

MAY 76
JACOB'S LETTER



**COUNTERFEIT KINGDOM
OUR PRIESTHOOD IN JESUS
MONEY MONEY EVERYWHERE (and not a drop to drink)
CHRISTIANITY OR WESTERN THINKING?**

EDITORIAL

The thoughtful informed voice of South Australia's Governor, Sir Mark Oliphant is currently sounding more like the prophetic voice of old than the voice of the people of God which almost has been made to resemble that of the court jester.

Jesus was never made to look ridiculous - hated, yes, ridiculed, yes, but never made ridiculous. He is truth and truth is never ridiculous. Even when he refrained from answering his accusers taunting, his presence was enough; for all that he ever did and said was truth. He never had to explain, excuse or justify himself - he was the Truth and everyone who was of the truth heard His voice (John 18:37).

Our lives are inconsistent with our beliefs. We are not like that. We don't measure up. We have been shot down in flames.

Brothers and sisters let us rise with Jesus - lose our lives for His sake and the Gospel's (Mark 8:35) in order that we might live with Him.

Humanity is not looking for theological concessions and pronouncements. We need Jesus who is Truth and Life. We are His Body and wherever we go let us step aside that Jesus may live in us.

Jacob's Ladder Community exists as a part of His Body in the world but not of the world. Before the Lord we are seeking to know what that means, before our brothers and sisters in Him, before the world - in the pubs, on the streets, among the outcasts and the downtrodden, the junkies, the bikies, the student radicals, in the face of despair and apathy, of contempt and anger. We pray that you might share in something of our joys and our sorrows, our concerns and our hopes, as you read this letter - and that each one of us might rise victoriously with Jesus.

KARL BRETTIG

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Jesus came to usher in the Kingdom of God. Thus we confess Jesus is Lord. Without the reality of the Kingdom Jesus' claim to Lordship would make nonsense. However, there are many who would like to confess that Jesus is Lord yet are not quite prepared to believe that God's Kingdom really comes, and that it is in fact a real Kingdom with all that goes with a Kingdom being a Kingdom.

COUNTERFEIT KINGDOM

There is a hesitancy among Christians which on analysis sounds or implies something like this:

"Jesus is King, but his Kingdom isn't quite a Kingdom yet. Jesus rules, but he doesn't actually control the situation en toto yet."

A king either is a king or he isn't. He either sits on the throne of rulership or someone else calls the shots. A kingdom either is a kingdom with a kingly ruler, citizens, government, order and control, or it's a free-for-all campaign with nobody in actual control, with no real citizens,

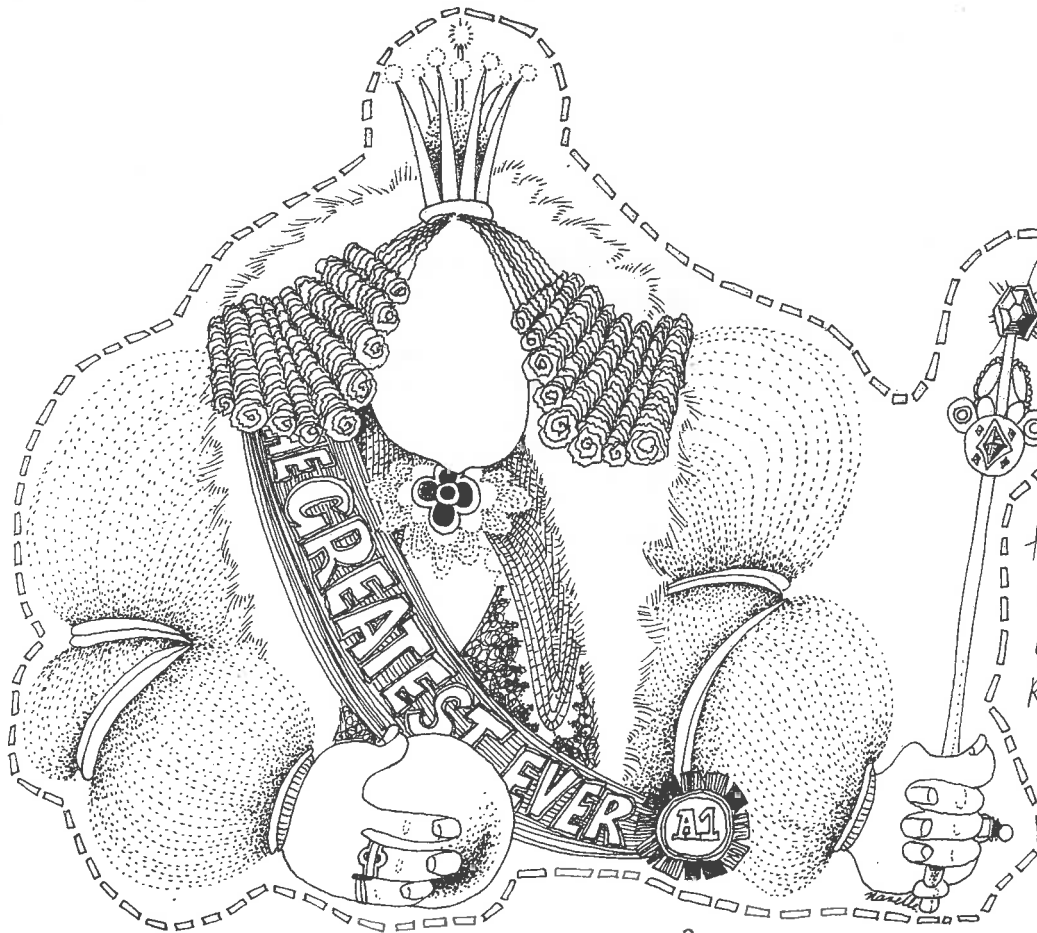
no actual government, therefore no king.

So when we say with St. Peter, Paul and the rest,

"Jesus is Lord, King, Supreme Ruler and Authority over me - my life."

We have confessed quite a mouthful. So let's get this straight - God as King is a King indeed, God's Kingdom is a Kingdom indeed!

This is what the New Testament claims. The Kingdom of God with Jesus as King is



*Colour this picture in. Paste a photo of your face in the blank space. Cut along the dotted lines & attach the picture to your mirror. Remember, you're the greatest! (Would I lie to you?)
love, Satan*

now an established fact - you and I are invited to come and be citizens within His rule, authority, power, protection and providence.

Otherwise what does St. Paul mean when he writes:

"At that time you followed the world's evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God." (Ephesians 2:2)

"Give thanks ... to the Father who has made you fit to have your share of what God has reserved for His people in the Kingdom of Light. For He rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His Son." (Colossians 1:12,13)

That all sounds straight forward enough doesn't it? There now comes another cop-out Christians employ to dodge the issue of facing the reality of God's Kingdom. The cop-out is to say, - "My place in the Kingdom is purely a spiritual matter. It has to do with my inner life."

Thus with this attitude, what we are saying really is that in terms of the way we live so long as I have a theologically correct inner attitude towards God and His Kingdom the practical moment by moment consequences of my affirmation

of faith of, "Jesus is my King", doesn't really come into the picture as yet.

Why not? is the question.

The answer of course is: "Well, I'm still living in the world, evil as it is. I'm still a sinner saved by grace, so I'm still a sinner. So God's Kingdom isn't a reality for me yet; it's still sort of in the future."

In this answer there is a tragic separation between the means of the Kingdom coming and the Kingdom having come. It is a Greek ethical idea that has caused this division. For consider when Jesus Christ is present to us, within us then the Kingdom has 'come upon' us, as He promised. Jesus in His incarnation comes to us as God's means for our entry into His Kingdom. But it must be said also that where Jesus Christ is, there already is salvation and His Kingdom.

1. Our entry into this Kingdom by faith in Jesus is to be now.
2. Christ's salvation is real and present now.
3. Therefore our life as a citizen of the Kingdom is a life lived now.
4. The Kingdom therefore is real now.

We may of course live this Kingdom life poorly or well, wisely or foolishly,

*Do you enjoy games?
If so, I hope this one gets you
in. It's a maze. Try &
find your own
way out -
it's easy.*

*your fiend,
Satan*

start here

Harold

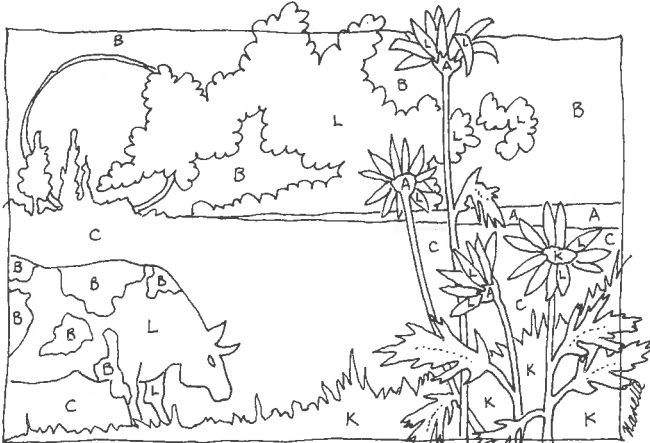
zealously or slackly. We look forward to our completion within the Kingdom when Jesus comes at the finale of history.

Having stated a "mini" case for reality of the Kingdom of God among us now - Let's assert the reality of the opposing kingdom, the kingdom of Satan.

Once again, excuses begin to role in. We admit there is such a thing, but Satan and demons and dark powers and evil spirits, isn't that overdoing things a little?

It must be recognised that people react far more readily to "the evil", "the dark"; they would believe far more readily that Satan was in the next room waiting to grab them than people are prepared to accept the reality of Jesus' love and Kingly power over all things. However in our modern, materialistic, scientific, so called objective-minded society it's not the done thing to admit to the supernatural in any shape or form (even if under all your clothing your flesh has goose bumps of the fear of Satan nearby, or of God's imminent act of judgement upon you against some secret sin).

So a sharp recognition of the reality of Satan's person, of his evil hordes, of



Colour this picture according to the letters:
B-black; L-light black; A-average black; C-clear black; K-kiln black.
Happy colouring! Yours Fatefuly,
Satan

his blasphemous counter reign against God's Kingdom must be made by Christians.

Scripture leaves us in no doubt at all about the matter. Paul speaks of us being rescued from out of Satan's kingdom. Christ's power is victorious over the power of darkness. Once we were enslaved beneath satanic rule. We are fighting, battling against not flesh and blood but spiritual powers. Peter talks of Satan as a roaring lion. Jesus saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven as Jesus' power began to eclipse Satan's.

This is the world view of the New Testament. As Jesus, Peter, John, Paul looked out into that which constituted reality for them they saw the reality of Satan's person, his kingdom, his power, his influence, the illusion he has spun blinding men's eyes not only from God but from seeing him who is blinding them, the master of the illusion, Satan. Over and against this they saw a real Kingdom of God come to overthrow the illusion. Now into the master illusion of life Satan sets up his counter kingdom - a blasphemous caricature of the reign of God. Like all of Satan's claims his kingdom is counterfeit.

The illusion is given the substance of materialistic progress, of technocratic power, of militaristic might, of intellectual prowess, of sociological concern. The illusion is spun with such subtlety and skill that it constantly is able to war against the Christian making him believe the Kingdom of God and the illusion are, if not one, at least able to co-exist one with another.

The Christian can use the mind-set of the illusion and with fragments of the illusion create an understanding of the Kingdom of God. Not surprisingly, such an attempt just doesn't work.

I ache as I watch Christians battling with the fact that their Christian life seems so much of a mere illusion, a mind game they play in their heads with fragments of the world illusion of Satan mixed with fragments of the words of the Kingdom of God. They strive to make

the concoction real and true and function as God's Kingdom.

Sweet and bitter water just doesn't flow from the same fountain. Figs just aren't gathered from thistles. New wine simply isn't poured into old wine skins.

Christ's obedience to the Father led him to death. His death marked the end of the power of Satan's counter-reign.

As the reality of Jesus' resurrection from the dead burst upon this world, this reality now constitutes the power to shatter Satan's illusion into a thousand of tinkling, tubular bell like pieces.

However, the price of faith in the reality of Christ's Kingdom come - is death. Jesus says "die!"

"Unless a grain of wheat die, it can't spring to newness of life again." Jesus said. *"I glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world"* said Paul. *"I have been baptised into Christ's death, buried with him,"* writes Paul. *"He who seeks to save his life shall lose it, but he who loses his life for my sake will save it."* says Jesus.

What all this means is that we die to the illusion of Satan. We die to Satan's strangle-hold on our lives. Our death through Jesus' power ushers us into a new reality - the new life of Jesus. This brings a new heart, new mind, new outlook, new attitude. Otherwise, what does Jesus mean by repentance (a change of mind, heart and direction of life)? What does Paul mean in Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24? What does Peter mean in 1 Peter 1:3-5? What does John mean in his whole first letter?

The big problem is that WE try to die - by our own power we try to suppress and paint over and rearrange and camouflage. But all this becomes just another illusion doesn't it? Here it is again. Satan has set us his blasphemous altar of self-adulation right in the midst of the temple of our sincere attempt to enter God's Kingdom. We discover to our

horror we have been duped by a counterfeit kingdom that bears no fruit of righteousness. Here the Holy Spirit comes to our rescue. He puts to death. He bring to life. He ushers us into God's Kingdom.

How do I die? I die when I recognise truly that Jesus is my King. I am no longer the king-pin around the place. Jesus is Lord. Complete obedience to Him is now my life. How does one describe the journey that death into Jesus takes and our entry into the Kingdom? How does one describe the reality that bursts upon your life of "once I was blind but now I can see!"

How does one describe that step of faith that plunges over the cliff edge of Satan's illusion into the wide open spaces of the reality of God's Kingdom? The discovery that what seemed to be so elusive as God's Kingdom has now become real.

What form of literary art should I use to describe such a transformation of mind of seeing and knowing?

I simply know now that as I grow into Jesus my King, my old life dies, a new life is born; the old illusion disintegrates and a whole new vision of life and godly possibility takes it's place.

I now begin to see this life, this world not through the twisted fun-fair mirrors of Satan's contortions but through the clear eyes of Jesus.

I once stood in darkness, I now stand bathed in light. Christ's Kingdom has come - His will is being done in me as it always has been done in heaven. Our God is my Father and He is stamping His holy Name in me. I feed on bread from heaven - my sins accuse me no more, therefore I have no need any longer to accuse my brother. The power of Jesus Kingly Rule is sufficient to be my defence in temptation and to cause the evil one to flee - I am delivered. For now I live in His Kingdom to whom belongs all power and glory forever.

Amen - so shall it be! REV. DOUG KUHL

I am a priest, and so are you, in fact all Christians are. Peter the Apostle said, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2:9)

To be a priest is not identical to being a minister. Priests are born, not made, they are created not ordained; that is born of the Spirit (as in John 3:5) and the washing and regeneration (Tit. 3:5f)

We are one with Christ who is our High Priest. He bids us to imitate Him in every way and our unity with Him is expressed in many different ways. One faith, one baptism, parts of one Body and as High Priest he calls us to every priestly function in His Body. But for the sake of the unity and growth of the Body He specifies tasks to different individuals "The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose" (1 Cor. 12:7f)

"Mostly the functions of a priest are these," says Luther, "to teach, to preach and proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to consecrate or administer the Eucharist, to bind and loose sins, to pray for others, to sacrifice, and to judge all doctrine and spirits." (Church and Ministry II Concerning the Ministry Pg. 21, American Ed.)

First we are to "sing the praises of God". This worship is the primary function of our office as priests and indeed it is a universal duty of all Christians.

Also as the R.S.V. puts it we are to "declare the wonderful deeds". This is the proclamation of the Word of God. And again in 1 Cor. 4:1 we are "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" and 2 Cor. 4:1. We have been entrusted with the task of administering the New Covenant that is the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:5-9). "We are ambassadors for Christ", entrusted with the message of reconciliation because we no longer live



for ourselves but for God as He has made us new creatures. (2 Cor. 5:15-20)

Clearly the offices of proclaiming the Word of God, teaching and preaching are common to all. And Luther wrote "Inasmuch as the office of preaching the gospel is the greatest of all and certainly is apostolic it becomes the foundation for all other functions, which are built upon it, such as the offices of teachers, prophets, governing (the Church), speaking with tongues, the gift of healing and helping." (LW 40 Pg. 36 Church Ministry II)* And also before that he wrote "If the office of teaching be entrusted to anyone then everything accomplished by the Word in the Church is entrusted, that is the office of baptising, consecrating, binding, loosing, praying and judging doctrine."*

All the functions of the Church, that is the priesthood have been entrusted to all Christians.

We are all commanded to preach and baptise according to the "Great Commission".

In Corinthians 2 Paul addresses the whole community making them the consecrators at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. "For this is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you..."

In Matthew 18:18 we are all given the administration of the keys for as Jesus said, "I tell you most solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven...."

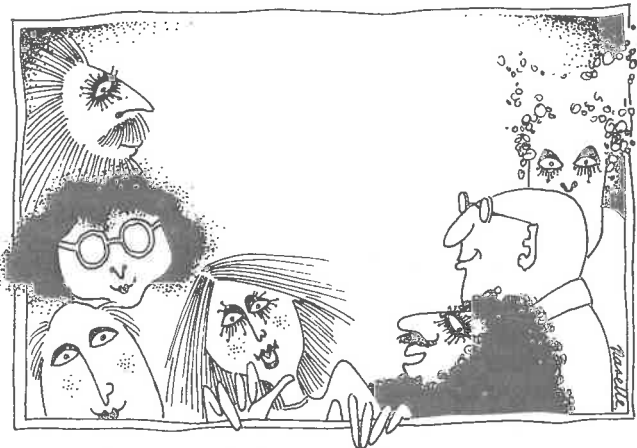
We are all to offer our bodies as holy sacrifices as in Romans 12:1. Thus the sacrificial office is common to all.

We are all to pray for others and are all to judge doctrine. James 5:16 and 1 John 4:1-6. Even Paul corrected Peter in Galatians 2:14f.

All of these functions are common to all believers. But the public exercise of these functions is to be entrusted into the hands of selected individuals for the sake of good order. God is a God of unity and the unity of each individual performing his function in the Body has the effect

that the Body grows and strengthens as Ephesians 4 testifies. And Luther's comments "For it is one thing to exercise a right publicly and another to use it in a time of emergency. Publicly one may not exercise a right without consent of the whole Body or of the Church. In time of emergency each may use it as he deems best." (Ibid Pg. 34)

It is with this in mind that we ordain pastors, appoint teachers, deacons, church workers, preachers, and evangelists in their tasks according to the will of God who gives them as His gifts (Ephesians 4). With prophets, administrators, healers, prayers, tongue speakers, interpreters, exorcists etc., they in unity serve to build up the Body of Christ.



For each function the individual acts on behalf of the Body of Christ. The gift is given to the Body and not just to the individual. We as a consecrated nation and royal priesthood possess these ministries for the sake of the Body as a whole.

Finally a word from Brother Martin "There is no other Word of God than that which is given to all Christians to proclaim. There is no other baptism than the one which any Christian can bestow. There is no other remembrance of the Lord's Supper than that which any Christian can observe and which Christ has instituted. There is no other kind of sin than that which any Christian can bind or loose. There is no other sacrifice than of the body of every Christian. No-one but a Christian can pray - no-one but a Christian may judge of doctrine. These make the priestly and royal office." (Ibid Pg. 35)

PETER MÜLLER

1

MONEY MONEY EVERYWHERE

1

and not a drop to drink

Ho everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk,
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money
for that which is not bread,
and your labour for that
which does not satisfy?
Harken diligently to me,
and eat what is good,
and delight yourself in fatness.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
hear, that your soul may live.



ISAIAH 55

ISAIAH 55

Nardelle.

The Lord's invitation rings out loud and clear across the barren wasteland in which we live. We're tempted to follow the ways of the wasteland and so labour for that which does not satisfy. We can erect lavish and extravagant churches which are monuments only to themselves. We can pour lots of money into keeping self-serving machinery serving itself. We can spend thousands of dollars organising missions which begin with a mighty roar and end with a feeble whimper. We can establish schools to teach, employ men to preach and buy tracts to evangelize. But as the people of God we need not adopt the values, attitudes and lifestyles of the wasteland. The Lord bids us come and buy wine and milk without money and without price, and so let Him satisfy us and give us life.

The Lord has shown us that He is both able and more than ready to meet all our needs. He has shown our community that even on a shoestring budget we can take the Gospel into the wasteland and that He will meet extraordinary needs for the ministry when they arise. We have learned that much of our previous lifestyle was based on our greeds rather than our needs. As the Lord

began to free us from our bondage to materialism we discovered that He had already provided for most of our ministry needs in what He had given us. So we began to try to live simply so that more of the Lord's time and money could be spent on sharing His love with others. A little goes a long way. It costs nothing to spend an evening on Hindley Street or in the pubs ministering to people. It costs nothing to talk with someone on the bus on the way home. We have five full-time and three part-time workers on the staff. None are paid status salaries yet all have more than enough for their needs. It doesn't need to cost ten thousand dollars a year to keep a worker in the field - we have found that investing in people is more investment than investing in buildings and things. The Lord will provide the material things that we need in order to perform the ministry that He has called us to carry out. In all things the Lord is faithful.

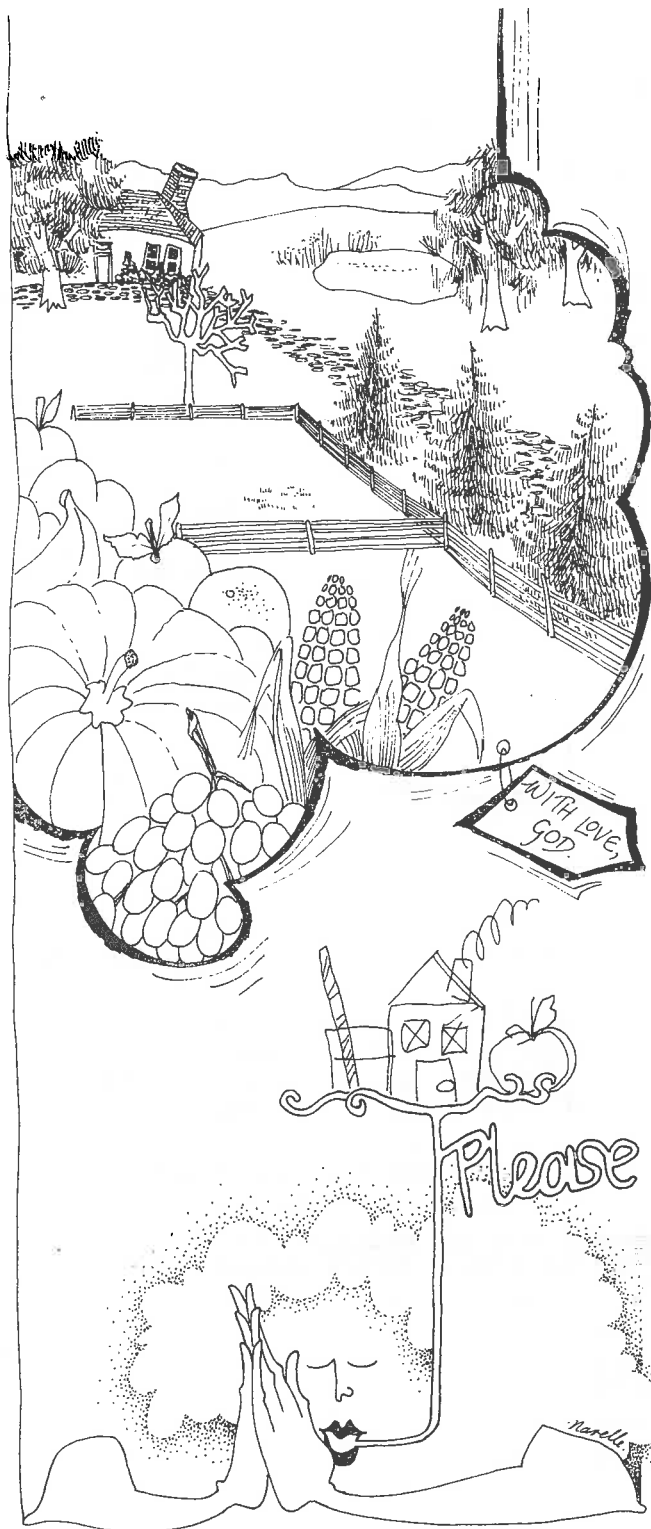
During the first two months of this year the community found itself particularly short of money and so there was little to pay staff with. Many people were on holidays but the Lord wasn't. He provided

for our needs as our gardens bore fruit and many of His people were moved to bring gifts of food. And so our tables were always full and we could invite others to come and share the goodness of the Lord. We simply bring our needs to the Lord and trust Him to provide - and He does! Last year the ministry had reached the point where a farm in the country for rehabilitation purposes and for growing food was becoming necessary. We had no money to buy farms so we asked the Lord to provide one, if it was His will that we have it at this point of time. A little while later a man got in touch with us to say that he believed that the Lord wanted him to give away his 300 acre farm to be used by a Christian group for rehabilitating drug addicts, alcoholics and others with similar problems. "Thank You Lord!"

The "Yahweh Shalom" ministry at Padthaway has now gotten underway on this property and a small community has been established to minister to those that the Lord is already leading there. It is legally independent of Jacob's Ladder but works in close fellowship and interdependence with us. The Lord is keen to provide what His people need for ministry purposes.

He can even use the Government to provide. Since much of our work is in areas that the State Social Welfare people have an interest, they are prepared to provide two salaries for our staff. In a day when "state aid" is a much debated subject we're happy to be able to report that we're being given the money "no strings attached" one year at a time. And so long as we don't build our ministry on this source of finance we're free to use it to the Glory of God without any danger of State Control or whatever.

With many other things, large and small, we have simply brought our need to the Lord and He has provided. He has blessed us beyond our needs so that we also have, to give to others. In the midst of such material blessing He has blessed us in our relationship with Him and with one another. He has prepared us and then sent us out to share with others and so become a blessing to them. The Lord

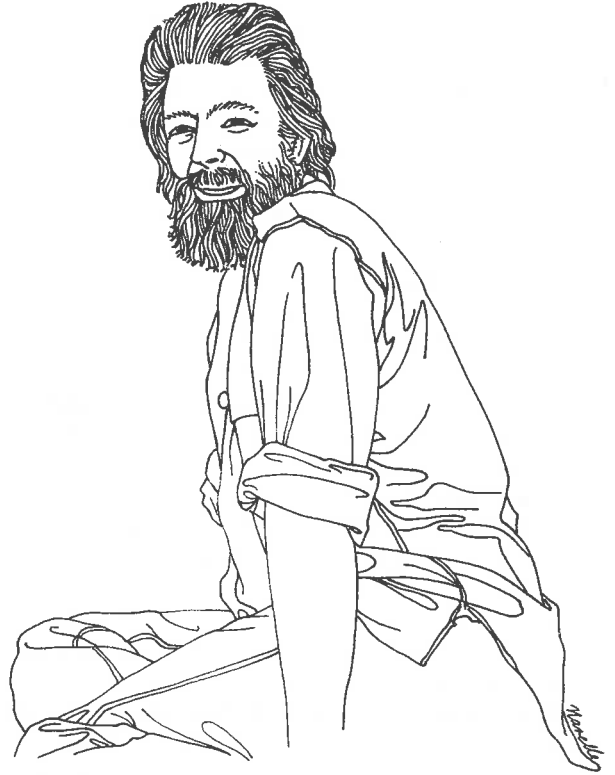


is true to His Word. He satisfies our thirst, giving us wine and milk without price. As we hearken to His voice He lets us feast on His goodness and gives us His life to live in the world.

Jesus said "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water'."

STEEN OLSEN

How wonderful a thing has God achieved for mankind, becoming one with Him in Jesus Christ! The Creator sharing His blessedness with mere man! The Maker bestowing His unending love and grace upon the germ of humanity that we might become Sons of the Living God!



LIVING AS GOD'S REFUGEE

We who were for a little while made lower than the angels, have now been lifted up with Christ to share in His universal redemption. Praise and wonder fill my heart as I ponder the truth of God's Word and consider the work He has accomplished in Jesus Christ, God the Son.

We, As God's people have been called along with Abraham, Jacob, Moses and all the millions before us, to follow the living God. The Kingdom of God is at hand, and we are called personally by the Eternal Father to rule and reign with Christ. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:1) and has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:19)

Each one who is called to "follow me" is charged with the responsibility of "preaching the Word" or in today's language "witnessing" to the resurrected Lord. Coming from "every nation" or every remote corner

of the globe, people gather together to form the Body of Christ.

For me personally to become one of God's refugees meant opening myself up to a revolution of mind, heart and soul so radical that many times I imagined I was insane. "The Way" of Christ is so different from that of drugs, sex, bikes or anything else that turned me on. It would have been impossible for me to survive as a child of God IN THIS WORLD without the intense support of a close knit family.

Converted in a mental hospital suffering from 'drug wipeout', coming from a non-christian home that was interstate anyhow, made it difficult to get a grip of my "new life". My mind was reeling with questions in every direction of culture, not to mention psychology and philosophy. How was I to sort out my brain and make room for God in my thinking? I had spent

22 years building up an approach to reality, and now I had to start all over again.

No doubt you can see I had a problem. I was discharged from the hospital and began to search for some answers. I had no idea where to look for help, my past experience with church people had so turned me off that it was hard for me to even think of looking there.

I travelled up back up through N.S.W. and on into Q.L.D. living among the counter culture freaks, sleeping on the beach etc., it wasn't long before I was tempted to try drugs again and pretty soon I dropped another tab of L.S.D. I thank God that He stopped that trip from having any major effect on me and I gave Acid away.

From the beach and the drug scene I moved out into the middle of Q.L.D. to work on a station for a few months. During that time God didn't waste a second. He worked on me night and day answering questions and creating new ones. Without knowing why, I packed up and came to Adelaide, to the place of my re-birth. God had called me to live in Adelaide. It's clear now, but at the time I didn't have a clue what He was doing.

When I was first introduced to Jakes Christian Community, I was about 9 months old, going on 10. For the first year and a half I was unable to hold a regular job. The family of 'Jakes' fed me and clothed me, sharing their homes with me. Finding love and acceptance and people who, even if they didn't have all the answers, seemed to be looking for them - I opened my mind and heart to hear the Word.

It is with tears of gratitude to Jesus that I look back upon that year and a half and remember the times I put Him to the test through His people. I had been sucked into almost every false doctrine of life for 22 years, this time I was going to make sure. If they preached it, I wanted to see it in action. Only then would I be able to trust them to be for real. I knew God was for real, He proved that to me. Now I had to be convinced that His people weren't phony. Time and again I lost



confidence in the family and decided to move on. As I look back I see that sometimes it was just the rebellion of my nature against God and at other times it was where the family had to learn something and I had to forgive.

Now I am almost three years old and I can see God's hand upon my life in a very real way. He has liberated me in so many ways through the working of His Holy Spirit in and through the community. I am now able to work and support myself, with some left to give, as well as study the Word and take part in the ministry of Jakes Community.

I live in a community house where we share the joys and hassles of family life. This is truly a privilege to live in God's house with God's family, having Jesus as Lord and His Father as our Father. Learning to love in the family situation is a cherished experience to me. This also

provides many opportunities to minister to our neighbours as a family, and provide a secure home for some who come to us through the Drop-in Centre or Coffee House. Truly God has become my refuge, and I, His refugee!

God has never been one to encourage His people to sit on the fence, in relation to their commitment and obedience. In fact in Rev. 3:16 He says that those who are lukewarm He will "spew out of His mouth." The call of Jesus to "Follow me" means all or nothing. If there is one place where you learn this principal truth, it is living in a Christian Community.

To actually be a visible "one body" means much more than meeting together once or twice per week. To "love one another



as I have loved you" requires much more than one or two days per week. Jesus doesn't want part of us, He want's all. The reason being, He wants to renew us 'all'. Jesus wants us to be His Body, not a dead body but one that is "living and active; filled with the fullness of God".

In order to "put on the new man" we have to "put off the old man" Col. 3

to put off the works of the flesh and put on the works of the Spirit. Only when the Holy Spirit has open vessels, will He be able to increase the integrity and obedience of a Body. When we quench the Spirit we wander alone in the foolishness of our own minds. Is. 55:8

It is only through complete commitment of all that you have and all that you are to Jesus the Head of the Church, His body, that we are released to praise and glorify God as we should in both love of God and love of neighbour. There are no half measures.

The practical implications of this principle are enormous, yet nothing less is required. In John 3:16 we read "by this we know love, that He lay down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any man has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"

Living in community means submitting to God's Word in every area of your life. Learning to live as God's children in all things, rejecting the standards and values of the present age of society. Seeking to be salt and light, or as Max Delespesse, a Belgian priest puts it: "looking at the Church, human society should see the road to perfection", "The Church's vocation is to be the spinal column of the world because it is a divine and human community and announces the kingdom of heaven BY FULFILLING IT ALREADY HERE BELOW (The Church Community' Max Delespesse Pg. 126-119.)

Living in community does not make you perfect, on the contrary, it makes you aware of just how imperfect you are. This allows you to confess your failures to God and pray for the gift of repentance and renewal.

Living in community is not easy on your own strength, in fact it is impossible for man to create true community. Only God can cause people to be united to the degree of commitment required to follow Jesus as God's refugees, in one Body and having one mind and one soul. PETER JASPRIZZA

A Lutheran Pastor in Adelaide rose to his feet and received an approving nod from the Chairman of the Lutheran Ministers' Fraternal Meeting granting him permission to speak. His thin tenor voice rang out, "This Charismatic Movement is making inroads into our church. Our church must immediately equip itself to fight this thing....."

He went on to enumerate the points of battle strategy which ought to be employed to blot out this latest threat to the purity of the Lutheran Church's doctrinal stance.

Sitting in the same meeting was a Charismatic Christian (one of those!), also a fellow Lutheran Pastor. This Pastor also was concerned for the church. However, his concern focussed on other issues. The issues which he saw tearing his church to pieces were:-

* A bankrupt understanding generally of Christ's righteousness for and in each Christian believer, this means for his daily life.

* A view of Christian baptism within his church that has relegated baptism to the level of some kind of white magic, i.e., in accordance with our current society's "instant" mentality, baptism becomes instant salvation, instant righteousness, instant entrance into God's Kingdom. Whatever has happened to Christ's call to repentance, to faith in Him as being the 'how' of salvation to the clear statement of scripture that baptism is being baptised in the Holy Spirit? There is only one baptism, and infant baptism is valid, but how do all these factors and more fit into the whole biblical concept of baptism? This question is of burning importance for it also raises the question of Christ's righteousness for and in us and of how his righteousness is appropriated for the believer.

* A dearth of understanding concerning the Kingdom of God and Christ's call to us to be disciples within this Kingdom. Coupled with this is of course, a dearth of understanding within our church of a Christian's standing as a child of God, their Father.

* When the church says that she holds to the principle of "Sola Scriptura" does

this mean that the church stands in faith believing that God says what He means and He means what He says in His Holy Word to us? If so, then it becomes no little challenge to us as to what a person is to do with whole slabs of the teaching of Jesus, of miracles, of spiritual gifts, of God's power over evil and sin etc., and yet remain standing where whole numbers of Christians are living out their lives today.

* When the church speaks of the priesthood of ALL believers, how does the church understand the putting into effect of this doctrine? Surely no-one would believe that we would be given a doctrine by God which was unworkable? What is to be the power that is to motivate a person from rebellion against God into a total, loving, sacrificial service to Him? Surely we cannot achieve this by the power of our own flesh? If not by what power is this to be achieved? What does it look like in practise and what steps must be taken for this power to be put into effect?

* When St. Paul says "put off the old man and put on the new man created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." What in the world does Paul mean? Are we to take him at his word? Really? What about, "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"? What does that mean exactly? What about, "the unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." What do these words mean?

This list of course could be extended to page after page after page of questions and issues!

This Charismatic Pastor, who is myself, sat in that meeting and heard so-called Charismatics referred to as arch-heretics

Lutheran spiritual renewal



of Christendom, and I wondered what God was thinking and what God saw as total truth at that moment. I wondered whether God, who sees all things for what they really are, wouldn't cringe at the sight of Christians suing each other on to each other in blind prejudice and fleshly bias? Who of us is absolutely doctrinally pure? "Who is without sin let him cast the first stone. Take the log out of your own eye." Who of us would claim that he by himself understood absolutely correctly all the Confessions let alone all of Scripture? So what is the fight we are to fight? Each other?

More than this I saw in my mind's eye past pictures of many meetings of Christians, maybe 30 to sometimes 120. Christians meeting together is a normal enough thing. But there was something abnormal in these meetings. They all intensely believed that Jesus Christ was personally present in the room with them and that the Holy Spirit was there too - moving in them and speaking to them and through them. Testimonies were given of certain ones coming to faith in Jesus. Prayer made for a migraine headache. A message of prophecy from God speaking in the first person was given. Foreign languages could be heard quietly in prayer to God. The abnormality continued in the fact that this group remained in prayer and praise and song and sharing of small portions of scripture and testimonies for two and a half hours, at the end of which there was a marked reluctance on behalf of those present to break-up and go home. They loved to pray and praise and give thanks to God by the hour. This they did daily.

What is this strange movement? So often in other places of the church people are anxiously glancing at clocks and watches should the worship extend beyond the sacred hour on one day of the week! As I sat listening to the charismatic movement being billed as a bunch of heretics I saw in my mind's eye the hundreds of persons whose

lives I have seen dramatically changed by a real power of renewal. The power of the presence of Jesus given in flesh to us into suffering, death, resurrection and glory. These hundreds have gone on in the faith in Jesus' Name and through Jesus' power. The miraculous power of God to heal a broken life or limb is a burning reality in their lives. Ask them if God heals souls, minds, bodies today, grants spiritual gifts today, daily provides for our needs, and they will reply. "If God was able to raise Jesus from the dead, if God was able to change me from drug addiction/alcoholism/chronic depression/prostitution/ etc. etc., or whatever into His child, and make me a member of His Family then for God to heal me of influenza or to cause me to speak in another language or to provide me with my daily needs is chicken feed to Him. Why of course God does these things! God's not dead! He's not even 'missing in action!' He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Not unlike other denominations, the Lutheran Church is being challenged by God to constant continuing renewal in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit's powerful indwelling. This is nothing new, it is as old as Jesus' teaching of the grain that must die so that a new plant may spring to life. It is as old as St. Paul saying that we must be transformed by the renewal of our minds, or that we have died with Christ and are now raised to newness of life in Him.

I have seen hundreds of "Lutheran" persons who have sat under years of preaching and teaching, who were believers in Christ Jesus yet in spite of all this felt there was something lacking in their individual lives. There was an emptiness in worship, a deadness as far as a living love for others was concerned. Their Christian life seemed just too much a matter of their own creation, a motivation under their own steam, an exercise of their own will to be satisfying in a purely Christian sense. PTO



A brief reading of the New Testament reveals conclusively that the power source of a Christian's faith and life is the resurrection power of Jesus, of Jesus' redeeming love. We are not Buddhists - simply following a great teacher, we are new creatures in Christ, new creations of Christ's love, born not of the flesh or the will of man but born again of the Spirit of God. I have seen persons open to the reality of Christ alive now, today, this very moment among us like a flower opens to receive into itself the life-giving energy of the sun. Their eyes opened now to many texts which they had seen before, dozens and dozens of times, yet had never been quite able to put them together. Texts which clearly announce that the climax of Christ's Messianic career was the fact that just as Jesus had received the Spirit to be Messiah and Lord, and that this fact of the Messiah (anointed one of the Spirit) and of the Lord (the one who reigns over everything, as King) was the key to his whole personality and role and mission in life, so now His life was His gift (Charisma) to His disciples, to us.

Therefore none of us would be or could be His disciples in any full sense of the word unless we be anointed of the Spirit, filled with Christ-life, conformed by the Spirit's recreating power in Christ's own image. With this at work within us then we could live and walk as His disciples.

I have seen people stir to this reality not in mere mental comprehension but in an apprehension of this reality for life with their whole being. For them it is like discovering Christianity for the first time. For now it certainly was a reality for them of the indwelling and powerful Spirit of God acting as the very motive and moving power of their lives. It was old doctrine, traditional doctrine, but now it was filled with a newness of discovery and insight as they began right now to live their lives

under the influence of this power.

Person after person has excitedly shared with me - "It's Jesus. Why after all it's Jesus. This Holy Spirit's influence is Jesus. Now I see Jesus!"

And of course, so it is - it's Jesus. Luther said, "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in my Lord Jesus Christ or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts and sanctified me in the one true faith." All this the Holy Spirit does so that I might see and know Jesus.

REV. DOUG KUHL

P.S. I have heard and read of people reacting against emotionalism, freaky conditions of ecstasy in association with the charismatic movement and their case for the rejection of the charismatic renewal seems to be heavily based on this factor.

I don't know what actually qualifies as being emotionalism, for my whole being is caught up in and involved in Christ's redemption. Not just my mind, but my whole being is made vulnerable to God's saving grace, to Jesus' redeeming love, to the Spirit's indwelling power, EVEN MY EMOTIONS!

As for a state of ecstasy it is a myth as far as I am concerned. Something a few people have read in the gossip columns of the local grapevine and theologians have subsequently stuck it into their paper and books and so it has been propagated down to this day. Even if a few extremists have been so carried away, there has been extremists of every kind of doctrine over the 2,000 years of Christendom and we do not thus throw away baptism, the Lord's Supper, justification etc., etc.

CHRISTIANITY OR WESTERN DRINKING?

One of the questions that has been occupying our minds in recent months is the whole question of the influence of twentieth century thought forms on our understanding of who the Lord is and what He is doing among His people in 1976.



In Isaiah 55:8-9 we read:-

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts
neither are your ways my ways,
says the Lord.*

*For as the heavens are higher than
the earth so are my ways higher
than your ways and my thoughts
than your thoughts."*

As we began to seek the Lord's guidance on what He wants us to be doing rather than asking Him to bless whatever we are doing, these words of Isaiah began to take on a deep significance in our lives. We began to see that God's ways of doing things and His mind about things is indeed different from our Westernized human way of doing things and our understanding about the nature of His Reality. For as Paul says in Ephesians 6:12

*"We are not contending against flesh
and blood, but against the principalities,
against the powers, against
the world rulers of this present dark-*

*ness, against the spiritual hosts of
wickedness in the heavenly places."*

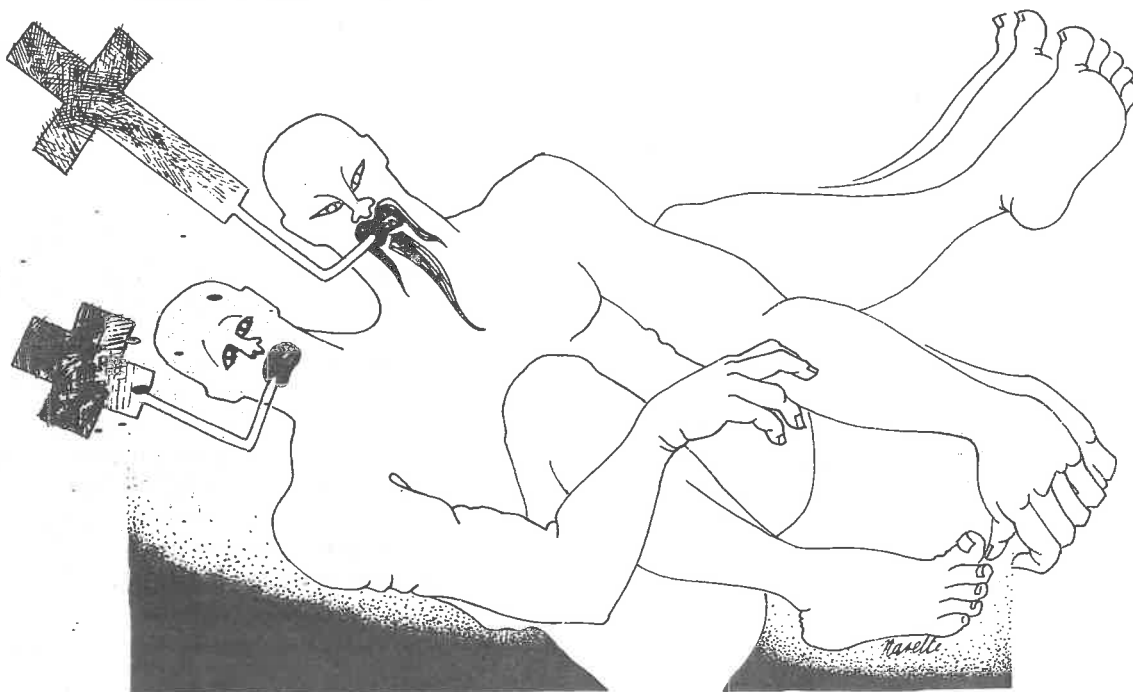
*The challenge we face as Christians in a
twentieth century world is first to recognize
the battle that is going on as we seek to
follow Christ and secondly to exercise the
weapons the Lord gives us to bring to
fruition the task of bringing the Gospel to
all people irrespective of their race or
philosophy or sub-culture.*

One of the significant things that the Lord is showing us through our brothers and sisters who live in Eastern countries like China, India and Indonesia, is just how much He is willing to pour out His blessing on those who would seek to follow Him in His Word and obey His teaching (John 8:31). We have all heard something of the incredible explosion of His love in those countries and the many people who have come into His Kingdom. At the same time we have noted

that this has been accompanied by many signs of His power that have been manifested (John 14:12-14). During 1974 we were visited by an Anglican Minister whom the Lord had called to work in Indonesia and he gave testimony to the incredible out-

pouring of the Spirit of God upon his ministry commenting almost imperceptibly that his community often used crutches for firewood. If this is what God is doing in the Eastern countries why then isn't it happening to the same degree in the West?

This question occupied our minds for some time until several things became clearer. When Mr. Average Ocker Australian Christian walks down the street he thinks within a certain framework. If, for example, he were to trip over and break his leg his first reaction would be to yelp with pain and ask somebody to call an ambulance which would then take him to a hospital where he would meet a doctor who would tell him that he had a broken leg and would instruct his nurses to prepare a cast that would keep his leg straight until it got better and he could walk again. Not so on the Mongolian Plains of Eastern China where there are no phones, nor doctors, nor hospitals, nor ambulances, nor friendly tourists. Mr. Average Mongolian Christian would be more likely to cry out "Lord help me!" - He does.



It is not too difficult for us to trace the kinds of influences that have taught Mr. Average Ocker Australian Christian to think along certain lines. Down through the centuries there have been various streams of thought which have influenced the way in which we react to the circumstances around us. Modern theology is no exception to this. One could trace the development of modern theology down through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to the introduction of the Hegelian dialectic into Western thinking

and discover the foundations of much of our modern understanding of God - as well as of Marx's dialectic materialism. We could then examine the influence of Kierkegaard's divorce between faith and what is rational, discover roots of the theology of Barth, Bultmann and Tillich and then ask to what degree Kierkegaard's dichotomy in relation to the Hebrew and Apostolic mind, has affected our understanding of the mind of God. Few would question the bankruptcy of modern liberal theology just

as few would question the bankruptcy of modern existentialism, and yet just how much of our day to day thinking is a direct result of these streams of thought rather than the thoughts the Lord would have us be thinking?

We are becoming increasingly convinced that the Lord would have us rediscover the eternal mind of our God, as revealed in Hebrew thought and the Apostolic Church. As a recent lecturer at the L.S.F. Conference at Luther Seminary - George Patterson recently put it, what the Church needs most today is spiritual discernment. Patterson, a journalist specialising in Asian Affairs, has had extensive experience with the Christian Church in the East and in his lectures he spoke about his vision of what the Lord is doing in these countries and desires to do among us also. We asked him to fill out what he meant by a statement that modern theology had become a pale imitation of Western thought forms.

(PATTERSON)

"I don't believe the Spirit of God can become a prisoner of anything or anybody. What happens, certainly as far as the Old Testament is concerned is this. We know that when the people of God there tried to contain God within their imagery, and I am thinking not only of building 'Golden Calves' and putting them in the Temple, I am thinking of just devitalising the forms themselves, that the Temple worship became an end in itself and the seeking of God's presence, the "Chicano Glory" and the fulfilling of God's purpose was lost so they went through their observances, they killed their bullocks and their sheep and their lambs for the offerings; but all that this did God said, was to bring a stench in his nostrils, so time after time we find it said that the Spirit departed from them.

You know Ezekiel speaks of the reluctant departure of the Spirit going from the Temple to the walls, to the mountain, the reluctant departure of the "Chicano Glory" and I see that this is what happened that in the present state of the 20th Century institutional church that the Spirit of God is not amongst them anymore; they have an empty shell and the theology that they have is a systematic accumulation of human thinking, of doctrinal practice which is

out of date by the time that it is accumulated. You know it is 20 years out of date by the time that it is accumulated into a whole systematic theology, but in any case it reflects the problems - theological, political, economic and social of the West and has very little bearing on for instance the East where I was talking on in my lecture.

In Asia they have discovered out of necessity that they have a whole different ball-game going on and that therefore the God that they discover from the Bible was not contained within the thought forms that they had had imposed on them for a couple of a hundred years, or the past generation to bring it up to date, and that this Bible that they had, this Word of God could apply in their situation. So they are working out not only the externalising of their activities of what they can or cannot do in any country under a regime as in China, under a democratic regime in India but heavily Hinduised and so on, under a very sophisticated industrial situation as in Singapore and Hong Kong, a heavily Catholic situation in Manila; that each of these are producing an externalising of a situation, but also an internalising. The thought forms are very much Oriental and it is this marriage that is producing an exciting, not only exciting new theology except in the widespread definition of the term, not a pale imitation of Western theology, though it is still a structured, but much more dynamic and organic approach to God's work in their generation."

(INT.)

"and much closer to the Hebrew and Apostolic mind!"

(PATTERSON)

"That's right in both the Old Testament and the New Testament traditions - they are at ease, they are no longer tied to special dispensational forms in the Old Testament and in the New Testament or then the various dispensations which these all fit into and find that these are rigid structures - or eventually ending up with whether it is post-millennialist, pre-millennialist, or unmillennialist in the present situation or whether this whole section only applies to the Jew because it is addressed to the

Kingdom of God and therefore excludes the Christian; that all of these formulations are Western formulations. They come to it and say this is the Word of God - does it apply? How does it apply? And they are finding excitingly that it is working it out in practice - so that they take not only the Sermon on the Mount but they take the parables of Jesus and apply them in their situation and they come up with, for instance, in Indonesia if they want to have communion and there is no wine they speak to the stream and the water becomes wine! Who brought the bread? Nobody brought the bread - but they have bread for communion. In this kind of situation they just expect God to do it and apparently he does it."

These comments reflect a growing awareness of our need as Christians to



unlearn, or at least break free from our Westernised ways of thinking and seek to discover what God is doing among his people all over the world and what he is desiring to do with us. He doesn't change, we do, and he is showing his people that he wishes to speak to them, to instruct them and to edify in ways that echo the words of the prophet Joel.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and the maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit."

We may find ourselves seeing visions or prophesying or speaking in an unknown language or lifting our hands and our voices in reverence to our Maker and know that the Spirit of the Living God is amongst us exalting the Name of Jesus and speaking His Word of Love into a confused and aimless world that has forgotten its Creator and doesn't know of His forgiveness.

What then is to be our reality? Do we like Paul wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this present age or are we continuously trying to strive against flesh and blood? Do we act as though the scientific principle of cause and effect is reality or do we recognise the God who is able to act into the natural world and change its pattern of events? Are our ears open to hear the still small voice of the Father speaking to us? Do we have the eyes of faith that enable us to walk victoriously over the troubled waters beneath us? How we strive to understand God with our Westernised glasses darkly when so often he is waiting for us to come to him like a child comes to his Father - unconditionally, accepting whatever he gives us, knowing that he will not give us a scorpion if we ask for an egg - knowing that he loves us unconditionally. We need to humble ourselves and pray and seek his face continually. He waits to receive us and pour his streams of living water upon us. If only we knew how much he longs to do it.

KARL BRETTIG

on the street...

Lord, along with many Christians in this land it is the desire and joy of this Community to bring you to the street, to the bike scene, and to those who step into the coffee house on a Saturday night; Lord it is our desire and life to share your love, care and wisdom with those who walk the narrow way offered by the world, under the deception that is a broad-minded way.

Lord, this is my desire too, but how Lord, and is it really my desire and am I too afraid to really do it? How Lord, how do I minister in your name without my own flesh ripping me off? How do I step off the safe side, walk into the fiery furnace of the street without getting burned by it all? You know Lord the stench of it all, will it cling to me? Can I kiss my wife good night tonight after I've been through all this? You know Lord, I'm afraid - Lord I'm not even sure if it is fear.

Well take tonight Lord, it was strange, we were seeking the bike boys but we didn't find any, we had a beautiful time of sharing before we set off too - helped me to fit in a little more but we still met no-one.

We must have checked out a dozen pubs where the groups might be but no-one.

Well we popped into our own pub and found we just missed Johnny and his chick - Johnny he's a loner Lord and has great potential - well who doesn't in you Lord - Look after Johnny Lord - talk to his heart.

Anyhow a couple of us had a game of pool - and a light drink, it's part of becoming established, known in a place, you know Lord, like the market place. However, we decided to take a ride up Hindley Street to see if anyone was there. Street kids by the carload, and groups everywhere, - pictures just getting out - sounds like they have been in prison hey Lord - joke of course. Anyhow as I was saying no bike boys around much at all. Well there were three light weights sitting by the side - just young kids, loners about 17 to 18 years of age - we went past, don't really know why - they seemed so pathetic maybe that was it.

Well we decided nothing was on so we called it quits. I took my passenger home and of

course my old machine started acting up again - electrical Lord.

Lord I really do need a more reliable bike; I'll come back to that later Lord - because I have more important things to share with you now.

Yes electrical trouble, I checked the battery terminals and found one loose but I had no tools so I wondered if those young whipper snappers would still be in Hindley Street on their power machines. So I went back into town keeping the revs up so the motor wouldn't die. Well Lord they were still there. I stopped and asked if they had a screw driver, well as you know, they did and I was able to tighten the battery lead. Thanks Lord. The guy on the big coloured Kwaka I've talked to before and I've seen one of the others.

On talking they said they were doing nothing and were bored by it.

Well then their mate on the greasy 650 Yam came - he was all steamed up - really Lord, his visor was foggy and he was excited.

"Looks like he got it - he's all steamed up." they said. Well yes he said he got it too. Must have been the first time - he was so excited - like a schoolboy with his first two wheeler.

I thought it might be drugs or something like that, but no Lord, Father how do I minister? It turned out to be a "head trip" and "it didn't need to be asked to strip off at all, matter of fact it plugged me in like a bath plug." he said "Wow, what a head trip it had, (drugs that is Lord) its down in the park I asked it to wait and it said yes. Come on gang who's next, come on let's go and beat it up." "No," said one "don't beat it up let's go and have a bit of fun".

Lord, I didn't know quite what to do

they were gone soon. They had to wait for a cop car to pass - as one had no baffles in his pipe, blew it out doing 90 m.p.h. down Anzac Highway.

The girl Lord, Oh be with her, they despised her; you died for her; to them she was an "it"; to you a person, a lost soul. Could I have gate-crashed them and rescued her like a knight in shining armour and brought her home, Lord what then? Help me Lord to minister into this scene, it's hard Lord and I'm afraid, inexperienced, unsure in this area too Lord.

Thank you that your strength and power are able to be used in me; Lord give me the boldness of Paul so I'll know what to do next time, you have before in other areas, coffee house, drunks and the street scene. I ask this in and through Jesus. I am your son.

BLOOD AND BONE

P.S. Later Lord I found out the one who said "No, don't beat it up" made a decision for you some time back. Lord touch him again - help me to reach out for you to him - bring him across my path again. Reclaim him Lord. IAN WADE

STEPPING OUT WITH THE LORD

John 20:21-3 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you, as the Father sent me, even so I send you." And when he said this he breathed on them and said to them "Receive the Holy Spirit." If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any they are retained.

God had given us the duty of making others friends with Him (2 Cor 5:16-21). What we do with it is not only our business but God's. So on Friday Nights a team of people share the Gospel with the world at large.

At 8.00p.m. on a Friday night some 12-15 people meet at 102 Gawler Place for prayer, study and worship time of about 60 minutes. We find it essential to be at peace with God and one another before going out to give a message of peace (Mark 9:38-50 - We should constantly be at peace with each other, God and self). From about 9.30p.m. to 12.30a.m. the street team divides into pairs and attends bars, the Pancake Kitchen, pinball parlours, and other places in Hindley Street. At 12.30a.m. we meet back at Jakes for a short sharing time and prayer. We don't use tracts. They make contact impersonal. The Gospel isn't words, it's God's activity in us (Phil. 3). To tell people about Jesus is just being loving, open and honest. There aren't any formulaes, just the Holy Spirit who is



the hallmark of the ministry (Luther's explanation to the 3rd Article of the Apostles' Creed). He has called us, guides us, is our strength, well it's difficult without Him.

A few concluding thoughts:- Luther says (Augsburg Confession Article 2) that man is born with sin and even now condemns and brings eternal death on those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit. If this is so, where does it leave most of the people of Australia's destiny? Let us keep alert to our responsibility for those who have not yet received the Gospel.

"Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Luke 10:1-2.) Yes, the Gospel costs us our lives; our life is now Christ's (Gal. 2:20-21) - yet let's not forget His famous last words:- "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations and lo I am with you always to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20)

BRIAN PROEVE

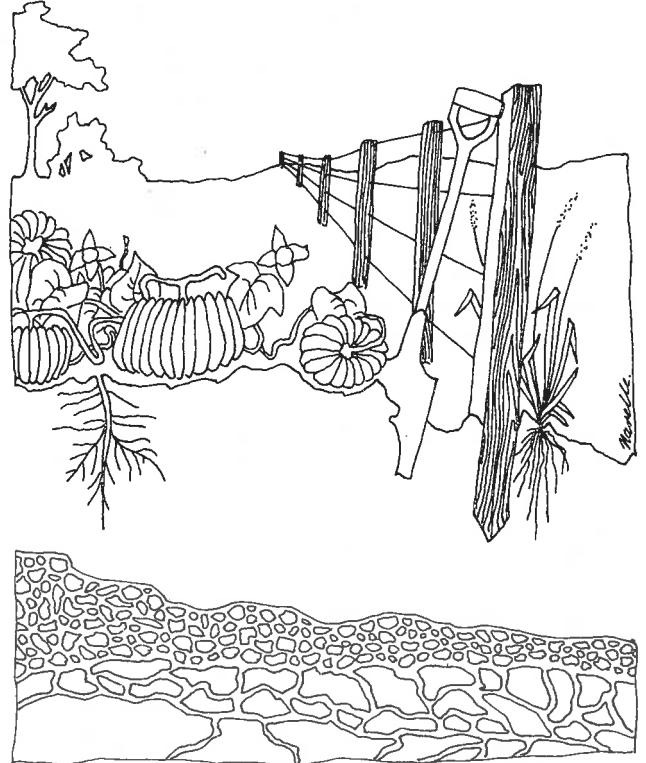
YAHWEH SHALOM CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

In January this year a committee of local Christians was formed to begin and manage this work. From the beginning we planned to work in close co-operation with groups such as Jacob's Ladder. Our contribution was seen in the area of providing a farm situation where we establish a small Community run on Christian principles. Folk requiring nurture and sympathetic employment would be accepted from groups such as Jacob's Ladder, and become members of Yahweh Shalom community. These folk will be cared for in our 'family' and encouraged to accept responsibilities for various facets of farm work.

Although we have only the bare fundamentals now we plan to provide more labour intense farm activities, hobby and craft facilities which should give folk an opportunity of self-expression and support the Community. A great deal of work has to be done - a good deal of building, property and pasture improvement, planting and maintaining of gardens, provision of a more satisfactory water supply and so on. We have had many offers of help, and realise that God is going to supply all our needs, just as He has thus far. Those of us involved at Yahweh Shalom have a real sense of service as we begin to work on various facilities that will be of benefit to us and others in the future.

The Council however, is still uncertain of how they should decide to view what we propose to do. It would appear they are caught between severe pressure from influential local people in our area and a sense that what we propose is good and worthwhile. We are convinced that God is using this situation to His own honour and glory, and that these immediate difficulties will be solved in His time. We value your

Some two years ago Padthaway farmer Mr. Frank Edsen became convinced that God was leading him to give his farm to some group involved in drug and alcoholic rehabilitation work.



prayers regarding this situation as we want to witness to the Love of Christ which compels us when so easily we could 'return evil for evil'.

Some local people are strongly resisting the establishment of Yahweh Shalom. The Council recently called a rate-payers meeting to gauge public reaction and we thank God for a response of 2:1 in favour of Yahweh Shalom.

Also pray for us as a family that God will guide and direct us as we learn how better to serve one another as we serve Christ, and that Yahweh Shalom (The Peace of God) may be the experience of all those who spend time in our Community.

IAN McLIESH
Caretaker/Manager.

STOOKEY VISIT

Sunday morning, May 2, saw Noel Paul Stookey at Jacob's Ladder Celebration which was held in conjunction with the Jesus Centre. The former Peter, Paul and Mary singer spoke to us about the Lord's calling to His people in 1976. Noel, as he prefers to be called now, has been led out from the city onto a farm in the State of Maine where he has set-up a recording studio in a 3-storey former chicken house.

He spoke about how we so often lose our first love and the need to turn ourselves over to the Lord. These are a few of his words:-

*"Deep in the woods the sound of an axe
Clearing the fields by the sweat of his back
A man of the soil plants his seed
And prays to the earth to provide what he needs
Turns it over to the Father
Turns it over to the Son
Turns it over in the Spirit
Until the Kingdom comes."*

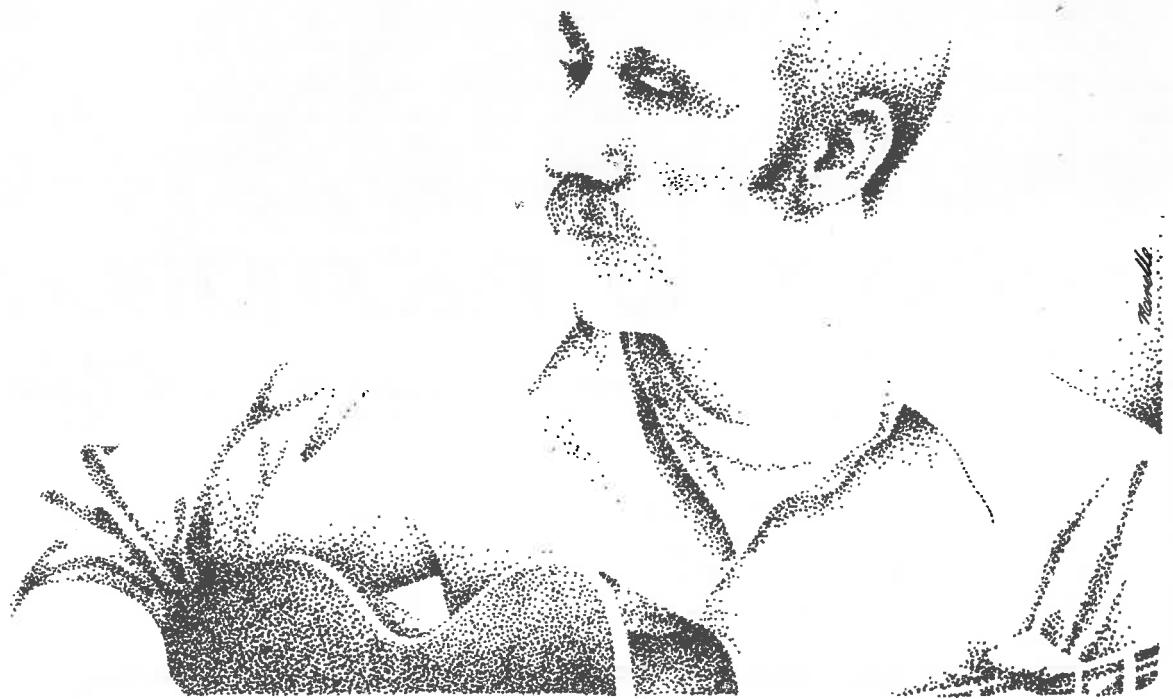
"If there is a uniqueness in my ministry it's that I'm from the other side of the world - and brothers and sisters are similar in many respects. There are meetings in the top of lofts, there are meetings in the traditional churches. The traditional churches are crying out for life. It is not unusual that the traditional churches are having such difficulties, because we as men seem to demand structure to our lives, whether it's beginning with the milk on Monday or the changing of the nappy before the child is put down. We have our own system that we work within our lives. We have our own means of doing that which we have to do. We don't eat pizza after we clean our teeth, you may have tried it once, you may have sucked candy bars when you were younger after you had brushed your teeth - and we learn. When we learn

we make decisions. The Church is a highly developed system and I don't mean the traditional church - the building, the four walls; I am referring to the very long, involved, complex system. It started off with Christ saying to Peter, "Upon this rock I am going to build my Church". In Rome it's some church!! - I know Peter is there somewhere! But it's the old cart and the horse story. We even do it in our lives.

We take on these objects which display the fact that we were in love once. They maybe photographs in an album, they maybe a ring - a sacred song. Sometimes they will be churches. Then we use the gifts and the rings and the photograph albums to remind ourselves that we were once in love and we have needed to be in love all the time and I think it is impossible to be in love all the time unless you're with Jesus all the time."

Later on we asked him about his relationship to the wider church and whether he was a member of a local church.

"Yes, the Congregational Church, which is called the United Church of Christ. They have about a 65 year old shock-white haired 'Mr. Kind' who is very thorough and very thoughtful, who He is really appealing to right now. He and I have a special relationship - I get him into trying to get an alive Christ into the church and he doesn't



joke but he knows from where I am coming. I do solos with guitar from the balcony of the choir - we have a meditation period that struck me today when I was talking. There is a purpose for structure, when I was explaining what the Church looked like today I didn't sense it but sitting down here talking today I realised it. While we do try and improve our system or get something that will feel comfortable and I'm not so sure that it is bad, because after all in the church we can be led in prayer. But when we are led in prayer, I don't know about you, but I find it very difficult to pray any other prayer but what I am being led in. I have to, if I keep trying to open up myself Gee I wouldn't have used that word or I don't understand what he means by that but I accept him as a voice of the Body so I will just follow, but in my mind I am one step removed from God because I am following the machinations of another heart no matter how praiseworthy it might be or at one with the Spirit.

I find that a church that provides, now the other end of the scales, when you are so structured that you have no time to yourself either, you are either mumbling with a whole bunch of other dead-pans the same credo, which never changes or you are singing or the minister is leading. But the perfect balance seems to be to really have moments where you just don't say

anything, you just let it sit there for awhile - I really think God invites us in those moments and needs to commune with us, unstructured, in a framework specially set aside - so what do we have, we have the paradox, a rigid structure which allows us to be free."

Then we asked if he would like to make a comment on what he thought God is doing, that he feels is really significant. Because if we can see what God is doing in other places then it confirms what is happening in our own lives.

"There is another category that I didn't cover that even though a lot of Christians have and will (and a lot of non-Christians because they have discovered truth they just haven't found out that it leads to God yet) and then as well there are communes who have discovered that the only way that they can exist is with God at the centre of it, even though all these things are investing themselves in the country or have moved to the country and feel a real burden to provide a haven in the later days and instruction in the later days and solace in the later days and the church in effect in the later days, there are those who still are called to stay in the cities. There is a real ministry in the cities and they won't leave until the last building falls - I really feel that is important to say".

°°SOLSOUND PROMOTIONS°°

Noel Paul Stookey's visit to Adelaide was made possible through Solsound Promotions - an organisation co-founded by Richard Berry for the purpose of enabling local and international Christian performers, who have caught the public eye, to minister in this city.

Richard has recently stepped out into this work on a full-time basis. His ministry in this area is a special one which we believe the Lord is going to use mightily in the task of sharing the good news of Jesus with the non-Christian world. Stookey's concert at Adelaide University produced sufficient evidence of that.

Coming Soon.....

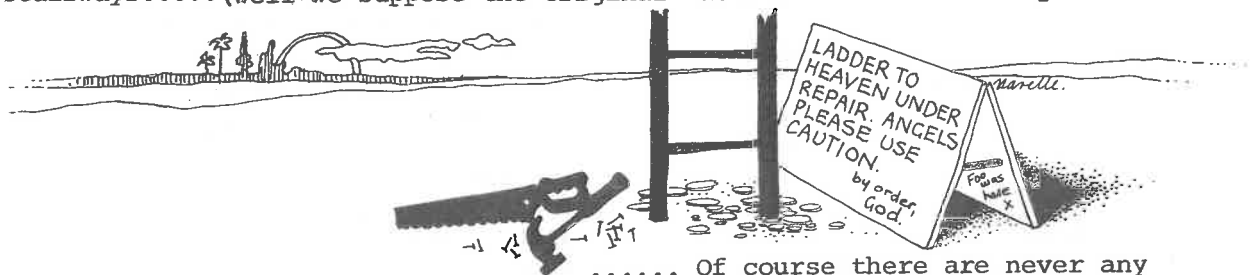
BARRY MCGUIRE
at Festival Theatre
July 3, at 8.00p.m.

And.....

LARRY NORMAN
watch for more details.

*** The Jacob's Ladder RESOURCE CENTRE is beginning to come alive! We would welcome any contributions such as research articles, books, cassette tapes, magazines etc. We would also invite you to make use of what is currently available (you can only do that by dropping in at 102 Gawler Place, between 10.00a.m. and 4.30p.m. Tuesday - Friday).

*** If you drop-in during the next month or so watch out for missiles from the ceiling or dust from underground or things to trip over
....The Centre is currently being CHANGED in order to make way for fireproof stairways.....(well we suppose the original Jacob's Ladder was fireproof!)



..... Of course there are never any fires at the top of the ladder (it's the ones at the bottom that the City Council has been worried about lest the people at the top of the ladder be consumed!)

*** Seeing as we are now going to have two ladders instead of one (in order to escape fires) we have been prodded into re-designing the coffee house and making it suitable for things other than serving coffee (you can only find out more about 'things other' by visiting the upper rooms of 102 Gawler Place on a Saturday night.)

*** Of course, the offices too have to be relocated in order to make way for 'other things' (including a lovely new secretary, Ruth Phillipson, who has been on the full-time staff since about a month ago.) Did you notice the improved quality of this letter? You can probably actually read it thanks to Ruth and another lovely lady (Narelle Beard) who did the layout.

*** It has been rumoured that some people have started a health kick!!!!!! This probably has something to do with talk about a food co-operative which probably has something to do with the seven or so households that have sprung up in the Brompton - Croydon area and are becoming more interested in sharing the good things the Lord has given them - watch for more details.

*** Melbourne's ARK coffee lounge now has a community house at 45 Clyde Street, Thornbury which you can also visit. The ARK is growing (being built-up) and reaching out into the streets of Northcote. Please pray for their work.

CONSTITUTIONAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED

Another major breakthrough! After two years of "constitutional constipation" and many hassles in sorting out our relationship with the rest of the Lutheran Church of Australia, agreement has been reached.

Jacob's Ladder Christian Community has constituted itself and applied to the South Australian District of the L.C.A. for admission to the District as a community (or congregation) of the District. At the time of writing we have met with representatives of the Constitutions Committee of the District and have reached agreement with them so we just await the completion of the final procedures. We have also applied for Incorporation as an Association so that we may have legal status as a community.

We praise God that this point has been reached and that our status as "church" in the New Testament sense has been recognised. For the past two years we have been saying that this is what

we in fact are. This also means that the position of our Pastor, Doug Kuhl, can now be put in order as far as the L.C.A. is concerned. Doug has technically been without a call for the past 18 months, though he has in reality been the Pastor of our Community for this time. We will soon be in the position to issue an official call to him and so end this abnormality.

So it is with much rejoicing that we can share with you that we are now "officially" linked with the Body of Christ through part of that Body - the Lutheran Church of Australia.

Praise the Lord!

STEEN OLSEN

