

**In 2002, I added to my role as Superintendent. I decided to stand for election to the Legislative Council in the NSW Parliament. At a joint sitting of both houses of Parliament, I was elected to take the seat of The Hon. Elaine Nile who retired because of illness after 14 years of working beside her husband, Rev. The Hon. Fred Nile MLC the leader of the Christian Democratic Party. 6 months later I received in a general state election over whelming support to win one of the 21 seats in the Legislative Council. There were 292 candidates.**

**This gives me the new opportunity of not only working to make life better for the poor, the under-privileged, the aged and all those who need help by proclaiming the Gospel and serving through leading the largest charity in NSW, but now of overseeing all Government legislation to ensure it will benefit these people for whom we care. Mostly, charities provide palliative care to suffering people. Now I had a new opportunity to work in preventative care through more Christian legislation. Prevention, not just cure.**

**Over the years Wesley Mission has been greatly blessed by people in our political parties. On our Wesley Mission Board we had The Hon. Milton Morris an ALP Minister and The Hon. Bruce Baird a Liberal Minister and former Deputy Premier. The Uniting Church has had a minister as Deputy Prime Minister (ALP) and another a Senator for the Democrats. The Christian Democratic Party is not a political party in the traditional sense but a significant group of Christians who seek government of our country based upon the teachings of the Bible and the value of the family as the basic unit to society. I shared this invitation that came to me in 2002 with the officers of the Mission and the President of the Uniting Church in Australia Professor James Haire all of whom supported me.**

**The Christian Democratic Party has policies which really seem like a list of concerns from Wesley Mission: housing, especially of the homeless; aged care; defence; Aboriginal justice and reconciliation; family and community services; law and order; the environment; land degradation and water conservation; education and training; state and regional development; child protection and care; and disability support.**

**The Christian Democratic Party supports whatever party is in power on its major budget proposals. The Premier Mr Bob Carr rang me to congratulate me on my appointment and to say personally how thrilled he was that I was entering the Legislative Council and how much respect he had for the way the Christian Democratic Party has always supported the government of the day on these important matters. The great value to Wesley Mission of having the Superintendent working as a member of the Legislative Council is that we now had access to all ministers and senior public servants. I soon became Chair of an important social issues committee, which gives me the opportunity to raise all the important issues that our staff raises with me. I also have the opportunity of speaking out on the social justice issues, which have always been a significant part of our ministry. I have chaired important inquiries in NSW Health (its hospital and medical operations), juvenile justice, the Ambulance Service and the insurance industry. The Prime Minister Mr John Howard, who in 1994 invited me to advise on matters of social welfare, requested me to stay on, which I did for the next ten years.**

**I led the Christian Democratic Party in the March 2003 election for both the upper and lower houses and I was elected until 2011.**

**Back in October 1992, one Thursday, I had lunch at Parliament House with the Deputy Premier, Bruce Baird, the Minister of Health, Ron Phillips; the Minister**

of Community Services, Jim Langley, the former President of the Legislative Council Johnno Johnston and a few other back-benchers. During the meal the Deputy Premier asked me: "Would you ever consider coming into Parliament?". I replied "No. I would never take one step towards coming into Parliament, because I am an evangelist, called of God, and any step in any other direction is always a step downwards."

I had already been asked that question by the Electoral Committee in Higgenbotham, Victoria, when The Hon. Don Chipp had stepped down from the Frazer ministry and had decided to launch the Australian Democrats. It was a "blue ribbon" seat, and I was assured a place in Federal Parliament if I agreed. My reply was the same. I was called to be an evangelist.

Why did I change my mind? Simply because my travelling ministry as an evangelist came to an end. I had announced that I would not accept a proposed extension of ministry as Superintendent of Wesley Mission beyond my 67<sup>th</sup> birthday in November 2005. After twenty-seven years in leadership it was time to pass the responsibility onto another person. Giving three and a half years notice would allow time for the search committee to scour the world for the very best successor, and still allow perhaps six months of overlap where we could work together before I closed my office door for the last time.

The timetable worked well. My successor was named, Rev Keith Garner M.Th., of Rochdale, U.K. and he arrived in time for a good handover. My concern was to be able to introduce him to all of my community contacts, major donors, supportive corporations and members and to encourage their on going commitment to Keith and Wesley Mission.

**I had no intention of ceasing ministry in the work of proclaiming the Gospel and caring for the community. I would do both. But with all of my contacts and understanding of society's needs, I was in a place where I could contribute in a preventative way to the making of a more just and Christian society. Many laws made by parliamentarians are designed to overcome a problem but are then found to create more. In our Parliaments there is not another member who has a lifetime of experience in the field of social welfare. Most are lawyers, accountants, and trade union officials.**

**If you ask any politician “Do you have an ambition to become leader of your party and the nation?”, only believe those who agree with the ambition to be leader. Those who deny their ambition are usually lying. Yet I have no ambition to be either party or national leader. Why should I be believed?**

**Two reasons. One, I have told my Party Leader and my Party Executive I will never accept leadership even if it were to be offered. Second, I have joined a Party that can never be in political power. My sole reason, after a long – fifty-year ministry – is to work to improve social welfare for the whole state. As stated earlier Parliament is a place for many ambitious lawyers and trade union officials, but there is no one with extensive social welfare experience.**

**After being sworn in I had dozens of people saying to me that they were assured that at long last we have a person with hands-on experience. When I speak on the issues of homelessness, poverty, drug addiction, public housing, ageing, health care and the like, I am listened to with politeness and silence. On decisions impacting on these matters, my colleague Rev Fred Nile and myself hold the balance of power. Our vote determines the legislative outcome on these matters, I am a tribal elder – and rejoice in that role.**

**I will always be a Christian spokesman in Parliament, but many people question the future of the Christian Democratic Party. For twenty years the supporters were good Christian men and women who were concerned about the moral drift in society and who worked hard to have Fred and Elaine Nile elected because they trusted them to uphold their views. But there was little success in building a national party structure based on a well-thought out statement of beliefs that could be easily communicated to the general public.**

**The party lacked an intellectual basis and sound political strategy. It existed primarily to ensure Fred and Elaine were re-elected. Today smart young voters want a clear statement of political purpose and strategy. Every voter under thirty years of age can tell you in a sentence what the Green Party stands for. But they cannot say what the Christian Democratic Party stands for.**

**Will the CDP survive? It will not unless there is fresh blood in the Parliament representing the Christian vision, a well articulated political platform and a sound party structure based upon democratic principles where each branch has input to policy and legislative decisions. That is going to require major changes that the long term supporters and leaders may not be able to make.**

**However, a major article in the "Sydney Morning Herald" "Getting Biblical not main thrust in Christian politics" by Linda Morris (March 29, 2005) spoke hopefully of the change.**

***"The party of morals campaigner Fred Nile wants to ditch its image as an anti-sex party and has launched a recruitment drive as it moves to compete for the Christian vote with the emerging Family First Party.***

*The Christian Democratic Party will re-brand itself to broaden its appeal across the Christian right and prepare for life after its founder. The move comes as Family First is to open its first NSW branch in coming months, and its chairman, Peter Harris, says it is planning to mobilise an "aggressive campaign" for the 2007 state election that could see a Family First candidate go head-to-head with Fred Nile.*

*The Christian Democrats' state director, Phil Lamb, said competition for the biblical Christian vote had the "effect of pouring gasoline into the tank".*

*The party was building a new structure, a database of supporters and had recruited 500 new members. Recently I invited 42 church leaders to provide feedback on the party's image and performance.*

*"We are changing from a Fred Nile support group and the many welded-on supporters to a grassroots-driven, Christian-based political party," Mr. Lamb said. "Up until now, the party is perceived as being 'morals crusaders', however, that will have to change. Our party is simply not just the anti-sex party, a reputation that has stuck for the past 23 years.*

*"The truth of the matter is that anyone who sees Fred Nile and Gordon Moyes work in the upper house knows that they are genuinely engaged in the whole process of governing, and have a much wider and balanced world-view than the press communicate to the public."*

The Sydney Morning Herald in an editorial expressed it cleanly: *" The Christian Democratic Party, born of the morality crusades of Fred Nile, finds itself in battle with the newcomer, the Family First Party. The Christian Democrat's NSW director, Phil Lamb, argues that competition will grow the cake, and that the fallout will be multiplication of the conservative fundamentalist Christian vote.*

*This seems more wishful prayer than political realism, at least in the short to medium term.*

*Mr. Nile, a former Uniting Church minister, is the great survivor of NSW politics, having entered the NSW Upper House 24 years ago - only a year after the Reverend Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority helped Ronald Reagan's elevation to the White House. Mr. Nile has kept his place by polling about 3 per cent of the overall NSW vote, enough for a state upper house seat but nothing like sufficient for a Senate seat, which he failed to attain last October despite outpolling Family First. Meanwhile, amid speculation that senators bearing the brand of Christian fundamentalism would control the balance of power, only Family First's Steve Fielding won a Senate seat and only then because of a complicated flow of preferences in Victoria.*

*So Mr. Nile held the ground all those years without expanding it. Then along came a new generation of the same breed with a message promoting values in a broader context than the Bible. If either has the potential to lure substantial voting support from major parties, Family First is better positioned because its message is more attuned to blue-collar voters, while the Christian Democrats are caught between a rock and a pillow. They want to move away from morals crusading and to join the same path as Family First but are being held back by the public perception of Mr. Nile, whose high profile also holds them together.*

*Christian fundamentalism holds more sway over American politics because it is more deeply rooted in the US and because, unlike Australia, voting there is voluntary. And there is little room here for Christian minnows to grow, given their need to bite into a Coalition already attractive to conservative fundamentalists."*

**Although I was asked to fill the Hon. Elaine Nile's seat when she had to retire due to ill health, I am not sure she liked the change. I had asked the Parliament to build me a computer table in the Parliament Chamber. They did build it alongside the Crossbench where Fred and Elaine used to sit. This led Elaine to write for her page in "Family World News". "We always used to say there were three of us on our seat: The Lord and Fred and Elaine. Now Fred sits alone with the Lord. Gordon is plugged into his computer on the Liberal's back bench, but wherever we are the Lord is with us."**

**"The Love Seat" as it was known was too small for Fred, our papers and me and with Fred's outspoken views on homosexuality, it would give rise to perverted humor. Incidentally when the Parliament made me the computer desk with its direct line, I was able to notify my constituents that they could E-mail me directly into Parliament House while issues were being debated, and I would consider including them in my speeches. I would also reply to them immediately giving them from within the Parliamentary Chamber my views on the state of the proposed legislation. I became the first member of parliament to become directly in contact with constituents electronically.**

**The Legislative Council, our nation's oldest Council of government and our State Senate, was the ideal place to do that. I would have the resources of the Parliament, my expert staff and a decent budget. Further, I had the unfettered freedom to raise in Parliament any issue I desired, to speak on every piece of legislation, to establish public inquiries, to Chair important committees, and to deliver addresses – even sermons – on any Christian matter.**

**For example I constantly raise in Parliament questions to the Minister leading to tighter regulations on social problems. Their problems cost us all dearly. Gamblers with large debts commit up to 20 per cent of white-collar crime often**



against their employers to continue gambling, win back what they have lost, or pay for living expenses. While drug addicts mostly commit crimes against property such as break and enter, purse snatching and so on researchers have found that problem gamblers turned to fraud and financial theft to feed their habit. One study of nearly 2,800 District Court and Local Court cases in New South Wales from 1995 to 1999 found that nearly one in five of those convicted of larceny or cheque fraud had gambling problems. Overall, 4 per cent of all crimes were found to be directly related to gambling. The gamblers, aged 17 to 71, had stolen, and largely gambled away, about \$4.2 million from employers, shops and individuals. One 54-year-old woman, for example, had lost more than \$425,000 taken from her employer over 10 years. Often it was easy for the gamblers to cash false cheques, falsify their employers' books or access the bank accounts of others, and the studies warn that many companies had poor auditing and internal security arrangements.

One man forged his employer's accounts after loan sharks threatened him and his family. Another robbed a TAB so he could place a bet on a trifecta. Almost two-thirds of offenders with gambling problems received gaol sentences ranging from three months to six years, but few were ordered to undergo counselling or treatment for their addiction. In a sense the NSW Government is hindering compulsive gamblers. On the one hand, the Government relies on a budget that is based very largely on gambling-related income. On the other hand, the Government is seeking to help resolve gambling problems. I congratulate the Government on some of the major initiatives it has undertaken in recent times, including a statewide cap of 104,000 poker machines.

They also included the requirement that venues undergo a social impact assessment before new machines can be installed; that hotels and clubs with gaming machines being prohibited from shopping centres.

**My experience in counselling people with personal needs and destructive habits, comes to the fore in being a Parliamentarian, for there in Parliament I ask the questions of the Government Ministers on the issues that are faced by real people, and get real results.**

**In a unique double sitting of both Houses of Parliament I was nominated by the leader of one party and seconded by the leader of another – a unique situation. The vote was unanimous. I would finish the term of the Hon. Elaine Nile MLC and then stand for re-election. With more than a million voters desiring that, I was re-elected for an eight-year term.**

**The news was not greeted with enthusiasm by the Uniting Church hierarchy! The Christian public flooded me with letters and invitation to visit and speak to Churches. But the Synod bureaucrats were worried by two unexpected concerns that would never have occurred to me.**

**The problem was two fold: one, I would now receive two salaries and that is unethical, and two, as Parliamentarian I can speak beyond the discipline of the church and I would not be subject to the church's methods of keeping its ministers in line. The second point is true, and if the church tried to silence me on matters when I speak under Parliamentary privilege, the church could be held to be in contempt of Parliament. You may be horrified how many ministers are silenced by the decisions made by committees of the church without proper evidence and without the presence of the person concerned. I was not present when my salaries were discussed. What was said was untrue and I had no opportunity to correct it. Hence I will tell you.**

**I have not been paid by the Parish of Wesley Mission for any of the work that I do when preaching, speaking on radio and television, providing pastoral care or home and hospital visitation. I voluntarily offered this to our congregations. I do get the equivalent of a Minister's salary for my administrative work but this I offered to raise for Wesley Mission every year from outside of the church. For the last 15 years I have raised my own salary and that of running the Superintendent's Office, from sources outside of the church, including raising \$25,000 from auctioning donated goods just as I write. The money I do receive from the Mission, I have given back to the Mission every month since my election, to supporting another person, and to fund a Christian magazine, "Marriage Works" to help young couples improve their marriages. The offerings and donations Beverley and I have made far exceed that of any minister's total salary. So much for the integrity and honesty of people who speak to the press from Synod questioning my salary! As a former Labor Premier said to me: "When I read that article I said to my wife, 'That Synod bloke only wants Gordon's job!'"**

**I commend to my critics the practise of raising their own salary. They would cease to be a burden upon our congregations as they currently are, bring them into contact with people outside of the church, and enable other people to be employed. I have enjoyed raising my own salary without using anyone else's donations or offering.**

**Apart from this, the Trustees of Emmanuel School of Religion U.S.A., where I have taught Urban Mission over more than a decade have honoured me by appointing me Adjunct Professor of Urban Church Mission. It is expected that I will do no more than I have been doing in the past decade, but this will allow me to keep updated on the impact of city living on Christian ministry, so that I can not only pass on that knowledge to students, but also incorporate those insights**

**into our ministry. Teaching and ministering at the same time is one thing, but what of legislating and ministering at the same time?**

**My acceptance of this position with the Legislative Council is in response to the Uniting Church's Basis of Union declaration that "the Uniting Church will provide for the exercise of men and women of gifts God bestows upon them and will order her life in response to His call to enter more fully into her mission." I sought to use my gifts and experience to enhance the mission of the Church.**

**When the possibility of this election was raised, I discussed this with the officers of Wesley Mission, representing the Board, Council and members of Wesley Mission. I informed the Committee appointed by the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee to bring a recommendation for my extension of ministry of the possibility of being offered an important position in Government. Later, I informed the Presbytery of which I was Chair, in session, of the same possibility. I also met with and informed the President of the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly to gain his counsel. All persons so consulted were affirming that I should accept. The President at length expressed the view that he supported the proposition that Uniting Church ministers should use their talents in the political arena, and in the light of the special time commitments of the Legislative Council, while I was still in placement as Superintendent of Wesley Mission. The President further suggested a UCA Church Service at which he would be willing to preach, to set me aside into this additional role.**

**I also approached the President of the Legislative Council and the Clerk of the Governments, to see if a minister in settlement would be acceptable as a member of the Legislative Council. The President indicated that as the normal term of office was eight years, she saw beyond my present work commitment to my retirement from that position and my full time involvement as a M.L.C. The**

**Clerk of Governments indicated that as almost all of the members of the Legislative Council also pursued their professions as doctors, architects, graziers, lawyers and the like, he saw no difference in me being in settlement until retirement or a replacement was made.**

**The Clerk also indicated that in the next eight months only 23 sitting days were involved, and in a full year 46 sitting days were required. There were some good reasons why the Superintendent of Wesley Mission Sydney should combine this role with that of being a lawmaker. The Uniting Church in Australia has always seen that ministry should go beyond the four walls of a church into the heart of a nation's educational, social, cultural, corporate and political life.**

**Being involved with the legislative program of the nation requires special gifts and abilities. I had long been involved on advisory groups to the Prime Minister and also to Ministers of the State Government on major social issues. I saw my appointment as similar to that of other ministers who are encouraged by their congregations to become involved in extending their ministry into community activities. Some ministers in settlements serve as local councillors and even Mayors of communities. Others have been Presidents of local service clubs, and others active in political branches and State political organisations while in settlement.**

**Others are chaplains to sporting teams and in schools, hospitals and industry. In the previous twenty years, I pioneered the extension of ministry into the corporate world and served as director and chairman of a number of significant companies in media, insurance, life insurance, film production, public and private hospitals, and in the ownership and running of two of Sydney's major radio stations. My training and skills were recognised by the granting of fellowships at the highest level in the Australian Institute of Management and**

**the Australian Institute of Company Directors. The fellowships are not awarded lightly, and came as recognition of expert training and the experiences of my skilled leadership in those fields.**

**There are precedents for the Superintendent of a large Central Mission combining his ministry with that of service to the nation in the upper chamber of the parliament. Rev. Dr. Donald Soper, Superintendent of the great West London Methodist Mission, served as Superintendent for sixteen years after being appointed to Britain's House of Lords, where he made a remarkable contribution to the national life of the UK serving in both roles. Here, in NSW, the Legislative Council has found members from among the serving clergy in settlement since the days of Rev. John Dunmore Lang who served the Legislative Council while minister of Sydney Presbyterian Church. They have included a number of bishops, archdeacons, and even the Archbishop of Sydney, all of whom continued in office while a member of the Legislative Council.**

**The legislative issues that come before the Legislative Council are of particular interest. The Upper House does not restrict the budget bills from the Legislative Assembly, but closely reviews every bill impacting the lives of citizens, particularly issues of housing, especially of the homeless; aged care; defence; Aboriginal justice and reconciliation; family and community services; law and order; the environment; land degradation and water conservation; education and training; state and regional development; child protection and care; and disability support. These issues are many of the social objects of Wesley Mission and all have been part of my concern and interest over many years.**

**Besides all of this, I followed the tradition of my predecessors and have always spoken out strongly on social issues such as the Uniting Church's proposals for the treatment of asylum seekers. Now I have the opportunity of speaking out on**

**the social justice issues that have always been a significant part of the Uniting Church's ministry.**

**Over the years I have thrived on extra activities while busy building one of the largest city churches in the world and the Uniting Church's strongest parish. I used to be on about 20 Boards and committees that involved me in more meetings per month than the Legislative Council does. For fifteen years I spent 35 weekends a year conducting small evangelistic programs in more than 400 churches round Australia, in every state, flying back every Sunday afternoon for an 8 hour afternoon and evening program of meetings, church services and radio broadcasting. Like many ministers in placement, I learnt the art of time management and using contacts outside the church to build up the Body of Christ.**

**I waited the maximum time possible before delivering my maiden speech. Anticipation increased, and at the appointed hour the House was packed. The Legislative Assembly emptied as members followed the Premier in coming to hear the speech. It was brief. I include it in full:**

*“My life has been a very simple one. My wife and I were born almost adjacent to each other in the same week and in the same community of Box Hill in Victoria. We did not get to know each other in the baby health centre, otherwise I would have proposed then, but we grew up in the same community and, we have been together ever since. When I was a teenager I was greatly helped and blessed by some people who attended a church that my parents never attended. When I was eight years of age my father died as an alcoholic. He literally dropped dead in the street, leaving behind four young children, of whom I was the eldest. Through the influence of these kindly people from a neighbourhood church I eventually became interested in the church. As a teenager I became committed to following the way of*

*Jesus Christ, and I have endeavoured to do so with whatever strength and capacity I have had since that period of time.”*

*“Right from the earliest days I was challenged by a schoolteacher, my school principal. Once I earned his displeasure, he said to me that I had to make up my mind to either be part of the problem of this society or part of the answer. He indicated that I was not to leave the front of his desk, to which I had been called, until I had given him an answer. That man's name was W. M. (Bill) Woodfull, who was the captain of the Australian Test cricket team during the "bodyline" series. He was a great leader of men. I remember standing before him in tears as a schoolboy and making the decision that I preferred to be part of the answer than a continuing part of the problem.*

*Consequently, my wife and I, as teenage sweethearts, volunteered immediately and we started to serve the churches in the inner slum areas of Melbourne-in North Melbourne, Kensington and Flemington.”*

*“While I went on to university and theological college studies, we worked among the hopeless and despairing of the slum areas. I became the youngest parole officer and the youngest probation officer in Victoria's history. At one stage I had about 104 murderers and car thieves assigned to me. With my girlfriend, who became my fiancée and eventually my wife, I spent eight years trying to help these people through the difficulties that they had encountered in their lives. It was from these beginnings in the slums of Melbourne that we developed a life pattern of working with people who have particular needs and concerns in society.”*

*“That flowed on to what was a very remarkable event that changed our life completely. It was the day that John F. Kennedy was shot. Traditionally people say they remember where they were at the time of that tragic event. I remember where I*



*was very clearly. I was in the United States Consulate, here in Australia, where we were about to have our visas stamped. I had been appointed to do postgraduate study in the United States of America. When the shots rang out in Dallas, Texas, the doors at the consulate were shut and the United States Embassy went into high activity. People were thrown out the doors and papers went everywhere, and with them went our visas, our work permits, our passports, our chest x-rays and a whole lot of other stuff. The result was that the boat upon which we were to travel, together with all our clothes, personal possessions and belongings, sailed to America-but we did not.”*

*“In order to survive I went to a small country church where I used my background in psychology and ministry to become chaplain in a very large mental institution and my experience as a probation and parole officer to work in the psychiatric ward for the criminally insane. That experience in a small country church became a turning point in our life. I then went to a suburban ministry for 13 years. During that period I saw the development of very large-scale works including building retirement villages-the first of their type built in Victoria-and other multimillion-dollar constructions in what was then arguably the largest Protestant church in Australia. From there I was called to Sydney – 27 years ago – to follow the remarkable Reverend Dr Alan Walker.”*

*“I have had the best part of 25 years in that role working with the disadvantaged, the poor, the homeless, prisoners and the mentally sick, and managing hospitals, nursing homes, retirement villages and so on. They have been very, very happy years. I bring with me a lot of background in caring for the underprivileged, which I hope will help me when I come here to speak on issues that relate to the people of New South Wales.”*

*“I am a preacher. But preachers are called on not only to do deeds of goodness in a community; they are called on also to proclaim the Word. So I have sought to proclaim the Word of God. For the last 44 years, since being a teenager, I have preached. In the last 20 years I have preached on average nine times each week. I preach on television; I have five half-hour national television programs. It is a wonderful opportunity to get the message of God through to people. It is 36 years since I started preaching on television, back in the days of black and white television with four-turret cameras in BTV 6 in Ballarat, Victoria, and then on to GTV 9 in Melbourne. The last 25 years I have been every week on TCN 9 in Sydney and on the Nine Network around Australia. That all developed into my speaking each week on a whole range of radio stations around the nation, and that, in turn, led to me writing. If you are going to communicate, you use all the abilities and opportunities that are open to you.*

*“I have authored something like 50 books, which have been published in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and, most remarkably, China, where they talk in astronomical figures in terms of publication of our books. Whereas in Australia you might think a book does well if you sell 5,000 or 10,000 copies, in China 500,000 copies of each book have been sold. Honourable members might be interested to hear that when I address universities in places such as like Beijing, because of the number of books we have sold in China and because of the government oppression of religion in China I am regarded as a radical who is likely to turn the world upside down! We have been chased by religious police and political police. Part of my group has been arrested. One of my party was arrested when we were smuggling bibles into China. My wife and I were more successful. It is quite remarkable that a middle-aged or older, plumpish, conservative, Anglo-Saxon should be hailed by student groups as a radical and a revolutionary, holding clandestine midnight meetings and working with the underground church.*

*“All that led to the Internet. The remarkable thing about the Internet is its power to connect with the world. We now have something like 4,000 addresses and editorials on the Internet that are read or downloaded by literally a hundred thousand people around the world each week.”*

*“Some years ago I felt there was a need to produce films, not Cecil B. De Moyaes films but documentaries based on some of the strengths I developed through the study of history and archaeology. The film company that we set up has been remarkably successful. We have produced about 50 documentary films, which were made predominantly in the Middle East and dealt with archaeology, history, the development of the early church and Christian beliefs. We have recently made films in China. They have been released internationally. It is awe-inspiring to travel in America, where a series of programs has been broadcast on public television, and to be recognised in airports by people who tell us they have watched our films.”*

*“I am not an academic or an intellectual. I have described myself in other places as possessing a fair, average quality, second-rate mind. Given that, I need the help of researchers. I acknowledge those people who have the gifts and graces that provide us with the opportunity to communicate those truths and to present good, sound, factual material. I have been very impressed with the quality of the speeches I have heard in this House, recognising that often behind an honourable member's contribution is some very good research done by other people. I acknowledge those who have helped me in that regard over the years.”*

*“Part of the role of a minister of the gospel is to manage resources. We have built up the resources of the Wesley Mission very well. When I started at the mission we had 23 properties. Over the past five years, I have opened a new building, on average, about once every two weeks. We now have 489 communities in New South*

*Wales that have a Wesley Mission home, hospital, nursing home, retirement village, childcare facility, employment agency or whatever. My wife and I are at present visiting 62 rural centres in New South Wales to help with drought relief funding. Madam President, with your permission, at the end of this brief contribution I would normally ask for an offering, but if honourable members are interested in helping with drought relief, I can provide very practical opportunities for them to do so!”*

*“My involvement in the Wesley Mission over the years has required me to learn management skills. I have gained that education since the 1960s and 1970s with the Australian Graduate School of Management, the Australian Institute of Management at Mt Eliza, Monash University and the Graduate School of Management at the University of New South Wales. One of the blessings that has come our way is to be elected a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors because of the positions held on boards of a number of listed and unlisted companies in a variety of fields. As a result of that work, honours have come our way which often have not been deserved but which have always been appreciated. I am not an academic, but I have been honoured by a number of institutions of higher learning with degrees and positions, and I have lectured for many years at a university and a seminary in the United States. I have developed a course that was originally unknown in that country, known as "urban mission". Earlier this year I was appointed on a permanent basis as the adjunct professor of urban mission, which gives me an annual trip and an opportunity to teach students in urban mission studies.”*

*“Over the years I have been described by community-based organisations as the Citizen of the Year, Father of the Year and Public Speaker of the Year. All of those accolades are enjoyable. Recently, I was named the New South Wales*

*Entrepreneur of the Year, which for a minister and a clergyman is a most unusual accolade.”*

*“Beverley and I have also been honoured by the Australian Government. Beverley was elected by the Sydney City Council as the Citizen of the Year. She is also a member of the Order of Australia. During Australia’s Bicentennial, the authority concerned nominated 20 outstanding women in Australia and Beverley was chosen as one of the 10 most significant women in this country- along with people whose names are known to all. It has been a wonderful experience as a husband to learn to walk just one pace behind when we go out together. For my part, in the mid-1980s I was made a member of the Order of Australia, and at the beginning of this year I was granted Australia’s highest honour as a Companion of the Order of Australia.”*

*“I appreciate the fact that we sit in this very historic place, not only because a long line of clergymen have been here before me, including Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, but also because, going back over the years, we have had members who were bishops and archbishops, back to Reverend the Hon. John Dunmore Lang, who was a member of this House. I hope to uphold the best of the traditions of those great leaders in the church and the community.”*

*“In 1964, while doing some research I chose to write on the history of what were known as the "iron churches". A small number of churches constructed in iron smelting works in the United Kingdom that were shipped primarily from Birmingham, although a couple came from Manchester, to Australia during the gold rushes. Church authorities in Australia wanted demountable buildings that they could get quickly to the goldfields. I decided to trace their history and discover where they were and how they were used. One was purchased by the Methodist Home Mission Department. Because it was felt that the iron churches-which had*

*iron roofs, walls, uprights and supports-would blunt the teeth of termites, it was sent to Palmerston, which is the former name of the city we call Darwin. That church still stands, although it is not used. Iron churches are very difficult to air-condition. After well over a century of use it is still standing.”*

*“I found another iron church in Ararat. It had also been purchased by the Methodists for use on the goldfields. On the side of this huge church were four big wheels 5½ feet high and made out of slivers of a huge tree trunk on which they were dragged by teams of oxen around the goldfields. The last goldfield it was taken to was Dunkeld in 1863. It was then dragged to Ararat and left temporarily in a vacant paddock behind the Methodist church. It was still there when I visited in 1965, and it is probably still there today.”*

*“Another iron church was purchased by the Anglicans and on sold at a profit for £1,200 to the people of New South Wales. Of course, that church forms the framework of this Legislative Council Chamber. We show visitors the steel structures behind the Chamber, the packing case walls and so on. I feel at home. Madam President, I have noted in my short time in this place that you occasionally have trouble with the more obstreperous members and you have to call them to order. You will not have a problem with me, because from early childhood I have been told how to behave in church.”*

The applause as I sat after this speech, given without notes was thunderous. A Hansard reporter later said to me, “That was the best speech I have heard in Parliament in 25 years of transcribing them.” But applause from the Parliament was not echoed in the UCA NSW Synod offices.

The NSW Council of Synod was not only disturbed by my Parliamentary salary which made me independent of the Church’s financial ties (I had been

independent since I started raising my own salary fifteen years earlier) but was concerned I would be independent of the Church's control and discipline. Scores of ministers had been controlled by the various Synods' through secret committees called "counselling" or "discipline" committees. Their membership is secret, the proceedings are secret, the minister needing counselling is not allowed to be represented, the decisions may deprive a minister of his job, his professional standing, his house and his car – and no appeals are allowed. The Synod bureaucrats try to keep ministers in line through fear.

One of the most obnoxious of these bureaucrats wrote to me criticizing a question my colleague Rev. Fred Nile had asked in parliament on a matter of public safety following a terrorist alert to the Parliament by the Australian Government. I replied as follows:

*"I am not aware of any UCA Regulation that forbids any minister asking any question anywhere. Further, I am not aware that any part of his question contravenes any doctrines of the Uniting Church. I would believe that for people concerned with the tragedies of Moscow and Hamburg, in the light of the warnings delivered to the Parliament that day, that this question could be asked in the Council of Synod or anywhere else. The freedom to question has been a prized right since the Reformation."*

*"Parliamentarians have some protection while speaking in Parliament, and every citizen has a right of reply to the Parliament."*

*"Parliamentarians who are Ministers of Religion, as have been many members of the Legislative Councils over the decades including high office Anglicans, Bishops and even an Archbishop, and other ministers such as Rev. John Dunmore Lang,*

*still are within the discipline of the church. I know of no case where any Parliamentary Minister has ever been questioned on clash of allegiance.*

*I hold allegiance to the discipline of the Church and will for the rest of my life. I am also aware that there are immediate authorities and ultimate authorities. I guess, although I do not know, that Ministers of the Uniting Church who are members of the Masonic Orders have an obligation to their Order while in certain places and in matters of disclosure. I know that Chaplains of the Uniting Church when on the scene of an emergency must obey the directions of the Emergency Services. I know that military chaplains are under the control of the field commander while on service duty. School chaplains have a responsibility to obey school discipline.”*

*“This does not mean they are no longer under the discipline of the church. It is the same in Parliamentary duties. There is an immediate duty to the Parliament. That involves telling the truth, behaving respectfully and listening to the Prayers that are said every day. The prayers acknowledge the ultimate authority of God. Members of the Council of Synod probably do not know, that every day, we pray: “Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this Parliament. Direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory, and the true welfare of the people of our State and Australia.” Then we together repeat the Lord’s Prayer - and in my observation it is repeated by almost all Parliamentarians, including the phrase, ‘Thy Will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven’.”*

*“Parliamentarians acknowledge the Parliament is under the authority of God as found in Romans 13. That is why Ministers of State are called “ Ministers” because they are ministers of God in the expression of His will in the governing of the community. They may do it poorly, but that is the problem ministers of religion may also have.”*



*“There is no issue of the discipline of the Church being in conflict with the discipline of Parliament. Both are under the authority of God, and in the Christian Democratic Party, we must always place the authority of God as our highest obedience. I am available every day if you have further questions.”*

I heard nothing in reply. Not long after that particular General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Chris Budden resigned his position before the end of his term. His departure was not lamented. When the State election of 2003 was to be held, I took some leave owing to me to campaign for the election. How do Christians campaign for parliament?

The Christian Democratic Party believes in campaigning in a different manner.

Over twelve weeks, with only a couple of days off for Christmas, Rev. Fred Nile MLC, the leader of the Christian Democratic Party who was not up for election, and myself as leader of the CDP’S Upper House ticket, each spoke to over 150 political rallies organised all over the state and in every suburban area.

We visited every one of the 93 electorates, and over 100 rural and regional towns, from Tweed Heads to Albury, Eden to Broken Hill, and including places like Cobar and Walgett and all places in between. We each drove over 13,000 kilometres. No politician in the NSW Parliament addressed in those three months more public gatherings than we two. When passing through communities where we have Wesley Mission facilities, my wife and I would call in upon our staff. We addressed breakfasts, lunches and dinners, and evening rallies every day without a break. These were arranged by a local committee and local candidate in every area.

**They invited sitting members and candidates from all parties to attend. In one gathering four Liberal candidates were present, another Liberal candidate attended four meetings, and ALP, National and other candidates attended. These ‘opposition’ candidates were given a chance to address the crowd. For them this was a new experience – they were applauded not attacked!**

**Crowds gathered in large numbers - even larger than for the Leader of Coalition and the Premier! Crowds of 100, 200, 400, were common and on one occasion there were 800 and on another 4000 present! We gave countless interviews to the press, television and radio to wide coverage.**

**In drought stricken areas, farmers were asked to come to speak of their plight. (During 2002 I had written to 980 farmers in drought areas and provided \$140,000 in cash aid from Wesley Mission donors and members.)**

**Newspapers in the cities were concentrating on the Greens and peace marches as a political tool. The Christian Democratic Party has been pressing flesh, face to face listening, and going to where the people are. Ours was old-fashioned politicking! It is no wonder at the election I received over a million first and second preference votes. The exact number is not known because when the first 21 candidates of the total of 290 are declared elected, the count ceases. I thank Kylie Lawrence our Party Executive Secretary, Phil Lamb our State Director, Linda Munoz my Legislative Lawyer and Jonathon Flegg my Parliamentary secretary, and my Personal Assistant, Blossom Vickers, for all their help in the election and since.**

**With all of our national problems, can the Christian faith influence politics enough?**

**Our nation is facing a crisis. We live in a land of peace and prosperity, with sound, democratically elected governments, with growing accountability from those in positions of authority, and a high level of personal morality. Yet such is the rate of change and the decline in personal ethics, we are now facing a national moral crisis. Can religion give Australia new hope?**

**Traditionally the church has delivered that sense of national cohesion and reconciliation. But is the church capable of delivering it today? Some mainline churches are divided over lack of commitment to the Scriptures as the only revelation of God.**

**Their acceptance of immoral sexual standards among clergy without any expectation of change of behaviour is a denial of the discipline and beliefs of the church over centuries. That denial is a heavy price for being thought trendy.**

**Some churches are politically aligned and spokespersons speak to every issue along predictable ideological lines not supported by a majority of their members. The very organism that people should be able to turn to in confidence is itself in crisis. These churches are showing signs of wear and tear and lack of direction. They adopt a religious pluralism that believes no one can be ever wrong and a post-modernism which declares everything is subjective, open to your own opinion. What is important is not the Bible, nor what Christians believe, but what is your story. One view is as good as any other. Everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes. That church attitude will never help Australia.**

**For these Churches, Christianity has become a form not a force. Faith is a performance not a person. It is religion not a relationship. They minister by remote control, preach by memory. They have no fire, no fervour, and no friendship with the living Jesus.**

**A crisis abounds in nation and church. Where is an answer? *Only commitment to Jesus Christ offers us hope.* Jesus made the laws of Moses tougher and the standard of morality among His followers harder. He was marginalised because of His teachings and His close association with the poor, the rejected and the leprous, put Him offside with everyone from the Pharisees to the Romans.**

**Yet Jesus Christ became, through the Cross and Resurrection, the Messiah of all. He will one day return to establish God's Kingdom and reign on earth as in heaven. Our only hope lies in committed Christians, obedient to the scriptures, who pray for the governments and witness to their faith, and who are willing to live under the authority of the Word of God. Will our nation continue to decline or can individuals find in Jesus Christ the deep answer?**

**I have had many opportunities to witness to, and pray with, parliamentarians in both the State and Federal parliaments. In one week, this 'Great South Land of the Holy Spirit' became the meeting place for the President of the most powerful nation on earth at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and the President of the nation, which will be the most powerful nation on earth at the end of the twenty-first century. President George W Bush and President Hu Jintao flew into Canberra to address both Houses of Parliament in joint sittings. I was there by special invitation.**

**I sat in a reserved section for twelve people who had been invited by Prime Minister John Howard to meet Mr Bush personally to discuss issues on their minds. The twelve were an impressive group of Australian leaders. I was honoured to go to the Cabinet Room and to meet and discuss issues I thought were important with President Bush. Issues like Iraq, free trade, international relations, Australian prisoners in American prisons and agricultural subsidies were on the agenda.**

**When President Bush heard I was from Wesley Mission, he offered that he was a Methodist and attended a Methodist Church. I told him I knew that and many other things about his spiritual life. I encouraged the President to push through his reforms involving 'faith-based initiatives'. He replied that the legislation on faith-based initiatives was the most important on his domestic agenda and he was determined to use state funds to help churches and synagogues run social programs meeting community needs, a promise that he has kept with amazing generosity.**

**I informed him I had been reading a publishers preview copy of a new book "The Faith of George W. Bush" (Pan/Charisma) by Stephen Mansfield. He asked me how it had treated his faith. I told him and the First Lady that the author and his team of researchers had uncovered some fascinating and little-known information about Bush's conversion, his sense of divine calling and how faith helped him overcome his drinking habit.**

**I guess I was the only person on his overseas visit that talked to the President about his drinking habits! But people are interested in the President's faith. They also have a lot of questions that need to be answered. He knew about the book.**

**I told him this book, due to be released the following November, included the fact that Bush first heard the call to run for president during a sermon by the Rev. Mark Craig at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas. Craig described Moses' reluctance to lead God's people, and Bush's mother, Barbara, turned to him and said, "He was talking to you." The First Lady Laura immediately informed me that was true. I mentioned that before Bush announced his candidacy, he invited Texas Evangelist James Robison to meet with him for prayer. That was also true.**

**George Bush is a close friend of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, also a committed Christian. The two have shared Scripture and prayed together. George W. Bush has attempted to apply faith to presidential leadership.**

**He asked me what I felt the book would do to his standing among Christians and I replied, much to his and the First Lady's delight, that it would help him get re-elected in November 2004. I stressed the need for more openness in his commitment to Christ.**

**Christianity is not a way of life. It is not Western culture. It is not conformity to a standard of living. Christianity is a relationship with Jesus Christ who sends us as His ambassadors of reconciliation. We are facing a rapid deterioration of the Christian ethic. Jesus confronted the economic and political power structures of His day, out of His commitment to God.**

**He died on a Cross-, not because He dared to change hymn-numbers, but because He cared for the poor and was prepared to confront and change practices and policies of injustice.**

***Chuck Colson said, "What we do must flow from who we are. Christians must contend for biblically informed morality and justice in the halls of power. That is the balance that keeps our ethics and our activism in proper perspective. I urge you to hold tightly to your courage and your moral convictions during the stressful days ahead. This is no time to wimp out!"***

**God knew when He had rescued the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought them into their own land, they would prosper. With prosperity there comes complacency. With complacency there comes a decline in personal ethics and morality. People will accept anything. In the name of tolerance all standards**

**disappear. They forget their heritage and what made them a people.**

**God knew that. So when Israel entered the Promised Land, God reminded them:**

**Deut 8:7-14** *“The LORD your God is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.*

*Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.*

*Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God.”* How relevant is that to Australia today!

**Australia is changing. Many of the changes causes us regret, but, thank God, we are learning to regret our past sins and failures! We now need to commit ourselves to a new future with committed Christians making the legislation for the future of our land.**

**Regretfully the Uniting Church in Australia continues to be a battlefield. Tens of thousands of loyal members have left. I meet them in churches of every other denomination in which I preach. In 2004 over 5000 regular attenders left the UCA. Yet the Church bureaucrats seem to think they are better off for their going.**

**There is spiritual warfare within the church today. I have no proposals for others who do not live and behave according to Biblical standards. The church has adequate processes to deal with ministers through counselling and discipline. That is not my role, nor do I sit in judgement on others.**

**On many occasion I have indicated the use of vocabulary based upon war is inappropriate. We are not talking about war in the military sense, but spiritual warfare, which is a Biblical topic. Paul certainly used the metaphors of spiritual warfare. Of the nine occurrences of the noun “war” in Revelation, eight are symbolic. The verb is found seven times and six of these are symbolic. The use of spiritual warfare is widespread in the New Testament, not only in Paul’s epistles but also in John’s – some 45 occasions. We do not fight according to the flesh, Paul states, but then speaks of spiritual warfare.**

**I always find it amusing that those who want to proclaim themselves ‘inclusive’ always want to threaten the exclusion of those with whom they differ. Many evangelicals know what it is like to be threatened and harassed. My language and conduct is entirely appropriate. It is my conclusions others may not like. I am a minister of congregations and have been so for fifty years, the last twenty-seven in the same church. I do not seek any position of leadership in the church nor in the agencies or groups of the church.**

**I have always respected people of differing viewpoints. I am always polite and respectful. I seek to represent other viewpoints honestly but without gloss. My hopes for every minister within the Uniting Church, is that we will be true to the Scriptures, that we will lead a devout and holy life, that our behaviour will reflect the holiness expected of those who are redeemed, that we will be active in doing the work of evangelists, and we will show a care for the least, loneliest and the lost.**



**I would hope all leaders uphold their ordination vows, that they are diligent in the study of the Bible and that they live a holy and a disciplined life as our vows stated. My concern is that all ministers, myself included, place themselves under the judgement and mercy of God as revealed in the Scriptures as mentioned at our Ordination. I have sought to live a just, holy and disciplined life and I hope others do also. It is not a question of theology but of behaviour that many find objectionable.**

**I know all ministers are required to place themselves under the authority of the Holy Scriptures; we are required to live holy and disciplined lives, obedient to the expressed commands as found in the Old and New Testaments, and in the light of the truths found in the confessional documents and the Basis of Union.**

**I write this on a Monday evening. Today, I preached four different sermons from the Gospels following a busy Sunday of services. Since last Monday I have preached at 14 services. With 50 services every week, life is busy in a growing church. I have also had funerals and a wedding and well as all the normal pastoral and staff cares. Such is the life of a Church minister. What can I achieve through also being a parliamentarian?**

**After 27 years of heading up Wesley Mission, the largest welfare organisation in New South Wales, employing some 3500 staff, I realised how much legislation works against families, against the unemployed, the poor, the homeless, the aged, the sick, the disabled. We need people who know, making a positive contribution to our laws. Governments never seem to get it right.**

**Strong family relationships are key to a stronger Australian society. We are concerned about the moral, social and economic impact that some legislation has on NSW families.**

**We believe every person has a right to good health and access to quality health services. After years of being Board Chairman running both public and private hospitals, I know the frustration that many people experience with our health system. I can ask the right questions to get the right answers for the people of NSW.**

**Every citizen has the right to live safely within his or her home and community. The Christian Democratic Party is committed to ensuring the security of our citizens.**

**Rev. Fred Nile and myself helped defeat the Government's plans to sell Hunter's Hill High School and Erskineville Public school because we support parents right to choose schooling that supports their family where they live.**

**Likewise my colleagues and I defeated the Australian Democrats attempt to remove Christian Schools from their current exclusion under the Anti-Discrimination Act. We defeated their attempt to remove the right of Christian schools and churches to employ staff of their choice.**

**We vote in support for all living humans from the beginning of biological life at fertilisation until natural death. Euthanasia will always be opposed by us. We are pro-life and support stem-cell research but never by the destruction of human embryos to harvest those stem cells.**

**We believe governments must enact legislation to safeguard against abuse of air, land and water resources and to preserve our natural heritage. That is why we helped defeat Government legislation to sell Callan Park for more high-rise apartments by private developers. Public parks should remain public.**

**The Christian Democratic Party has achieved much through our Parliamentarians. We established the Royal Commission into paedophile activity, which uncovered society's dark side. We were responsible for banning tobacco advertising in newspapers and magazines. No wonder the press lampoon us – we cost them too much income! We were successful in prohibiting smoking in public places like clubs and pubs and I am sure you now enjoy eating out.**

**It was the Christian Democratic Party that saved country jobs such as the Letona fruit cannery. I have visited 150 rural and regional communities in NSW to listen to local needs.**

**We strongly support the police force. We defeated the Greens when they tried to end practice of opening Parliament with prayer. We oppose all soft laws on illegal drugs, injecting rooms, brothels, gambling extension and the availability of pornography, issues that have been supported by both Liberal and Labour parties voting together.**

**The Christian Democratic Party defends the rights of individuals, promotes quality family life, encourages small business, supports Christian schools, and brings Christian ethics to bear within our society. We are a balanced, skilled team.**

**Many people are concerned for the future of our country. We are the only party committed to ensuring Australia retains our Christian heritage. We want Christian ethics and morality as part of the fibre of New South Wales, and we will ensure Christian faith, freedom and values are protected within our government.**

**A number of newspapers reported on 31st of January 2002, a notice from Canberra. It made front-page news in every state of the nation:**

**“The Superintendent of Wesley Mission, Sydney, the Rev Dr Gordon Moyes AC, has received the highest honour ever awarded to an Australian clergyman still in full-time ministry - Order of Australia Companion (AC) in the General Division.”**

**“Dr Moyes, who was one of only six Australians who were awarded the AC on Australia Day, received the honour for "service to the community in the delivery and expansion of social welfare and outreach services through the Wesley Mission, fostering networks and partnership arrangements with other agencies to make services more widely available, and to religion.”**

**“He said he was surprised and stunned by the award, which he claimed was an acknowledgment of the work of Wesley Mission staff, volunteers and supporters. It is a recognition of the work of the Wesley Mission team," he said. "It is a wonderful honour and an affirmation of our ministry of word and deed conducted by our 3600 staff, 3000 volunteers who are supported by our tens of thousands of donors." Dr Moyes arrived back in Sydney on 25 January after spending the previous three weeks lecturing at a major theological college, Emmanuel School of Religion, in Tennessee, USA.”**

**“The honour was also due to Dr Moyes' involvement in building partnerships between charities, churches, governments, corporations, donors and people in need, to better serving the underprivileged. To this end he was a founding Board member of the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership. For more than 25 years, Dr Moyes has promoted other organisations and their work every week, both on radio and television, seeking to raise funds for any worthy Christian or charitable activity.”**

**“For some years Dr Moyes has been active in seeking support from politicians of all parties. He has built close relationships with our national leaders. One media reporter described him this week as being "one of the most influential clergy in the nation, due to his direct contact with all senior Cabinet Ministers and, in particular, with the Prime Minister.”**

**“During the election last year, one prominent politician was asked by an audience member to get a certain message back to the Prime Minister. The politician, Ross Cameron of Parramatta, replied, "If you want to get a message to the Prime Minister, then you better work through Dr Gordon Moyes. He has more access to the Cabinet and the Prime Minister than I have.”**

**That highest of all honours has never been given to a minister in parish work or to any politician in any Parliament. It was a seal on my life’s work. A number of colleagues approached me with the idea of researching social and community issues and then to do something about them. I suddenly realised that while all my life I had usually been the youngest to do this or that, I was now a ‘tribal elder’.**

**No clergyman in a church has ever been so honoured as I was by being made a Companion of the Order of Australia. Usually only Governor Generals, Governors, Prime Ministers, Chief Judges of the High Court and a few extraordinary people have been so honoured. In England, this honour is equivalent to being elevated to the House of Lords.**

**I found out that if one has already been honoured by being made a Member of the Order of Australia, a second honour can only be conferred for a different kind of work. In my case, this meant for work in developing the concept of helping people by developing partnerships between corporations and employees,**

**a welfare organisation, the governments and people in need, a concept that I carried into the special taskforce established by the Prime Minister on which I have served. The partnership programs Wesley Mission have developed have become national models. It is an honour that I will share with all who work with us.**

**That honour brings instant recognition from key people in our nation.**

**Then in 2003, I became the recipient of the Commonwealth Government's Centenary Medal, struck to honour those people who had made a significant contribution to our nation during the previous one hundred years since we became federated as the Commonwealth of Australia.**

**In 2004, Beverley and I spent a week in Brighton England, with its stone beaches for the world Convention of Churches of Christ. It was our 6th World Convention. But they were spread over 52 years. In our early married years, we could not afford overseas travel. We caught up with many of our friends we see only once every four years. 165 countries were represented. Every day there were main speakers, many seminars on a dozen topics, and great evening rallies. I presented two seminars on Ministering in the Inner City, each running for 4 hours. I had two excellent groups of interested people from many countries.**

**One night I was greatly surprised during the evening service. It was announced that a new international citation was to be awarded each four years. This was named to honour Sir Garfield and Lady Todd, remarkable New Zealand Missionaries to Southern Rhodesia for 72 years. They pioneered the education system in Southern Rhodesia. I had met him at my first World Convention in Melbourne 1952. Meeting him, and other famous missionaries and church leaders, made me feel, as a thirteen-year-old boy, that I was walking with giants.**

**With the move for Independence, Garfield went into politics trying to move the country to a bloodless change to black power. He became Prime Minister for eight years, but the illegal coup of Ian Smith, meant his fellow whites imprisoned him for 12 years. We prayed for him during this time. Eventually with the overthrow of the Smith regime, he was released and appointed a Senator in the new Government. Unfortunately, the new Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, was far from Christian even though he was a former student of Garfield's. Garfield died earlier in 2004.**

**The recipient of the Garfield Todd Citation was for a person who had served the church and the broader community of the church, politics and commerce. It was then I heard that I was the first recipient. I was absolutely speechless and unable to believe it. Beverley knew but kept it secret from me. The president read an outline of my ministry and I was given a standing ovation by the thousands present. It was a highlight of my life, to be honoured by my peers from around the world. Every day thereafter, I had people greeting me and wishing us well.**

**Back in 1952 World Convention, I carried an autograph book and sought the signatures of the great and famous. Now all of those memories came flooding back, and some young boys and girls at the World Convention, pressed their autograph books and Bibles into my hands, asking for my signature. I willingly signed each one, praying that each child would be as influenced as I was at my first World Convention, 52 years earlier.**

**Prophetic ministry is Biblical, but never fully understood by most congregations. The most controversial aspect of the ministry of Wesley Mission over the years has been its bold proclamation on matters of social justice. A city church is in a unique position to see the injustices of society and to have the ear of the public.**

**Frequently social action has been the result of the strong presentation of the prophetic word to our country.**

**Just as the prophets of old spoke out the word of the Lord according to the social evils of their day, Wesley Mission has spoken a word of rebuke, of guidance and of witness to the Christian message. Earlier Superintendents did not exercise the prophetic ministry with as much controversy or strength as did Rev. Dr. Sir Alan Walker who very quickly gained a reputation for his controversial and hard-hitting stands.**

**Sometimes the Mission lost support because of his prophetic utterances, and other times greatly gained. Under his leadership the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, which provided musical and biblical content for people over many decades in the heart of the city became The Lyceum Platform where, for a number of years, social issues were debated and examined by speakers from the Christian point of view. The message of this crusading platform was carried by radio to the people of Sydney. In recent years radio and television have become overpopulated with current affairs programs and people making utterances on the social issues of our day, and the voice of the church is only one of many competing voices. The Mission decided to continue its social issues presentation with a changed format.**

**Instead of finding fifty social issues each year to fight from the Lyceum Platform, the Mission chose to raise issues on television and radio where we have direct access to a large listening audience, and instead of criticising what the government had done, provided more materials for the government by way of submissions during the decision-making process rather than after it. Submissions are made to Federal and State governments on a wide range of social and moral issues, and in one Senate Select Report a large amount of the Mission's submission was accepted ultimately as the Federal Government's**



**report. Dr. Keith Suter uses remarkable intellectual skills (he has two Ph. D's!) and deep Christian commitment to formulate new submissions on government policy.**

**However, public protests are still held when matters of importance are raised, and the new Wesley Theatre is still open to the church at large to be used for significant Christian protest. One important aspect of the prophetic ministry is at the individual level. The church must speak on behalf of those whom society ignores or tramples. The poor, the confused, the hopeless, the homeless, the unemployed, the socially neglected, the physically ill are part of the constituency that is represented by Wesley Mission. These people have little voice in the community and against the bureaucracies, and although their need is real it is seldom heard. Someone needs to stand alongside them, and with all of its strength speak on behalf of the powerless. That is where since 2002, having a Superintendent who is also in the Parliament, Wesley Mission has an advocate for the poor sitting on the leather seats of legislation, and speaking every day to the ministers of the Government.**

**Wesley Mission sees itself as the voice of the voiceless. Understanding, compassion, backed by specialist social research, provide the basis for Christian social action on behalf of those people in the community who have no muscle of their own.**

**To represent the powerless in the community requires a city church ministry with muscle. A powerless church is only another ineffective voice. The weight and size and strategic strength of Wesley Mission have been effective in helping people in their battle against State and Federal government bureaucracies, and on behalf of ordinary people caught up in legislative changes and political decisions, the Mission speaks to enable justice to be done. Only a church in the**

**heart of the city with a city on its heart can do that! The powerlessness of ordinary people caught up in the machinery of government, and the apathy of so many public servants, make more urgent the role of Wesley Mission.**

**Personal political lobbying at the highest level by senior staff, close personal contact with politicians and public service bureaucrats mean that ordinary people's needs can be helped, frequently by a simple telephone call to the right person. The progression to parliamentarian was quite natural, and I look forward to many years of service to God and humanity.**