Christ! If Christ had done what you are doing who would ever have been spared?" (Luther).

"I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries" (Zech. 10:9. According to God's will Christendom is a scattered people, scattered like seed 'into all the kingdoms of the earth' (Deut. 28:25.) That is its curse and its promise. God's people must dwell in far countries among the unbelievers, but it will be the seed of the Kingdom of God in all the world."

(Quotes from: Paul L. Stagg, William Stringfellow, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.)

The body of Christ, God's holy community, are the people whom God's love and acceptance has been shed abroad in their hearts and lives through Christ Jesus. This love and acceptance God's people now share among themselves and thus enable each other to share God's love with the world.

Our witness becomes visible to the world when this is actualized among God's people as community. There God's love in Jesus is received, shared and acted upon. Christian community is more fully enabled to be a channel of God's love, channeling love into a loveless world. The Christian community offers Christ's whole message of healing from sin. We need evangelism, but we need something to call people into - a Body where they will be healed, supported, and instructed. Nothing is more important for the world to see than the real alternative at work. The Gospel ceases to be rhetoric and becomes a way of life.

WHAT'S HAPPENING CURRENTLY AT JAKES

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The ministry of Jacob's Ladder can not be seen only in terms of a coffee house outreach program. The coffee house which is still in operation, is only a portion of the total ministry of Jake's.

Central to the ministry is the principle of a caring and sharing community of believers devoted to teaching, fellowship and prayer. (Acts 2:42). We are learning what it means to be a Christian community living in a world that has lost its experience of community. (John 13:34-35). We are seeking to support each other in order that we might fulfil the ministry that Christ has called us to fulfil. (Gal. 6:2-6).

Some members of the community have been led to live together in extended family type households in response to the call of Jesus. These households exist in order that young Christians might be nurtured in the faith in normal day to day situations as well as in Bible sharing and prayer times. Many of these young Christians have come out of situations in which their peer group has been heavily involved in drugs, biko culture etc., and need to be taken out of that situation in order that they might grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord. It has been beautiful to experience the transformation that has taken place in the lives of many of these who have been entrusted into these households.

There are many other areas in which we are learning to share our lives together in the Lord and give witness to Him in terms of Christian community. By living simply, we are finding that we can give more of our time, our talents and our earnings to His service. Currently, Jake's has 5 full-time staff-workers and 2 part-time staff-workers who are being supported by the community. These are involved in the running of the drop-in centre, making field visits to homes, hospitals etc., developing Christian music, art and drama for the presentation of the Gospel, as well as the many other areas of ministry.

Much of our time has been spent in visiting places where people gather in order that we might share the Gospel of Jesus. These include hotels, coffee houses, poetry and folk evenings, university campuses etc. The Lord has blessed these occasions and many contacts have been made.

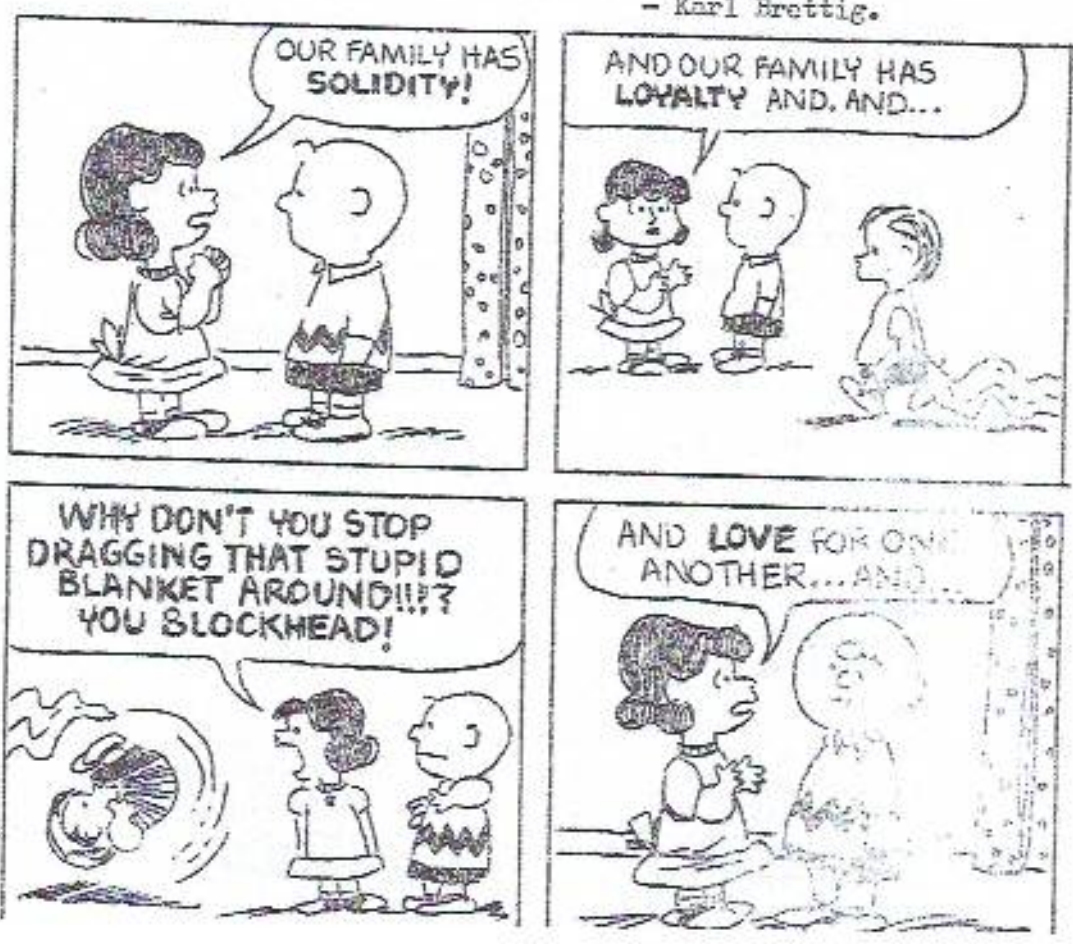
In terms of our weekly program, there are a series of cell groups in various parts of the city on Tuesday nights, which are devoted to nurture, Bible study etc. On Wednesday nights, the Kerux Apostles biko group meets as well as another group of musicians etc. who get together for an evening of folk music and sharing various forms of Christian art. Thursday nights have been set aside for in depth Bible studies at the centre. On Friday nights the workshop is in operation at the centre, where Christians can work side by side with

lot of potential. The workshop is also employed at other times during the week especially when the drop-in centre is open (Tues. - Fri., 1.00 - 5.30 pm.).

Also at the centre, a resource room is being developed which has a library of various books, tapes, magazines, papers etc., relating to the ministry. Again, the group of people associated with this area see much potential, eg. we feel a great need to offer a Christian answer to the many Eastern religious influences which are invading our society at present, and there are many other such areas that need to be researched and answered. Gradually a team of people who would be able to do this is developing.

The coffee house on Saturday night is still operating and being used of God. Many of the musicians etc. who have been involved in this ministry have developed sufficiently to be able to take their message into various places of public entertainment as has happened with many conversational evangelists. On Sunday afternoons, the fellowship gathers for worship. Various experimental forms have been used and we are rediscovering much about the worship life of the church.

- Karl Brettig.



"KERUX APOSTLES" MOTORCYCLE CLUB

11---

Since the last community newsletter we have revised our name and back-patch to "Kerux Apostles" M.C. This emphasizes the fact that we are called into nothing less than an apostolic ministry. I cannot help but have this conviction as I search scripture and read through the Acts of the Apostles and the letter to the Corinthian Church, that we, as ambassadors for Christ, carry with us in word and in our lifestyle the vital message of reconciliation with God to outlaw mentality and sharing His Love and Grace where fear and hate reign un-challenged.

The word "apostles" comes from the Greek "apostolos" meaning a delegate or one sent with full power of attorney to act in the place of another, the sender remaining behind to back up the one sent.

In the case of Christians it means God sends them to do what He Himself would do if He went.

As the Scripture says "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him if they have not believed? And how can the message be proclaimed if the messengers are not sent out? (Romans 10:13-15) - Thus saving faith comes from hearing the message and the message comes through preaching Christ.

"Kerux Apostles" seeks to bring our outlaw brothers and sisters into the saving knowledge and freedom experience of Jesus Christ. We fly Christ's colours as a banner uplifting Jesus within the bike scene and bound by the Truth we know, we wear a cross strung out on our backs as a convictional testimony of our death to ourselves and a bourgeois value system, so that God can raise us in newness of life and in vision of ministry; to seek out those who are lost and bound in darkness; to renew our vision of the cross and the Kingdom; and to restore the right emphasis, better relationships to God and our brothers and a proper value system.

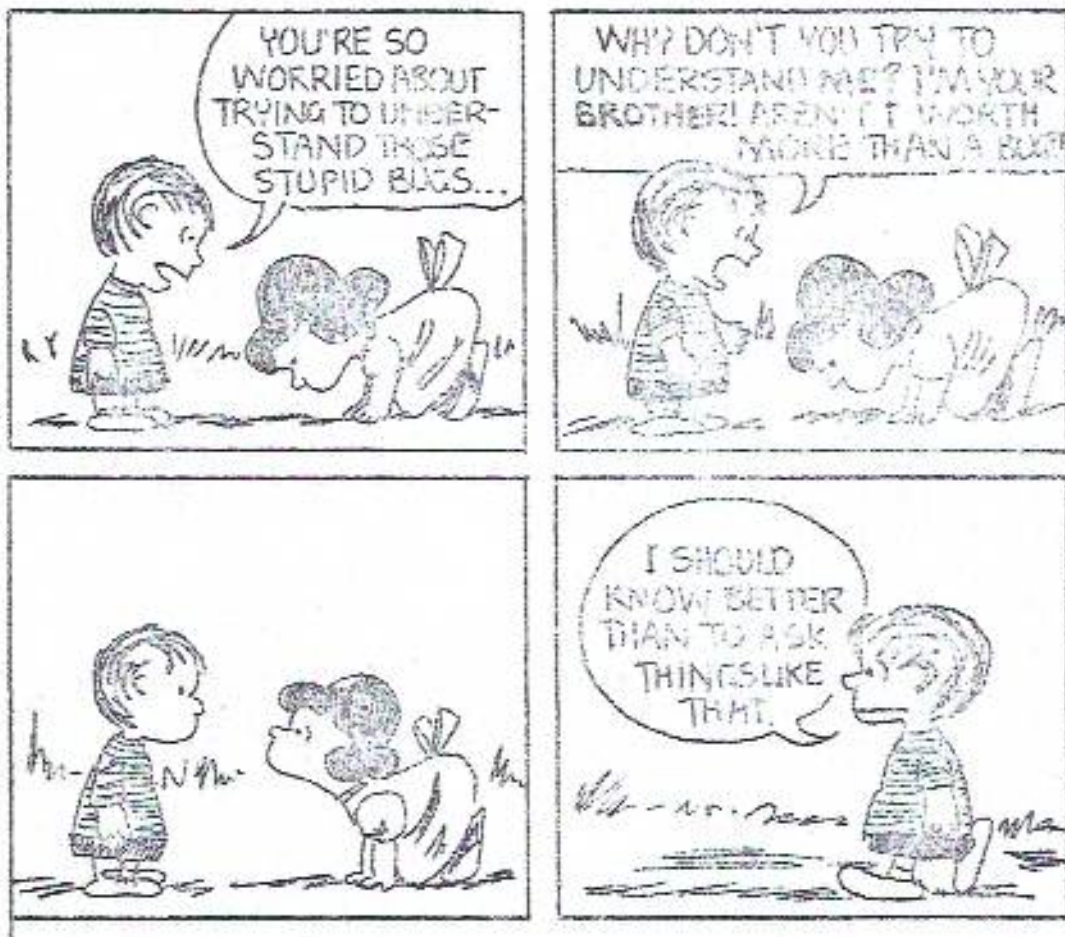
"Kerux" is another New Testament Greek word meaning "witness", "proclaimer" or "herald", thus the "Kerux Apostle" is one sent out to proclaim this message and so fulfil the four-fold apostolic commission to be with Him, to preach, to heal, and to cast out demons (Mark 3:13-15). Our call to an apostolic ministry, to me means that we should be a pioneer group, living our lives the Jesus way, learning to think in a Biblical mentality with a radical Christian mind and then abandoning ourselves to the inbreaking of the Kingdom, with Christ as "scout" out front.

However, such a ministry exists at the price of heavy affliction - something every "Kerux Apostle" must be prepared to pay as part of their counting the cost of radical discipleship in this Jesus ministry. Look at what Paul went through and rejoiced in, the hardships, sufferings, rejections, failings and weakness,

(II Corinth. 11:16-33; Acts 27).

Through the dealings and workings of God's Grace, "Kerux" has and will become familiar with this spiritual principle of God's power being strongest in us when we are of ourselves weak, a characteristic of our high calling! - Praise Him,

GEOFF (Scrooge) TURNER



THE RE-DISCOVERY OF JESUS BY CLERGY AND CHURCH

In our process of renewal we must re-read the Gospels and see therein the un-church-tainted Jesus. The Jesus who ministered to the addicted and adulterous, to the publicans and sinners; who was prepared to do whatever must be done to bring men and women face to face with God.

Wherever the need was the greatest, there was Jesus. Unafraid of public opinion, He mixed with the flotsam and jetsam of society that drifted along the highways of human misery. He was known by forgotten men, by unremembered women. The common people could speak of Him softly with deep affection and because by His involvement with them they knew that His love was not tainted with conditions. While Jesus honoured the traditional religious institution of His day He never let it or its taboos hamstring Him in His passion to reach humanity. For His judgement concerned the present, not the tradition of the past. If there was a religious ruling that said it was wrong

for any self respecting Jew to mix with this or that kind of person, what matter to Jesus! If the accepted norm of the day said a religious person shouldn't be seen in such and such a place, what matter to Jesus! But it matters to us. Or so one must be forced to conclude. For the common complaint is, "What is someone saw you go in there?" And if our Ministers go there, then there is an uproar in the Church meeting because "that's no place for a man of the cloth to be amid such people!" But Jesus was constantly amid such people. "Oh, but He was Jesus," the reply comes. "He could go there, but not us". Those who level that criticism must never have read John 12:26, where Jesus says "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant be also".

"There shall My servant be also" ought to be heeded by the whole Church today. For too long we have left the penetrating of the hellish places of humanity to a select few, instead of seeing it as the mission of the whole Church. Too many of us within the Church spend too much time confronting people in unreal situations, in a "churched" atmosphere. The only real sign of conflict that faces us is frequently a battle for power in the Church's Committee of Management, etc. Due to the institution we find ourselves virtually cut off from a proper exposure to life and I guess that's why some of our Ministers speak with a plumb in the mouth sound and as Harvey Cox says, wear the uniform of a war that the rest of the world has forgotten. It is no wonder then, that the world generally views the Ministry as a body of well meaning but tolerably harmless men who have perfected the art of tea drinking and biscuit-nibbling.

The Church on the other hand is held to be little more than a massive testimonial to irrelevance, a scouldering vastion of victorian virtue.

But whose fault is it? Nobodies but ours. For we have lost Jesus and His meaning amid our ecclesiastical structures and taboos. The Church today is only a pale reflection of her Lord and is suffering the consequences.

I remember hearing somewhere the story of Francis of Assisi and the Pope. It seems that the Pope was showing Francis all the riches and glories of the Vatican. With all the splendour of it before them the Pope said to Francis "You see brother Francis, no longer does the Church need to say silver and gold have we none". The answer of Francis is worth thinking about. He said "True your holiness, but no longer can she say, 'in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk!'"

We are a Church without power - we have lost our dynamic because we have almost lost sight of the Biblical Jesus.

The early Church Fathers attributed a saying to Jesus which is not recorded in our canon of Scripture. It is believed that Jesus said:

"He that is near Me is near the fire,

He that is near Me is near the sword".

Fires burn, swords are sharp, and both together speak of involvement; what of that kind of Jesus do we know in the Church world-wide today?

We must be willing to bear the "SCANDAL OF MISSION" and see for ourselves, as Dag Hammarskjöld said "Our road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action" and that the cost of our discipleship today is involvement in life for the redemption of life, despite the circumstances or the consequences.

In our rediscovery of Jesus, let us be sure that we rediscover the Historic Jesus of the Gospels and not as some existentialists call Him "the Jesus of Easter Faith". For Christianity is not a philosophy or a religion, it is a person, the Person of the Historic Christ.

What I am trying to say is that we must re-evaluate our Ministry, our mission, in the light of Jesus and that "His Cross be raised again in the hells of life as well as on the steeple of the Church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in some splendid Church between two candles, but on a Cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; on a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew and Latin and in Greek ...; at the kind of place where cynics talk smut and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died and that is what He died about!" This is what we must know, this kind of involvement and complete identification with those who are regarded as sinners. Some will see our ministry as a foolhardy one. They will warn us of the consequences of our actions. They will remind us that to follow this pathway will lead to the lowering of standards within the life of the Church. We will be advised that we are not keeping the discipline of the Church, neither are we staying untainted and unspotted before the world, but if we take a great deal of notice of such admonitions we will find ourselves following in the footsteps of dead tradition rather than in the pathway of the living Christ. We must decide now whom we will serve. Is it better to observe the voice of man or the action of God in Christ? - "who humbled Himself and took upon Himself the form of a SLAVE ... and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross". (Phil. 2:7). - and in so doing showed us how far love will go when confronted with human need.

As the Father sent me, "in the same way", so send I you, Jesus.

(John Hirt, House of the New World, Sydney).

QUESTIONS WE FACE

15...

There is a conflict between Jacob's Ladder and certain members of the L.C.A.. We must not fall into the trap of dividing the dialogue into two camps opposed to each other. This would be dangerous as well as foolish as we all recognize our brotherhood of one Lord, one faith, one baptism etc. We at Jacob's Ladder are moving towards a recognition of our nature as a unified body of believers. One of the basic areas of conflict is whether Jacob's Ladder is a church, understood as local ecclesia or not. If this can be adequately explained, then such minor issues as the control and limitation of Jacob's Ladder could be seen in context. If it can be established that Jacob's Ladder is in actual fact church (ecclesia) then of course there would be no question of control but a matter of a dialogue about the confessional stand with the L.C.A. The second major area is the seeming incompatibility and alienation between Jacob's Ladder and the Church at large due to outward manifestation of 'policy' and 'practice'.

Firstly, Jacob's Ladder is Church - we cannot deny this, neither can we avoid it. Confessional statements and constitutions do not make Church by themselves. By virtue of the fact that we meet together in the name of the Lord Jesus to further the Kingdom by preaching His word and administering the sacraments automatically makes us Church. Rom. 10:10-21; Matt. 18:20; Matt. 28:18-21. It is by His grace that we are being led into an expression of being the body of Christ which leads, inspires, and joins us together even in the simple details of everyday life, i.e. living and caring for each other. (Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article V11 & V111, Section 5). "The Church is not merely an association of outward rites like other civic governments however, but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts." Just a casual look at the confessions that the L.C.A. embraces would indicate strongly the reality of Jacob's Ladder being Church. (Articles V11 & V111, Section 13 & 14).

We are being led more and more into the outward workings of the reality of being a congregation. We strongly feel the call to live our lives with a greater and greater sense of commitment to our brothers and sisters. We believe that we are called to be community and this call is for the duration of our lives. To this end we are entering into a covenant which embraces our commitment to God, to each other, to the ministry to the world as revealed by Him.

The matter must now concern developing our relationships internally and our relationship towards the L.C.A., i.e. Confessional Agreement.

We confess that as a community of believers we possess:-

- (a) The Word of God and the duty to preach it.
- (b) The Priesthood of all believers which involves all individuals in our community.
- (c) The Keys: confession, absolution, forgiveness.
- (d) The sacraments and the fellowship and unity with all believers through their administration.

All this is supported by the Confessional stand of the L.C.A. in the "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope", Smalcald, 1537, Section 67, 68, 69 & 70.

It is now a matter of living out our calling to community and working out internally our confessional agreement and then bring it as a body to the L.C.A.

The second major area of tension with the L.C.A. and J.L. is the seeming incompatibility due to the outward manifestations of policy and practice, eg. in the areas of worship forms, internal organisational structure, sharing and commonality of goods, charismatic gifts, methods of outreach to the world, dress styles and the administration of the sacraments.

It would be of little worth to discuss each individual practice and rite with regards our worship life. The Christian Church is not marked by its uniformity of expression throughout the ages but by "the Holy Spirit in mens' hearts". Thus the old saying: "unity - but not necessarily uniformity" has come about.

John 14:31 "The world must be brought to know that I love the Father and I am doing exactly what the Father told me. Come now, let us go!

John 15:16 "You did not choose me, no, I chose you and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last and then the Father will give you anything you ask Him in My name. What I command you is to love one another.

The purpose of this community is to face and meet new challenges of presenting the timeless message of Christ to areas which the present organisation structure of the L.C.A. and other central denominational bodies, due to its current mentality, would find difficult to accommodate the principles and methods required to reach out to hippie drop-outs, drug scene, bikie culture, street gangs, the poverty stricken and the alienated members of our society.

It is only to be expected that in meeting these challenges, new ways and fields will be discovered. We cannot be expert in all areas. It is natural to assume that there will be some conflict between view points with regards to the 'how' and the 'why' of going about such ministries. This is a part of the common human dilemma of which we are all participants.

But more specifically, there has been some concern about the administration of the sacraments at Jacob's Ladder. I believe that this is largely due to the conflicting opinions with regards to the reality of Jacob's Ladder being Church.

There have been four occasions on which the sacrament of the altar has been celebrated within the community of J.L. It has been instituted in agreement with the scripture (1 Cor. 11). The reality of Christ's real presence, His body and blood, in, with and under the elements of bread and wine, has been clearly stated for the benefit of those who wish to commune. This is all in agreement with the confessional stand of the L.C.A. We believe that currently in the L.C.A.

there is not a complete consistency between the confessional statements concerning the nature of the sacrament and the common practise of the L.C.A. by way of the rules which the L.C.A. have developed over and against the administration and participation of Christians receiving the sacrament.

There are other outward manifestations of community policy which are the cause of conflict. One of these is "living in community". If "living in community" is a source of conflict and criticism for other Christians then that is unfortunate but it cannot be a source of alienation.

Community is not a kinky idea borrowed from the Counter Culture hippie freaks of the late 1960's. Community is as old as God's chosen people, lately seen in the form of the Christian Church, see 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4:1-12, John 17, 1 Peter 2:9,10 etc. We take seriously the principles as outlined in the Old and New Testaments with regards to living for one another, even to the extent of living with one another. We do not hold that these are just higher principles (that no-one can hold to, therefore not to be taken seriously), but they are everyday expressions of the reality of every day living in and for Christ Jesus. See Acts 4:32, where the community held all things in common. Note that it follows immediately after the statement "They were filled with the Holy Spirit". We have discovered that such living can be truly successful only with the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Such a radical life-style is not new. It is not weird or as commonly stated an alternative to this society. We yearn to live rather as normal human beings, i.e. as sons of God. Living according to the standards of this world of the old order is not freeing us to live as sons of God in the new order and to express and experience the fruits of the new order in our daily lives. We yearn for the reality of the brotherhood in Christ. This is why we live in community. The community of the early Church was not just an unusual phenomenon of that age, never to be repeated again (1 Peter 2:9,10, Hosea 2:24), but spoke of the fulfillment of the prophecies and promises of scripture concerning God's people. So it is as true for today, as it was for all ages. We are to be one together, just like the Father and Son are One. (John 17:21.) This is God's will for His people for all time.

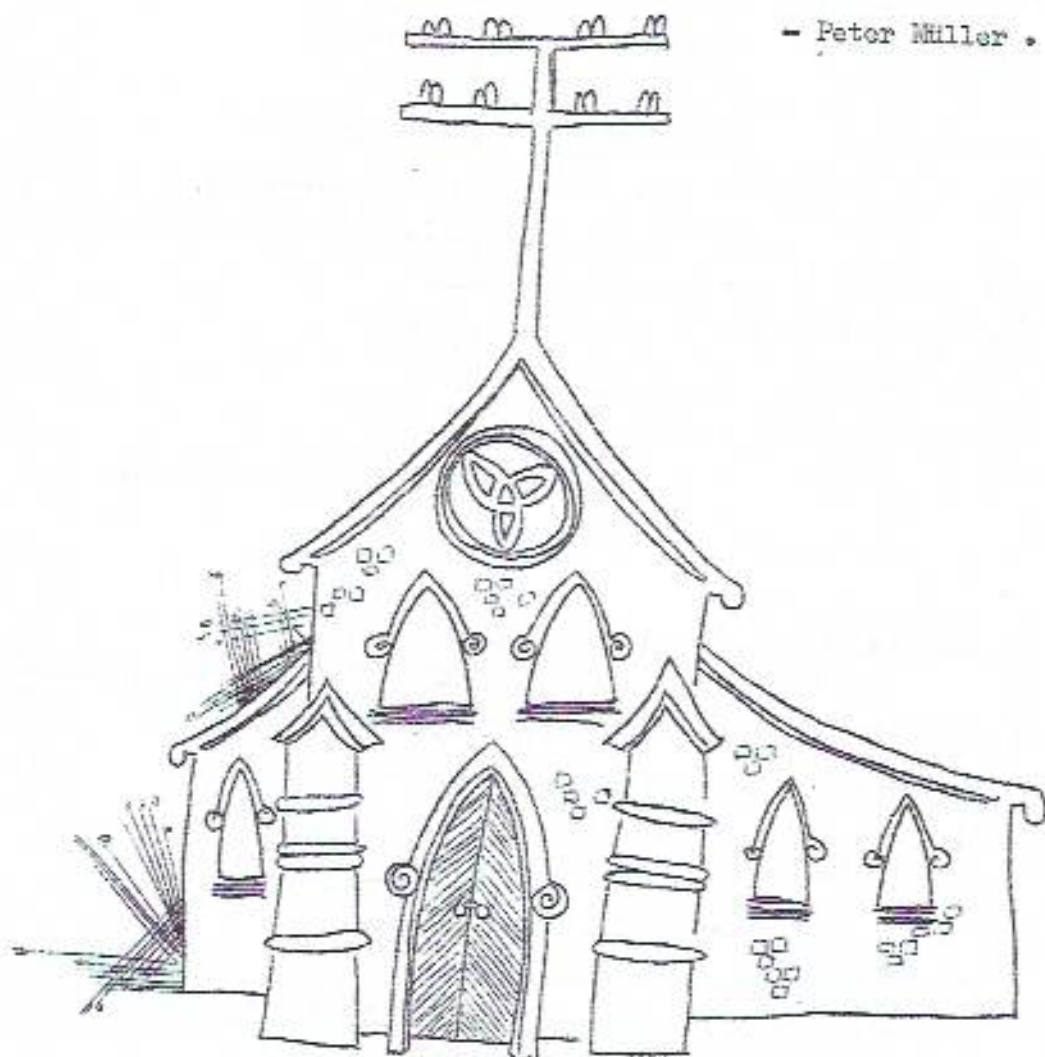
Community is not just living with one another (although this helps immensely), it is living for one another. It is not a question of whether one is living in community or not, because as Christians we are automatically living in community when we confess we are a member of Christ's body. 1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12-13, Eph. 4, Phil. 2, Col.3, Gal. 5-6. It is then a question of how much you are willing to let it be a reality in your life. To live truly in a community of love and commitment and sharing isn't something you bind yourself to in a legalistic way, but it is a blessed release in Christ from the bondage and alienation we suffer living in Western society (1 Pet. 2:16) which is based on selfish principles of private gain, and accumulation of goods etc. We are slaves of no-one but God, yet slaves all the same.

We recognise that we are all still enslaved to some degree by the systems of this world. We recognise the source of our growing freedom - Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is our slavery to the will of God through the power of His grace that is our life now. We have been called by Jesus to be released from the systems of this world, made to be truly His sons, and thus truly normal human beings as God originally intended us to be.

We will always be imperfect expressions of who God wants us to be. But we do not belong to the world (John 17:14). God expresses His calling to us to be truly children and therefore truly brothers and sisters to each other in His Son Christ Jesus. This call is absolute not relative. We all receive the same call to the same family in the same faith by the one Father of us all.

If anyone feels conflict with us over our being in community, there is really no need for that to be so. By being in community we are simply obeying God's calling to us to make our commitment to Jesus a reality in our lives.

- Peter Miller .



SUGGESTED READING LIST

19...

1. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'Life Together'
Girard, 'Brethren Hang Loose!'
Michael Harper, 'A New Way of Living'
Dave & Neta Jackson, 'Living Together in a World Falling Apart'
(Illinois: Creation House, 1974)
Graham Pulkingham, 'They left their nets!'
Graham Pulkingham, 'Gathered for Power'
Jack Sparrows, 'God's Forever Family'
Stedman, 'Body Life'

2. CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE LIFE TO SECULAR SOCIETY

- Ivan D. Illich, 'Celebration of Awareness'
Vernard Eller, 'The Simple Life'
Jacques Ellul, 'The Presence of the Kingdom'
" " 'Hope in the Time of Abandonment'
" " 'The Politics of God and the Politics of Men'
John V. Taylor, 'Enough is Enough'
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'Cost of Discipleship'
Udo Middleman, 'Pre-Existence'
Art Gisch, 'Beyond the Rat Race'
Johnson, 'Counter Culture and a Vision of God'

3. GENERAL READING FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE

- Francis Schaeffer, 'The Church at the End of the 20th Century'
Basilea Schlink, 'Repentance - The Joy-Filled Life'
J.B. Phillips, 'God our Contemporary'
Gavin Reid, 'The Suzzing of God'
J.B. Phillips, 'New Testament Christianity'
" " 'Your God is too Small'
" " 'Ring of Truth'
" " 'Preface to "Young Church in Action"'
" " 'Making Men Whole'

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

(IN JACOB'S LADDER THAT IS)

20...

We are anxiously looking forward to the further development of a number of areas that form our vision for ministry at Jacob's Ladder.

1. Purchase of our own centre near to the heart of the city. This centre is envisaged to cater for - Coffee House - Drop-In Centre - Offices - Resource Centre/Library - Worship Centre - Art and Craft Workshop - a Drug referral Clinic.
2. The further development of our Community Houses. We have five such houses at present. We are planning for a community exodus from a "scattered condition all around Adelaide" to moving into inner city areas - establishing Christian community cells and beginning to inter-react with the inner city neighbourhoods. We are also searching for land close to Adelaide, in the hills area, (approx. 40 acres) to establish a community farm and village. This farm will enable a rehabilitation centre to be established, provide foodstuffs for total community use and establish a village community out of the area of "city influence".
3. Extension and intensification of our Evangelistic work into the areas of drug culture, outlaw bike groups, poverty stricken neighbourhoods, emotionally disturbed of our society.
We are already working into the drug scene and the outlaw bike scene with a great amount of success - Praise the Lord!
We are experiencing a number of emotionally disturbed people passing through our community houses, and we need further professional assistance, guidance and instruction to help us minister to these people.
Finally we are feeling a strong, deep call of God to enter poverty stricken neighbourhoods and share, life, strength, joy, peace, love and the saving message of Jesus with the people there. Over a period of years this will involve "family guidance groups", alternative education courses for children, marriage counselling services, child care services, youth counselling and drop-in centre agencies, distribution of foodstuffs to needy homes etc.
4. Further establishment of a Christian art and craft fellowship and workshops.
5. Further intensification of outreach - via. street drama, puppetry, folk/rock music, discussion groups, into the universities, tertiary and secondary institutions.
6. The further establishment of Christian drug referral clinic - rehabilitation centre ministry for Adelaide. This will involve a clinic near to the city, a first stage rehabilitation house in the metro area, and a final stage rehabilitation house in the country - (part of our hills community village).

7. Looking into the possibility of assisting other Christians to establish similar Christian alternative communities in other capital cities of Australia, New Guinea and Indonesia.

We have spent hours discussing & praying about the above vision which we firmly believe we have received of God. We simply commit this vision back into the hands of God - He will bring it to pass. The Lord simply asks for our moment by moment faithfulness to the tasks at hand. God's good and gracious will be done, God's kingdom has come among us.

Praise the Lord!
- Rev. Douglas Kuhl.

PRAYER NEEDS ...

We invite you to join us in praying for the following people and projects. If the Lord leads you to help in any way we would be most grateful.

Community Houses

Coffee House

Kerux - Apostles Motorcycle Club

Drop-In Centre

Workshop

The Staff and their families, namely:-

Doug & Erna Kuhl, Heidi, Ingrid, Kurt

Ian & Helen Wade, Kim & Martin

Steen & Ruth Olson

Colin Smith

Marelle Board

Phil Jefferis

Karl Bretting (part-time)

Peter (Bert) Schubert (part-time)

Our need for approx. \$12,000 for deposits for land in the country and a city centre.