

From my earliest days as a teenage Christian, I wanted to be an evangelist.

1952 was a great year in the Melbourne Churches of Christ. They were host for the World Convention of Churches of Christ, and 10,000 people attended the great public rallies in the Exhibition Building. Thousands of over-seas visitors were accommodated in the homes of Melbourne Church members. I was taken to the World Convention by two ladies who worked in my mother's cake shop, Jean and Maggie Perry. They were devout members of Churches of Christ, and they had first taken me to Sunday school, and were part of all of my life from teaching me to sing to teaching me Chinese words and characters.

At the World Convention there were church members from about 120 lands, each with their own distinctive dress and skin colour and language. They came from every inhabited continent on earth. Many gave away little craft pieces they had made from straw or wood. Everyone shook hands. There were famous preachers from churches of thousands of members, especially in America, and singing groups from the Pacific Islands, India and Africa. There were missionaries from a score of lands who told their stories of service to God. Dr Oldfield was there from the great hospital in Dhond, India and Garfield Todd, the New Zealand Missionary from Southern Rhodesia who had established primary and secondary schools all over that country.

Associated with the Convention was an evangelistic mission held with two visiting Americans, Mr Ralph Pollock a song leader, and Dr E. Ray Snodgrass the evangelist. The Snodgrass-Pollock Mission was conducted in Wirth's Olympia. This great circus arena was now filled with chairs and thousands sang the popular choruses and hymns. "The Awakening Chorus" lifted the roof. There was hardly a dry eye as they learnt the beautiful "Beyond the Sunset".

All of the members of the Court St., Box Hill Church of Christ were attending the Snodgrass-Pollock Mission. They were great nights. Some of us thirteen-year boys climbed up the very highest row of the seats at the back, and made paper planes from the hymn sheets and sent them circling down upon the heads of the crowd below.

One night however, I heard what Dr Snodgrass was saying. He was holding up five fingers, and showing how first God required us to have faith in Jesus Christ. The second finger meant we should repent of our sin and indicate to God that we would try to live a better life. The third finger meant that we should privately confess to God our sin, and publicly take a stand for Jesus as one of his followers. The fourth finger meant that we should be baptised as he commanded us as obedient

believers. And the fifth finger related to the promise of the Holy Spirit who was given to those who believed, repented, confessed and were baptised as Peter had promised on the Day of Pentecost.

I understood every word. Then he asked those of us who would follow the way of Jesus to come to the front for counselling. As the choir and the congregation started to sing, "Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come", I came.

I walked in tears down the high rows of seats, and along the sawdust covered ground of the circus ring to the front, and stood with those who received Christ as Lord.

Two nights later, our minister and my Sunday School teacher, Jack Ferris, visited my mother to talk about my baptism. We had a Bible Study then a prayer time. For the first time in our new house, we knelt down together on the floor of our lounge room and prayed.

My mother and I understood what was happening. It was arranged for me to be baptised the following Sunday night, 21st September 1952 at the Snodgrass-Pollock mission in Wirth's Olympia. Hundreds of us were baptised that evening, witnessed by some 5000 people.

20 years later, when I was preaching as an evangelist in America, a remarkable event occurred. I had travelled through many states on my way to another Churches of Christ World Convention, this time in Mexico City. I had been booked to preach in Enid, Oklahoma. It was a huge church, the largest I had ever spoken in to that time. Several thousand people were seated in the congregation. The minister had told me with some pride that every week they had over 100 millionaires in the congregation.

Just as we were about to enter the platform, the minister indicated that he would get a gown for me to wear, as was their custom. From the cupboard he produced an old gown and apologised for it. "This gown used to be worn by the previous minister of this church. He died a few years ago after a 25-year ministry here. His name was Dr E. Ray Snodgrass."

I turned to my friend: "Did you say Dr E Ray Snodgrass? I made my commitment to Christ under his preaching!" The minister confirmed that this was his gown. He put it on my shoulders, and I

felt the blessing of the old evangelist, much like Elisha must have felt when he took the prophet's cloak of Elijah. (1 Kings 19:19-21)

That morning as I preached in his old pulpit, I held up five fingers, and told the way of salvation through faith, repentance, confession, baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit as he had done. That morning at the door as I shook hands with the congregation, person after person wept with the joyful memories of their beloved pastor. One lady, in a big fur, said: "When you were preaching this morning in that gown, holding up your five fingers, I could just hear Dr Snodgrass speaking!" And I replied, "He was. He was!"

I was later to hear many great evangelists in different parts of the world, but I did not want to be an itinerant evangelist, going to different churches and communities all the time. I wanted to be an evangelist, settled in one place where I could come to know the people, help them to come to faith in Jesus Christ, and then be there for the next few years to see them grow in their faith and service. I wanted to see the new Christians progress and become mature in Christ.

Every week of my life since I have preached in services, on radio and television, in public halls and theatres, Opera House and Town Hall, in the open air, in football stadiums and factories, but always I have given an appeal for people to commit their lives to Jesus Christ, and untold thousands have.

While the evangelistic message is one, the methods of proclaiming it are many. Over forty years, I have tried, with varying success different methods of proclaiming the Gospel.

The Dynamic Of Preaching.

Mission begins with God. When Douglas Webster wrote his little booklet "Changing Missions - Biblical and Contemporary", he commenced with these words: "We begin then, where mission begins, with God". The mission of the Church primarily is the fulfilment of the mission of God to the world.

However, there is general agreement, that in the Church, there is a crisis in the sense of mission today. There has been a wholesale drift of membership from the Churches and a reduction of the number of Churches serving in the inner city. Many church leaders, awakened by the crisis, are searching for cause and cure. Many are grasping at the mission of the Church, crying for renewal, reformation, restoration, or revival - the choice depending upon the theological assumptions of the speaker.

The mission of God is fulfilled in part by the Biblical task given to the Church of Jesus Christ. This task is upward toward God, inward in renewal, and outwards in reach. The mission of the Church, is the Church as "sent" into the world as light, salt, the servant, the prophet, the witness, and any other of the descriptions given to the Church in mission in scripture.

1. The Biblical Foundations For Mission

The root idea of mission lies in the concept of sending and it contains the four elements of:

- a) The sender who is the one expressing concern,
- b) The message which is sent expressing that concern
- c) The messenger who brings the message of concern,
- d) The recipients who are the receivers of the message and the object of the sender's concern.

Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament these four phases of mission are emphasised. God is always the sender. The message of man's fulfilment and wholeness in relationship with God is always the same. However, in the Old Testament the messengers of God were the chosen people and prophets of God, whereas in the New Testament the supreme messenger is Jesus. The recipients in the Old Testament are the people of Israel, whereas in the New Testament the emphasis is upon the whole world as the recipients of God's message.

The Old Testament concepts of God's mission to mankind are fundamental to the total understanding of the theology of mission. It would be true to say that the method of mission in the Old Testament was centripetal. Israel, God's chosen messengers, were so to live under the blessing of God, that nations and individuals would be attracted to Jerusalem and hence to her God. Jerusalem is the celebrated city of God and she is to be the home city of all nations. Other cities and countries may be enemies of God's will, but the significance of the election of Israel is that the day would come when Jerusalem would be the centre of the world's allegiance to God. Throughout scripture we see this emphasis upon the centrality of Jerusalem with the coming of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, the journey of the Ethiopian Eunuch to Jerusalem for worship, the coming of the Greeks to see Jesus, and the gathering of all the nations on the Day of Pentecost. At the end of history, the book of Revelation informs us that it will be the new Jerusalem that will be the centre of man's worship to God.

The Old Testament is not often seen as the source of God's saving purpose. A study of the Old Testament revelation, particularly the concern of God expressed in Genesis 1 -11, indicates that

God's concern and mission was to be for the whole of the human race. The theology of mission must commence with God's concern for the whole of creation. God's mission did not commence with the Exodus but with His expressions of love and concern for all of mankind in the opening chapters of scripture. They are the pre-history of Israel as the people of God, and these chapters give meaning and significance to Israel's history, calling, and purpose. Israel is the means by which God's mission is to be expressed to the whole of mankind. The call of Abraham and the development of the history of Israel is the beginning of the move to restore the lost unity of mankind and of the broken fellowship between God and His creation. The history of Israel is the continuation of God's concern with all of creation and therefore the history of Israel is only understood in the light of God's continuing care and concern for his creation.

Israel, as God's chosen vessel to bear his mission to the world, discovers resources of moral and spiritual strength that unifies itself as a nation. It holds a deep consciousness of the unique covenantal relationship between itself as a people and with God. That covenant not only reveals to them a knowledge of God as Creator and Lord, but reveals their own purpose as servants of God.

Israel with her emphasis upon ethical monotheism was in stark contrast to the rest of the world, and her very preservation as a people, bearing the witness to God's mission, is in itself evidence of God's concern for the fulfilment of his mission. That fulfilment of God's mission would be found in Christ.

In the New Testament the emphasis is still upon God's mission to the world. However, the method of bearing his message to mankind is different. The failure of Israel as a nation to attract people to God as creator and ruler, and her rejection of the messengers of God, led ultimately to God sending his only Son. The Parable of the Vineyard and the introduction of Hebrews, are two points in the New Testament that seek to link the method of the coming of Jesus with that of the fulfilment of Israel's mission.

While it is important to understand that the theology of mission flows through the entire scripture, it is also important to realise the distinctions in the Old and New Testaments in the fulfilment of this mission.

We have already indicated that in the Old Testament the commission to proclaim to the nation was seen in a centripetal sense. Israel was to so live that other nations would be attracted to her God. But in the New Testament the commission is to proclaim to all the nations in a centrifugal sense.

The Church, as the chosen people of God to bear the message of God, was to take this message to the uttermost parts of the world beginning in Jerusalem, then widening out.

The function of the mission of God was transferred to the Church, as the New Israel (1 Peter 2:9). The Church, as the new Israel, was to bear the message of God brought through his Son. Jesus had this world vision and commissioned his people to take the message to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Jesus was the bearer of God's message of concern to all of mankind. The Church, as his followers, is to bear witness to that message into all the world. The ministry of Jesus demonstrated his concern for the fulfilment of the mission of God.

The Kingdom of God was the focal point of Christ's proclamation. (Mark 1: 14-15). There are some sixty references in the Gospel to Jesus preaching the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom was seen as the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises, and begins with the preaching of Jesus. In his preaching the Messianic character of the coming Kingdom of God comes into sharp focus. In Jesus the expectation of salvation is being fulfilled, the revelation of salvation is becoming clearer, and the history of salvation is unfolding.

In his understanding of himself, of the Fatherhood of God, and of his unique purpose in his atoning death and resurrection, Jesus was outlining for those who would believe, his sense of fulfilling God's mission to mankind.

These fundamental concepts are each centring round God's mission to all of mankind. They provide the fundamentals of the theology of the Church, which was to go to all of humanity bearing the message that the fulfilment of God's mission is found through faith in Jesus the Christ. Henceforth his people would have the task of proclaiming that fulfilment. This task was no less than the evangelisation of the world.

It is important to realise that there is no separate theology of mission. It is not an appendix to Biblical theology, but part of its very heart. For no understanding of God as Creator, and Jehovah, no understanding of Israel's election and purpose, or understanding of the coming, the ministry, and the uniqueness of Jesus, can be complete unless it is within the scope of God's saving purpose for the whole of mankind.

It is easy to document from the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of the New Testament, how the early Christians took the message of God's salvation through Christ to the limit of their geographical understanding.

The rapid and far-flung spread of Christianity within the first few decades of the existence of the Christian Church is the best commentary on the zeal and purpose of the early Apostles. To follow them was to follow in a path of mission. Every Church found itself in a mission setting in a very peculiar sense. Every Church was surrounded by multitudes without God, without hope. Here was their first challenge, as Paul tells the Church at Philippi (Philippians 2:12-16). Similar words are spoken to the Churches at Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica and Colossae.

Again, Paul commends the Churches at Rome and Thessalonica for their efforts in evangelising their communities and beyond their borders (Romans 1:8; 1 Th. 1:8). The Apostle admonishes the Church of Corinth to abound in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58), that is they are to excel, to go beyond their usual bounds, to spill over and do the unusual. The Apostle also praises the Philippians for having an active part in his ministry (Philippians 4:10). It must be remembered that the Philippian Church had a missionary out in the field (Philippians 2:25).

Paul expects that his own example will inspire others to follow in his train. He calls upon the Churches to follow him even as he follows Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; 4:16; Philippians 3:17; 1 Th. 1:6; 2 Th. 3:6-7). He makes it clear that his supreme mission is evangelism (1 Corinthians. 1:17, "For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel". He speaks in no uncertain terms of his mission to evangelise. (1 Corinthians 9:16-18). To follow Paul meant to pursue the path of evangelism.

The early disciples had an enormous task in taking the gospel to the whole world. It is well known that they were ordinary, uneducated men without influential backing, and that they came from a second-rate province on the edge of the empire.

If anyone had considered at the time the probabilities of the success in their mission even granting their enthusiasm, surely the odds would have weighed heavily against them. Yet it was this overwhelming sense that they were fulfilling the mission of God through the command of Jesus that propelled them into every known part of the world. Michael Green in "Evangelism in the Early Church" stressed this enthusiasm for evangelism.

"The enthusiasm to evangelise which marked the early Christians is one of the most remarkable things in the history of religions. Here were men and women of every rank and station in life, of every country in the known world, so convinced that they had discovered the riddle of the universe, so sure of the one true God whom they had come to know, that nothing would stand in the way of their passing on this good news to others. As we have seen, they did it by preaching and personal conversation, by formal discourse and informal testimony, by arguing in the synagogue and by chattering in the laundry. They might be slighted, laughed at, disenfranchised, robbed of their possessions; their homes, even their families, but this would not stop them. They might be reported to the authorities as dangerous atheists, and required to sacrifice to the imperial gods; but they refused to comply. In Christianity they found something utterly new, authentic and satisfying. They were not prepared to deny Christ even in order to preserve their own lives; and in the manner of their dying they made converts to their faith."

The early Christians believed that there were three elements for the fulfilment of this mission - the first is that they were to carry their message to the uttermost parts of the earth, to complete the arrested mission of the Old Israel; the second is that this task would be theirs until the end of the Age. The preaching of the gospel was one of the signs that God intended to create a new heaven and a new earth. Their proclamation must continue until God again intervenes in history. Third, that this mission which began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would continue in the power of the Holy Spirit until the end of this world, with the coming of the Day of the Lord.

Their effectiveness in fulfilling the mission of God can be seen in the estimates Bishop Stephen Neill made that by the end of the Third Century there was somewhere about 5 million Christians out of a total Roman Empire population of 50 million. Their mission was a fulfilment of their Biblical understanding of God's mission to men.

2. The Dynamics Of Mission

In spite of what has been said by some who are critical of the mission of the Church, we are not living in a post-mission era. Certainly that concept is not borne out in the scriptures, nor is it evidenced by the continuing need of the world, nor is it found in the expectations of the Third World Churches, nor, I will contend, should it be part of the expectation of any Christian. The Christian lives in the most urgent era of the history of the Church. Only a full recovery of the dynamics of mission can enable us to fulfil our purpose as the people of God.

The centrality of Christ is fundamental to our theology of mission. That Jesus is central to the Biblical revelation needs no argument.

The coming of Christ, his dying and rising and ascension, are the central pivots in God's plan of salvation.

The Incarnation-Cross-Resurrection event is central to any Christian understanding of history, the salvation of mankind, and the mission of the Church. This event is central to the divine history of salvation. For here the promise is fulfilled, sin is judged, forgiveness is offered, death is defeated, and life and immortality are brought to light. At the heart of the Christian theology of mission must be the Incarnation-Cross-Resurrection event and the salvation that was made possible as a consequence of it.

There is a universality about the scope of that salvation, for Jesus "the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world". That salvation however, is only potentially universal until it is actually appropriated by the individual who believes in Christ. Scripture bears records, however, that this salvation is far beyond human response and includes the completion of the restored cosmos. There is an ultimate cosmic fulfilment through Christ.

Jesus, himself, outlined the purposes of his mission in the Parable of the Vineyard (Mark 12:1-9). In this the relationship between God and His Creation is outlined. Here Israel has a responsibility, which they failed to fulfil. So God sends His own Son and Messenger. But He is killed, delivering the message.

In John's Gospel (Chapter 9) there is an even more touching outline of the mission of Jesus. It has to do with John's exposition of the healing of the blind man. John sees Jesus as the light of the world and that his mission was to bring men into that light. Jesus searched for the man who had been made blind after he had been expelled from the Jewish Temple. Here once more the mission of Jesus in seeking, searching and saving, is outlined. The fulfilment of mission is found only when people see Jesus, discover Him as the light of the world, and continue to live in that light.

In all outlines of the theology of mission, Jesus Christ stands central. Through God's grace He is the bearer of the message of God's loving concern of whom the scriptures speak. The Apostles were gripped by God's great redemptive act through Christ.

The Disciples were convinced that they had been eyewitnesses of the great decisive redemptive act of God through Jesus. They believed that as a consequence of this act mankind could now enter upon the salvation offered since the beginning of the world. They believed that what was happening was in complete harmony with the teaching of God's mission as outlined in the Old Testament. They believed that this was to benefit all of mankind dependent only upon a receptive, faith-obedience to the gospel.

Hence they were willing to share their understanding of the completion of God's mission with everyone they met. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Act 2:32, 3:15; 4:10, 33; 5:29-32). John, in his first Epistle, joyfully and confidently writes that what he has seen and heard he must declare to those who read his word (1 John 1:1- 3). Here was the essence of reality-experience. Paul is an even clearer example of the way the early Apostles were motivated to proclaim the fulfilment of God's mission. Johannes Blauw writes of Paul:

"There is no doubt, however, that Paul's reflection of the gospel is the fruit of his missionary activities (1 Cor. 15:10). The "irregular" apostle has done more work than all the other apostles, even though he does not give himself credit for it but ascribes it to "the grace of God that was bestowed upon me". The eccentricity that is characteristic of Paul's apostleship has a deep meaning also for the missionary task of the present. Just as to Paul the light arose over the mystery of the salvation of all humanity (Eph. 3:4-6) which had not been known to previous generations, so the Church of today will not be able to understand the "divine economy" (Eph. 3:9) in any other way, nor preach the mystery (Eph.3:9) in any other way than by its continued "preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph.6:15). Missionary work is like a pair of sandals that have been given to the Church in order that it shall set out on the road and keep on going to make known the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 6:10). Only thus will this mystery be revealed more and more to the Church itself. Serving among the Gentiles enabled Paul to serve the Church; the Church lives mainly on his missionary epistles!

The dynamic that motivated the Apostles and centred their preaching upon Jesus as Christ, lay in the equipping of the Holy Spirit. From the foundation of the world the Spirit of God has been brooding over mankind. On the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God equipped and empowered the disciples to fulfil their mission to the world in a new way.

However, Pentecost is not merely an historical event in the history of the Church. The Holy Spirit did not merely come on that day. He came to abide, and to continue the fulfilment of the mission of God. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit the mission of God has a new dynamism. The "come" of the Old Testament, is replaced by the "go" of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit was the power that made the men go in mission. A close study of the Book of Acts reveals that all major steps of expansion were initiated, inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

It was through the Holy Spirit that the religious barrier was broken when Philip went to Samaria, Peter went to Cornelius, when Christians from Cyprus went to Antioch, and when Paul and Barnabas set off on the first missionary journey. It was the Holy Spirit who equipped the early Christians with power and boldness to proclaim the gospel, and endured them with courage in the midst of obstacles and persecution. Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is the guide in the formation of Churches, the dynamic behind the ongoing spread of the gospel, and the inspiration of Christian mission.

From what has already been said it is obvious that the cutting edge of the theology of mission comes at the point of proclamation. It is not just enough to have a Christian presence within the world; there must be a Christian proclamation of the great salvation act.

For the last two decades it has been popular to speak of the Christian presence within the community, and some speak of the Christian presence as though the serving, healing and comforting witness of the gospel is sufficient in itself to fulfil the mission of the Church. However, the emphasis in the New Testament is on evangelism by the direct proclamation of the message of God. More than 140 times the New Testament uses such words as "to announce", "to tell", "to spread good news", "to talk", and "to herald or proclaim".

Any Church engaged in the fulfilment of the mission of God must have the dynamic that comes through the proclamation of the gospel, supported in turn by the presence of a witnessing, loving, and serving community. There remains a sense of urgency in the fulfilment of the mission of God. Throughout the scripture there is stress laid upon the imperative of the task, which is given to the Church. (John 9:4, 4:35; Matt. 9:37-38). The urgency was accepted by the early Christians who believed that now was the acceptable time and now was the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:1-2). Christians, therefore, must live both in their private and public lives with the sense of urgency to fulfil the mission of God.

3. The Church As God's Agent Of Mission

Johannes Blauw has indicated that there is no other Church, than the Church that is sent into the world, and there is no other mission, than that of the Church of Jesus Christ. If one understands the election of Israel as an election for service, then we have already begun to see the role of the new Israel, the Church of Jesus, chosen for the service of bearing the message of salvation to the entire world.

The Church has been chosen as God's agent for mission. She is to perform for the world the service of being a witness to the Kingdom of God, which has come and is coming in Jesus Christ. It is impossible to separate the Church from mission. The Church is only the Church when it is the Church in mission. The Church is God's agent on earth through which God expresses himself to the world. God has no other redeeming agency than the Church.

The Church is at the very centre of God's cosmic purpose and is the means through which God fulfils his mission to men. The Church is the earthly agent of God's cosmic reconciliation and to witness to that mission is the primary task of the Church. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has said "So I would lay it down as a basic proposition that the primary task of the Church is not to educate man, is not to heal him physically or psychologically, it is not to make him happy. I will go further; it is not even to make him good. These are things that accompany salvation; and when the Church performs her true task she does incidentally educate men and give them knowledge and information, she does bring them happiness, she does make them good and better than they were. But my point is that those are not her primary objectives. Her primary purpose is not any of these; it is rather to put man into the right relationship with God, to reconcile man to God".

If the proclamation of the gospel in the fulfilment of the mission of God is the primary task of the Church, it ought not to be only proclamation by word. It must also be proclamation by deed. Christ gave us an example not only of preaching, but of service; not only of worship but of witness; not only to individuals, but to society. The witness is evangelical and social, private and public, individual and corporate. In the Prayer of Christ recorded in John 17, Jesus prays for His Apostles and all those who will believe "in me through their word". His commission is "as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17: 18-21).

For me starting to fulfil the mission of God as an evangelist began in the slums of Melbourne as a teenager in 1957.

Pastor To The Slums

When I was studying to be a minister of the Gospel, my student churches were two adjacent wooden churches in the inner slum areas of Melbourne. For seven years during the 1950's and 1960's the people of those inner slum areas were my parish.

During that time as student minister, then part- time minister and finally as a full- time graduated and ordained minister, my work as Pastor to the 'Slums' was still that of an evangelist, with a strong emphasis upon social care.

During my first eight years as a Pastor to the slums of inner Melbourne, I was involved in a great deal of social work. We were helping people with food, clothing, finding accommodation, helping drunks and derelicts and particularly working as Parole and Probation Officer with young offenders. I spent as much time going in and out of the courts and the jails as I did any other place. But always there was ringing that ordination charge, "Do the work of an Evangelist".

In the slum ministry I sought to do this by preaching a Gospel message every Sunday night regardless of the size of the congregation. The first time I ever preached was a Gospel service and fourteen people were present, eleven of them my friends and relatives who came visiting the little inner suburban Church to give me encouragement. Every Sunday night of my life in the nearly fifty years since then I have preached a Gospel message and invited people to commit their lives to Jesus Christ.

Billy Graham came to Melbourne in 1959 and the thought of preaching evangelism in the style of Billy Graham influenced many of us.

But I also felt that the better way was to train and equip members of the Church to be evangelists themselves. So for four Sunday afternoons while I was working in the slums I brought together a group of rather unwilling Church members and taught them how to witness to their faith and how to lead others to Jesus Christ. Then for four Sunday afternoons in a row we encouraged them out of the Church building to go and visit friends and relatives and share the Gospel with them. It was a miserable failure. After four weeks not one life had been committed to Christ through the evangelistic witness of our members and so the program was quietly dropped.

Every Sunday night I would preach a Gospel message from the centre of the platform asking people to commit their lives to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. A few did and there was great rejoicing at their baptism. At most baptisms, I prayed in Paul's words, "Woe to me if I preach not the Gospel."

They became seven incredibly happy years. Beverley, the love of my life, who had started there as my seventeen year old girlfriend had become my fiancée, two years later my wife. Three years later she became the mother of our first child. Our baby daughter was the delight of all of the people in the church. With so many elderly people in both congregations, the coming of the first full time minister in forty years and the first baby to be born into a church manse in the two churches in that century, created a great deal of delight for the elderly members. We used to think that Jenny had one hundred grandmothers.

An evangelist in the slums, I witnessed over a hundred local residents committing themselves to Jesus Christ and being baptised into the Church. By 1963 I had graduated both from the Federal College of The Bible of Churches of Christ and from Melbourne University, and the time had come to move on.

I had cherished the idea for seven years that I should do some post graduate study in the United States of America and after writing to many various universities and colleges I decided that I would seek admission to the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana, and work at the University of Indiana toward a Doctorate in Christian Education.

The idea behind all that I did was that I might equip myself to one day ministering in a large city church teaching Scriptural truths by the most efficient and effective means to large numbers of people. I wanted to be an evangelist who would teach the truths with integrity and insight.

An Australian minister of Churches of Christ was the senior pastor a very large church in Indianapolis. He wrote offering me a position on his staff while I completed postgraduate studies and the thought of becoming Associate Minister at the Norwood Christian Church under Rev. Dr. Theo Fisher was a tremendous opportunity. Theo had become a leader of integration between the black and white communities of Indianapolis. He had marched with Martin Luther King into Selma, Alabama, and had succeeded in taking the church with him down the road to integration.

In those days of intense civil rights campaigning Theo Fisher was a man of great courage and I looked forward to working in ministry with him.

The second part of the picture fell into place when the Christian Theological Seminary offered me a postgraduate scholarship. The letters flew backwards and forwards across the Pacific and it became a matter of great excitement as we looked forward to leaving Australia on Boxing Day 1963 to commence our new life in the United States of America.

We had spent more than seven months getting ready to depart in 1963. We had been advised to gain a non-quota immigrant visa because I would be working as well as studying in the United States of America. So we both had completed the long series of medical checks. Now, armed with our chest x-rays, certificates of clearance about smallpox, venereal disease and a host of other unwanted conditions, with our taxation clearance and church authorisations we waited upon the Consul for our visa.

We filled in endless forms which were sent backwards and forwards across the Pacific to Washington DC for official approval for our immigration. The people at the Consulate were quite nice but the queues were inordinately long and we had to stand with baby daughter in arm for hours before we would have our certificates and applications processed.

We packed all of our belongings. It broke our hearts to give away many of the gifts that we had been given for our engagement and wedding but it was not possible to take everything with us. In the centre of the lounge room we had a huge wooden crate five-foot square and three foot deep. It weighed half a ton and it was the maximum that we were allowed to take on the ship. We sold some of our furniture and gave most of the rest of it to other young couples. Inside that wooden crate was placed all of our blankets, sheets and towels on the bottom and around the edges to protect the rest of the contents, all of the clothes that we intended taking, all baby Jenny's requirements, the crockery, special wedding gifts, family photographs, typewriter, books, sermons, university transcripts and everything else that would be needed to establish us in our new life were packed into that crate. They went in with loving care, everything wrapped in towels or linen to protect them on the long sea journey. Eventually the wooden lid was closed and the whole lot bound in hoop iron and carted by truck to the wharves to be loaded on the S.S. Monterey. We had saved for three years to get enough money for our fare and it was a proud moment on the last day

when we went to Macdonald Hamilton Pty Ltd and paid our fares, two adults and one child, Sydney to America, - with airfares from Melbourne to Sydney and from San Francisco to Indianapolis.

That day we sold the car and the last of our Australian possessions were on board ship sailing to Sydney where we would join it on Boxing Day after our final Christmas with Beverley's mother. The day of our final appointment came as we went to the American Consulate to get the last approvals on our visa.

The queues were long and we waited patiently for several hours. Suddenly the Consulate seemed to go berserk. Members of the Consulate ran to one another talking in excited whispers. People broke out into stares. Men wandered away from their desks and met in huddles. Someone locked the outside door of the Consulate and no one was to be admitted. Those of us who were being processed were just left as if we were not there or were invisible. Someone turned a radio on and people could hear. The news broke upon all assembled. "President John F. Kennedy has been shot. He has been assassinated in Dallas, Texas. No news of his condition is yet available officially, but it is believed that he is dead."

The Consulate went into a tailspin and with it the world. Minor details like our visa applications were literally wiped off the Consul's table. World events caught us up in their confusion. Immediately the American Consulates everywhere in the world were placed onto terrorist alert. The Consuls were recalled to Washington DC. Somewhere, there on the floor, or on a bench, or in a waster paper basket were our visas with our photographs and everything required except the official stamp.

The Consul's office remained closed for several days. The new President was sworn in and then the Consul's office returned to normal. Now, with only days to go before our departure, we once more lined up with extra long lines of people wanting to be processed. It was Christmas Eve and the staff of the Consulate were harassed. They could not find our visas. We pleaded with them to commence new applications. We sent telegrams across the Pacific asking for cabled permission to leave without the visa. The legal minds in the Consulate argued that new visa applications could not be processed while present applications were pending.

Then it was time to break for Christmas parties and the Christmas holidays. My mother and friends went to Sydney to farewell us on Boxing Day. Some friends drove up to Sydney at the passenger

terminal to wave us goodbye. Beverley and I and baby Jenny slept on the floor, owning nothing except our toothbrushes. Even our hand luggage had been taken on board and placed in our cabin on the S.S. Monterey. Christmas Day left us feeling utterly bereft without money, clothing, furniture, car, job or house.

On Boxing Day the Consul gave the dreaded news to us from his home. "I am sorry but there is nothing I can do. We will just have to process a new visa application for you when the office opens in January."

In Sydney the S.S. Monterey sailed out into Sydney Harbour and standing at the shore was my mother and friends with no one to wave goodbye to.

Back in Melbourne Beverley and I and baby Jenny were still sleeping on the floor. It would be another six months before the visas would finally be approved, before new x-rays of our chests were completed and we were guaranteed pure from infection of tuberculosis, smallpox, venereal disease and all the other unwanted conditions. New taxation clearance certificates had to be obtained but by then I had missed the start of the university year. I could not wait in Indianapolis and I could not be unemployed in Australia. President Kennedy's assassination had affected our lives completely. I needed some work in order to keep us and so became Chaplain in a mental hospital and minister to a small country church. My time as a Pastor to the Slums loomed into life as a bush padre.

A Country Parson

Our furniture was duly unloaded in San Francisco. Our luggage went on to Indianapolis. It would be more than two years before, eventually we would get all of our hand luggage returned and get the crate back to Australia. We lived with borrowed everything during that period of time, gradually replacing our necessities and re-establishing our lives until the time came when we could once more take up the interrupted journey.

Two years later, with another baby on the way, the hoop iron crate arrived back in Melbourne. How excited we were and how long were the delays of getting it out of the bond store. Eventually, with duties paid the truck delivered it to our country parsonage. With great excitement we burst open the iron bands and levered up the wooden lid. We peeled back the layers of blankets and bed linen still surrounded with mothballs. And inside lay all of our earthly possession. The kitchen

saucepans were all out of shape from the pressure of the crate being dropped by a crane. The typewriter was bent in the middle; the lecture notes and books had mildewed pages. The clothes looked terribly old fashioned and out of date and nothing seemed to fit. Things were broken. In fact as we unpacked and unwrapped everything complete despair settled upon us. Most of those things went back into the crate and the whole lot was sent to the tip. But the call to be an evangelist was still thrashing in my veins.

In 1965, I had only been in Ararat for one month when I realised that there was a desperate need to do something to help the teenagers of Ararat. My experience as a Parole and Probation Officer was already being called upon and I recognised that too many young people were going before the courts. The life in a small country town is not very exciting and many young people found the most exciting things happened when they broke the law.

I was contemplating the problems of the young people in the community one night in bed. It was incredibly hot and I was awake, unable to sleep. Eventually I got out of bed and seeking something cooler went out and sat on the front steps of the manse. Only those people who have lived in the inland of Australia know how hot some of those summer nights can be when the north winds continue to blow from the inland across the Wimmera. I guess it was well over a hundred degrees and after midnight, as I sat on the stone doorstep at the end of the long passage that ran through the wooden manse thinking about the problem of young people in the small country town.

While I was sitting there a drunk ambled past, grasping hold of our front fence to steady himself. He looked up and saw me and wished me good evening. I said "Good evening to you" in return. Suddenly discovering an audience in the otherwise deserted street the drunk opened the front gate and staggered up the front path and collapsed on the front step beside me. He placed his arm around my shoulder and thrust his stubbly beard close to my face and with strong alcoholic breath said, "What's troubling you mate?"

I explained to him that I was not able to sleep because I had been thinking much about young people in the community and that there did not seem to be much in Ararat for them. This was a signal for him to start on a long discourse about the needs of youth in the community. He had grown up in that country town and there never had been anything for him and for other young people. "The community does nothing, the council just sits on its backside, the school teachers are only thinking about their promotion to another bigger town, and the churches only thought of

wanky things for kids to do.” As the drunk continued on this long discourse about the needs of youth an idea began to firm in my mind.

What if we did organise a big occasion in Ararat and brought to Ararat the leading sportsmen in Australia, the leading bands, the leading teenager singers and television personalities? What if I brought to Ararat some of the best known people in the country and the best youth preacher I could find and see if we couldn't give them good entertainment and at the same time a strong Christian challenge to find purpose in their lives? What if I could get the whole town involved in organising this youth emphasis? What if I could get all the stores to display youth fashions, and the sports stores to put on special sporting displays, and the community service groups like Rotary and Lions and Apex and the Country Womens Association to focus their activities and fundraising in support of some on-going programme for young people in Ararat? What if we started it off by getting every young person who lived in the Shire together? What if I had a special "Teen Week"? While my drunken friend kept talking meaningless rubbish about his own youth and telling me the story of his life, an idea began to formulate for what was going to become a week in the life of Ararat that is talked about to this day. Forty years later, I was invited back to Ararat to open a new church building, which was a direct result of “Teen Week”!

After an hour or so I managed to get my drunk friend back on his feet and out the front gate and off again up High Street to his destination. I went to my study and wrote down thought after thought as ideas tumbled out of my mind.

With no money, no organisation, I gathered together a group of young adults and launched the idea of Ararat's "Teen Week". Soon we had a committee of twenty and we were setting up a new approach to youth evangelism.

I realised with young people that we had to get to them personally so I rounded up about twenty young people from the streets and asked them to come to my house and bring with them their Ararat High School Year Books going back over the previous ten years. The kids sat around the lounge room floor with the Year Books before them and discussed what had happened to every person in the class photograph. We took each year and each class in turn and gave a name and address to every child. Someone got the Shire voting rolls and we traced down the addresses of every teenager who lived in Ararat and the surrounding Shire.

I then recruited twenty young typists to sit at a long row of manual typewriters and write to 2,000 young people a personal letter inviting them to a series of activities. At the same time I asked my colleague ministers if I could have the opportunity of addressing their congregation and inviting representatives to form a Teen Week Committee. Soon we had prayer groups meeting each week in four churches and I set myself a timetable of four months to prepare for this massive Teen Week. I visited the Apex, the Rotary, the Girl Guides and Rangers, the Country Womens Association. In fact there were 110 adult groups or committees in Ararat and we contacted them all. We set up a catering committee for the biggest youth tea that the community had ever seen, an administration committee, a hospitality committee, a finance committee and a prayer committee.

We then set to work drawing up a list of the most famous people in Australia and I wrote to them inviting them to come to Ararat. The Prime Minister wrote back commending what we were doing and sending his photograph. The "Ararat Advertiser" began to run front page articles in every edition about the progress of Teen Week. To have the photograph of Prime Minister Menzies on the front page commending the unique Teen Week in Ararat certainly brought the attention of the whole community to what we were doing. Then the Premier of Victoria, Mr. Bolte, decided to pay a visit and indicated that what we were doing in Ararat was beyond anything he had seen in any other community in Victoria.

On Thursday, 16 July, 1964, the front page read "Sydney Church Leader Commends Teen Week" and reads "Rev. Alan Walker of Sydney, who was awarded the Order of the British Empire by the Queen for his church work in Australia, has commended Ararat's Teen Week". And then went on with a commendation from Alan. Neither Gordon Powell nor Alan Walker would come to Ararat at the invitation of a 25-year-old minister in a small country church but at least they sent their encouragement, which was featured in the "Ararat Advertiser". Incidentally that was the first correspondence with those two great church leaders, which led to a 25 year friendship with both.

We scouted round all of the League footballers who were heroes in those days and all of them agreed to come and be part of the unique Teen Week. We got together with Olympic athletes, top entertainers, television personalities and others designed to bring young people together with a great sense of challenge to Christian commitment. Television stars who ran the teenage programmes of that day gave us a day and, of course, all of the politicians and community leaders quickly recognised that this was an opportunity to be seen and they too came to town. The motels and private houses were booked out with outstanding personalities.

We took over the Ararat Town Hall to launch our Teen Week with a free meal for young people explaining what would be on during the week. The meal was catered for by church ladies groups and the Country Womens Association. A banner headline ran across the "Ararat Advertiser" for Tuesday, July 28, 1964, reading "Teen Week Launched by 600 Teenagers". It told the story of how 600 teenagers gave Ararat's unique Teen Week a spectacular launching. More than a thousand attended the opening night's programme. Each day and each night in the schools, in the Town Hall and in the main community centre outstanding personalities spoke about the need of purpose, direction and goals in life.

I invited a well-known youth speaker, Jack Calder to wrap up each session with a call to commitment and a challenge to young people to live in Godly ways.

The result was beyond our estimation. The buildings were crowded. The programme was paid for. Hundreds of young people came into contact with the Christian message. Four thousand five hundred of them attended in one week in a community that had only 5,000 people in it. For weeks afterwards the paper produced photographs in every edition of football stars meeting with young people, of young people becoming involved in community service projects, of youth groups that had new vitality, of YMCA classes that were brimming as all of the church youth groups and community youth activities provided special on-going programmes.

But Teen Week was not only a time of celebration and fun, it was a time of Christian challenge to living the way of Jesus Christ. I made sure that we gathered the young people together in order that we might present to them in a clear fashion the Christian gospel. A national paper the following week reports "The Victorian country town of Ararat was the scene of a thrilling adventure with youth from July 26 to August 2. A number of churches co-operated in this effort to reach the teenage section of the community and the results were staggering. A galaxy of talent drawn from across Victoria was used including League footballers, TV personalities, international singing stars, instrumentalists and vocalists. There was a total attendance of 4,500 people in this small country town with over a thousand in the final meeting in the Town Hall. There were 261 commitments to Jesus Christ."

That national report brought enquiries from all over Australia. In fact we had the closest experience in the four little churches of Ararat to a revival that we had ever seen. How do you cope with 261 commitments to Christ in one week? The Presbyterian Church set up membership training classes

as did the Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches and at the Church of Christ we had more than 100 new members in training. For the next eighteen weeks I conducted training classes for church membership and baptisms of families and groups. The little church with 36 members was suddenly packed out. The membership had increased by more than 300%. Now we needed to keep up the momentum and a new monthly program called "Teen Meets" was established. Hundreds of young people gathered for roast suckling pig cooked on a spit. Bible studies became crowded and our old buildings were inadequate. We immediately started to demolish the buildings and to rebuild a huge new youth hall and kitchen. I drew up plans for new halls, kitchen and a rebuilt Church. It took time to build these over the next year and I was called to open the rebuilt church forty years later! Young people gave of their money and their time in the most remarkable way. Rabbiting parties were set up to clear farms of rabbits and then their carcasses were sold with the money going to the church. Mid-week home groups were established and groups of more than 600 met for special activities in the Town Hall.

The young people put their new found Christian faith into practical service cleaning overgrown gardens and houses for elderly people, washing windows and mowing lawns for those who were sick in the community. Groups adopted wards in the mental hospital and started visiting the patients.

In the midst of our greatest achievements the preacher on those occasions, my friend Jack Calder, announced he had terminal cancer. He was dead within six weeks. He had only had one mission in his life and it was at our Teen Week. Hundreds of people crowded his memorial service and thousands attended his funeral. "That one week" said his widow, "meant more to him in his life than anything else he had ever accomplished."

When we go back to the country town of Ararat we still meet people who talk about that remarkable week. Recently in the Darling Harbour Convention Centre a fine young man who was present at an international convention greeted me warmly indicating that he was one of the young men I had baptised following that Teen Week. The fruits still live on and it all started on that hot summer night when we sat out on the front step with a drunk talking about the needs of Ararat's youth.

Suburban Minister

On the night of my ordination back in 1959, I knelt in prayer as hands were laid upon my head and representatives of the Federal Conference of Churches of Christ in Australia laid their hands upon

me in the act of ordination. I always remembered the ordination charge given to me: "Do the work of an evangelist". That phrase continued with me throughout every year of my ministry. I have never forgotten that I was called to "do the work of an Evangelist". No matter what other activities I have been involved in always there has been this ordination charge ringing in the back of my mind "do the work of an Evangelist".

I spent thirteen years as a suburban minister of the Cheltenham Church of Christ in Victoria. They were busy years with all the demands of a very large parish that was growing from strength to strength. In the first couple of years we overcame the inertia which was in the Church, changed some of the leadership from the very tired and elderly people who were in positions of power, removed the debts that were strangling the Church and affecting all aspects of growth, saw our offerings rise incredibly as additional people came into the membership of the Church, extended property, and added staff. In the midst of running the Church sporting teams, playing football, training with the young fellows, and putting into practice almost every kind of social welfare programs you could imagine, I still had ringing in the back of my mind the old ordination charge "Do the work of an Evangelist". I managed to quieten this call for several years because I received a large number of invitations to be a visiting Evangelist for state wide Church Evangelism Crusades.

For many years I went to Western Australia each year where all the Churches of Christ in Perth and the nearer country areas came together for a State wide Evangelism Crusade. Each night for fifteen nights I preached in the huge theatre attached to the main Perth City Church. Scores of people made commitments to Christ in each of those evening rallies. During the day time I spoke on radio, gave lunchtime lectures at the Universities and Teachers Colleges, spoke to women's and men's morning teas, breakfasts and dinners and at youth barbecues. It was an exhausting round to be capped off every night by an evangelistic rally.

Then for two and a half months I toured New Zealand on behalf of the Churches of Christ in New Zealand conducting evangelistic crusades up and down that nation, never pausing for breath and having every single day a Crusade Day starting with a new city every Monday after finishing late Sunday night at a prior place. I was fortunate to have as a working partner and crusade director, Alan Avery, another Churches of Christ minister from Melbourne. He made sure everything ran well.

After two and a half months away from home I met my wife for a delightful one-week holiday where to my surprise I found that I had been booked in to a wonderful hotel on Mt. Cook but left to pay the bill myself. There were similar crusades in Tasmania where we visited every Church in that State, conducting crusades each running for a week. Then came Crusades in New South Wales and Queensland under the leadership of Kevin Crawford.

Looking back on those years as a visiting evangelist I realised that I was away far too much when my children were young. I was always tired and weary from speaking usually about thirty times each week with large public crusades each night and all day filled with half a dozen other speaking engagements or appointments with elderly citizens' groups, nursing homes, many secondary schools, radio stations, editors of local papers, men's breakfasts, lunches and dinners and family barbecues.

The life of a visiting evangelist is weary from constant moving, living out of a suitcase, sleeping poorly in some person's home, skipping meals or else having the meal at a function where more often than not it was sandwiches and sausage rolls. All the time the visiting evangelist is encouraging the local minister, listening to his problems, giving advice and counsel to individuals whose marriages were falling apart or whose children were off the rails and then leaving behind young Christians who had committed their lives to Christ during your visits. But I was never really confident that the local Church would care for them and see them nurtured and grafted into the congregation. It was at this time I learnt the meaning behind the Apostle Paul's statement when he listed all the things he was doing in various Churches throughout Turkey and Greece and concluded "And all of the time I have the burden of the Churches upon my heart". The work of a visiting evangelist is not easy and if properly done is the most exhausting ministry imaginable. And then because of the wonders of aircraft flight I would literally finish an extensive six week non stop campaign, get on a plane and two or three hours later be back at home where the mail would be piled high, where there would be recorded dozens of messages to contact people urgently and where every problem of the past six or eight weeks in the local parish demanded instant attention. It was not surprising that upon returning home I often suffered from heavy chest infections and hoarse voice.

When I was not a visiting evangelist I always felt my ministry was that of a pastoral evangelist, particularly to men. In most Churches women outnumber men. Today Wesley Mission is one of

the few very large Churches in the land where there are more men than women and where the average age of the membership is only thirty-one.

I had a concern to reach men in the Cheltenham area and therefore visited people in their homes of a nighttime particularly wanting to talk to the husband and father. More often than not I found whenever I asked a man a question about his own personal spiritual life and his relationship with God that before he could utter a word of reply his wife would jump in with some kind of defensive statement. I realised over a period of months that every man I had spoken to directly had his wife answer for him. I realised that many men were not at home in their own homes. In their own home the wife inevitably dominated the conversation and if I wanted to speak to men I had to get them while they were in their garage or outside their own homes. Most wives did not know how to make a place where a man can really call his house his own.

So I started what became a habit for many, many years of making an appointment to visit one man every Tuesday lunchtime at his work and to have lunch with him wherever he ate his lunch. I only had two rules - one was that I would eat wherever he ate, and the other was that no one would ever buy me lunch. I was not visiting for a free lunch but I was there to talk to the man about the significance of his work, of his role as a father and a husband, of any problems he had in his own life, of how he saw his relationship with God at the moment and if he would let me outline to him the facts of the Gospel, the necessity of baptism and taking his place within the membership of our Church. Visiting those men every lunchtime became a sacred duty and a wonderful opportunity of sharing the Gospel. Almost every lunchtime or at least once every second week I had the joy of seeing a man make a commitment to Christ and frequently this was then followed by other members of his family whom we baptised together. I was doing the work of an evangelist.

Sometimes I had lunch at the bar of a pub, out of a paper bag sitting on a footpath with my back to the factory wall, in a Board room with the finest silver and crystal, in a works canteen or in a restaurant, but wherever that man had his lunch I would sit with him and share the Gospel, doing the work of an evangelist. One by one I saw men and more often than not other members of the family coming to faith and into the membership of the Church.

The greatest change in this approach to the work of an evangelist came about when I was sitting in a little South Yarra Italian Restaurant having lunch with Jack Fawcett. Jack had been divorced and was presently running an advertising agency. He had his eye upon another young woman and was

talking about getting married. As we sat together having lunch in the restaurant, he with his glass of red wine and I with my glass of lemon squash, I shared the Gospel with him. Step by step I took Jack through the outline of what it means to become a believer in Christ and to become a member of our Church.

I outlined to him some eight verses of the Gospel and slowly walked him through, with him understanding and agreeing to each proposition until in the end I led him in a prayer of commitment of his life when he for the first time bowed his head and prayed out aloud in front of someone else. His response at the end of that prayer was wonderful. "I'm a Christian. It's wonderful. I am feeling different already. You know I secretly always wanted to be a believer and know the truth of Christ. I am amazed it is so simple. I just didn't know where to look when I looked at the Bible in the past. Oh, thank God, I know I am saved and I feel quite different. I want to thank you for just showing me how I could become a Christian. If you hadn't spent this hour with me over lunch I would never have found out how. Oh, I feel wonderful."

On the spur of the moment I said to Jack Fawcett something that ultimately was the most inspired question I had ever asked a man. "Jack, if you feel so different and you have realised what it means to become a Christian in just this little time sitting down together looking at these Bible verses, why don't you come with me while I explain this to other people as I have to you and learn so that you yourself can then go and share with others?" Jack Fawcett readily agreed and thereafter began a pattern of training and working as an evangelist that would change every Tuesday night of my life. We met the following Tuesday night and we had prayer together in the Church's Board Room before going out to visit a married couple. I told Jack that all I wanted him to do was sit and listen to the way I would share the Gospel verses, learning from me as I led the discussion, then at an appropriate time I would ask him to explain the difference Christ had made in his life and I wanted that to be brief and to the point.

At the first house we visited the husband was a metal fabricator. He employed a number of men and made car trailers, horse floats and the like. He was a big strong man and his wife was open and friendly. I led the discussion in the same way as I had shared with Jack in the restaurant in South Yarra and at the end of the time asked the father if he would commit his life to Christ and membership in our Church. I felt overjoyed when he indicated that he would and turning to his wife said "And I am sure you'd like to become a committed Christian and member of the Church, also wouldn't you?" She agreed and so it was in that first visit two people confessed Christ as

Saviour and came into membership of the Church. The following Tuesday night when we went visiting another two made commitments for Christ. Then came a very important decision. I asked Val Adcock a wonderful Christian lady who was terribly crippled and unable to get out of the house if she would set up appointments for us each Tuesday night.

Henceforth I would give her a list of people with whom I had some contact either because their children were associated with our Children's or Youth Programs in the Church or else whom I had met through some avenue of activity in the local community and she set up an appointment asking the same question each time "Would you please receive Mr. Moyes and one of our younger men who would like to visit you this coming Tuesday night at 7. 30pm to speak to you about your faith in Christ and membership in the Church."

Val started making appointments and Jack and I would go and visit them. After four weeks of training I then asked Jack if he would lead the conversation using the scripture passages and I would keep silent except for a word of testimony. On his first night Jack led two to faith in Christ and an agreement to be baptised and become members of our Church. He was overjoyed. After four more weeks he had led about seven people to faith in Christ and membership in the Church and this all occurred before he was baptised. At the end of eight weeks of training, I then asked Jack to take Trevor Adcock and train him in the same way as I had trained him and I would take another person. In asking for two more people to come visiting with us I discovered an interesting fact, that a number of people said they would pray for us but they couldn't go visiting and talking. So I asked them to take upon themselves the same discipline of those of us who were going out visiting, that is, they would give up their Tuesday nights, we would all meet together in the Board Room of the Church for prayer and then while half of us kept praying in the Board Room the other half of us would go out and visit, coming back to report to them at the end of our visit.

That really put some impetus into their prayers and some focal point because they kept praying for the people whom we were visiting. While we were in the house sharing the Gospel with others, we kept remembering that back at the Church these other faithful people were actually on their knees praying for us by name. That gave us courage in our witness. The first night we returned to our prayer partners and revealed that two or three more people had committed their lives to Christ. There was great enthusiasm. The people who were praying felt they were really part of the action. After another eight weeks there were four of us now trained in sharing the Gospel and all four of us had led others to Christ. We then chose another partner and added more to the prayer team. Then

another round of eight weeks visitation began. At the end of those eight weeks, the eight of us all took another eight partners and another team was added to the prayer partners. Soon we had sixteen people visiting each Tuesday night and Val Adcock had the task of organising eight homes where we might visit each week. The prayer partners were alive with their enthusiasm and every Sunday night we witnessed more baptisms as adults came to faith. The Church membership grew rapidly.

Over the next years each Tuesday night was spent visiting and each Sunday night was spent taking the public commitment of those who had made their commitments to Christ with us on the Tuesday night. They would go through a short period of training in Christian faith and the meaning of Church membership before being baptised. Over the years it was my privilege to baptise hundreds of adults who came to personal faith in Christ through our Tuesday night visitation evangelism. I was again doing the work of an evangelist.

City Superintendent

Rev. Dr Alan Walker was an evangelist who came to prominence through the Methodist Church's Mission to the Nation in the 1950's. He conducted many other missions in Australia and around the world in the next forty years especially through the World Methodist Council's World Evangelism program. He preached in more than 140 countries and with his wife, Win, was a constant traveller and preacher. Alan was a prophet to this nation, opposing all the forces of evil and corruption, especially Australia's involvement in war and capitalistic exploitation. He used the media well and in his last program of development established the Pacific College of Evangelism, now called the Alan Walker College for the training of church leaders from Asia and the Pacific. I describe him as the greatest Christian minister in Australia of the twentieth century. He was a model travelling evangelist.

Alan Walker was impressed and invited me to lecture staff and Board members on how to grow the Central Mission at a staff retreat at Vision Valley and a members conference in Wesley hall on what was his own vision. This was in 1977.

I was in my thirties but had studied church growth across America, had practiced it in Melbourne, and had made a special study of Alan Walker's concepts. I was amazed that so few of the staff of Wesley Central Mission really understood the big picture. They understood one piece of the jigsaw that involved them, but few had any idea of the integrated theology of mission.

Perhaps only Dr Jim Pendlebury, Harold Henderson, Stan Manning and Dr Keith Suter who had just started at the Mission, understood the big picture. Everyone else had his or her favourite bit of the jigsaw, and was pleased when Alan Walker promoted that, but they were either tolerant or critical of some of his other emphases. One leader of the fundraisers in the 1970's complained that Alan's left-wing political involvement and comments were the reason why it was so hard to raise money for the Mission.

Alan was impressed that I was able to express his concepts simply and cogently. I expressed them as five policy points and they guided my leadership over the next quarter century. For in 1977 I was appointed his successor. I had written a 500 page thesis entitled, "*Transforming the City Church*" in which I acknowledged Alan Walker's vision, and this book became the blueprint for all we did over the next twenty-seven years. It encapsulated the vision of how to develop a city ministry. What we are today is due to the fact that we followed the blue print I had written. My 500 pages included the summary I had made of Alan Walker five policy points for Mission development. For twenty-seven years, every new staff member heard from me in a Staff Orientation lecture.

The original thirteen centres and services that Alan had grown to twenty-three when I arrived, have grown now to over 490 centres and services. Those principles that Alan Walker enunciated and I have followed, work. We have today the world's most viable city ministry.

Wesley Mission has become a great social welfare and evangelical organisation, not by accident, but because we have consistently lived by our policy points.

No theological college in Australia teaches urban mission – the role of the church in the cities. Wesley Institute now has an accredited Master's degree in this subject. Again, we are on the cutting edge. I have been teaching this subject every year in America since 1980. In 2002, the Trustees of Emmanuel School of Religion where I have taught Urban Mission over more than a decade, honoured me by appointing me Adjunct Professor of Church Ministries.

Different Approaches To The Work Of An Evangelist.

As an evangelist I felt there was a unique opportunity in the heart of a great nation to speak to the whole nation, using unique methods and the media during both Easter and Christmas. The aim of Holy Week is to present as many people as possible with the true story of the meaning of Easter. Each year, we reach 20, 000 people face to face with the message of Easter. The Easter Sunrise

Service, screened nationally on television, is seen in all capital cities of Australia and the larger regional centres, and is watched by a million people.

Likewise at Christmas time An Australian Christmas was a bold attempt to put the true meaning of Christmas into one out of every five homes in the nation. A tightly structured Christmas service was presented before a congregation of 50,000 people, each with their candle and carol sheet. The start of summer in our hemisphere is a good time for a great outdoor gathering. The Christmas story was told by about 2,000 members of the cast and choir who became the people of Bethlehem. Craftsmen, potters, carpenters and weavers set the scene, all in costume. The Shepherds arrived with their flocks of real sheep. Mary and Joseph arrived on her donkey. The Wise Men arrived on their haughty camels in splendid attire, much to the delight of children. The colour and pageantry caught the imagination of the country as we retold the true meaning of Christmas. Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus", sung by the full choir and accompanied a symphony orchestra brought the evening to a climax, and as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" was sung a massive fireworks display burst into the heavens. Each presentation each year is an awesome experience! The show was produced for us by Mary Lopez Productions. Mary also produced the annual Schools Spectacular. Leading Australian television artists such as: Mark Williams, Maria Venuti, John Foreman, Marty Rhone, Adrian Ross and Francine Bell were just some of the leading performers. A full orchestra was under the baton of Maestro Tommy Tycho.

I had the privilege every year, in-between the colourful pageant of telling the Gospel message in its theological context. A million people watched. As part of this presentation, viewers were asked to contribute to the needs of those homeless with whom we minister. Thousands rang to make a donation or talk to our counsellors and to speak about the coming of Christ.

The cutting edge of evangelism must be present in any effective city ministry, and Wesley Mission has demonstrated over the past century that it is not enough for a church to just worship or serve, but that there must be the gospel of hope presented to those in the city streets. Consequently, the evangelistic program of Wesley Mission means its services of outreach are designed primarily for the person who is not a Christian. Special effort is made to reach these people with the good news of the gospel. These services are so arranged that those people who are not Christians can understand what is happening and feel at home during them. Conversions are recorded. Lives are changed. I have been true to the command of the Master to disciple people in His name.

In 1979 I conducted my first Easter Mission in Sydney. I continued the tradition that Rev Dr Alan Walker had established and simply followed his pattern adding a few things of my own. The Palm Sunday feature in Hyde Park went well as did the breakfast and lunches. They weren't really evangelistic outreaches because I discovered that all the people on the mailing lists were deeply committed Christians but it certainly did give them encouragement as we met together at Easter time. The Good Friday afternoon service featured the premiere of Chuck Colson's film "Born Again" and the theatre was packed with 1,400 people. The evening rally saw many commitments to Christ. My diary says "I launched Easter Mission and spoke at 36 functions during Holy week. It was a great week and a very successful mission especially our newly instituted Feast of Tennebrae on Maundy Thursday and a television service from the North Ryde Drive in Theatre."

I was determined that Easter Mission would be upgraded instantly. By 1980 the men's breakfast began to change. A deaconess working for us Beryl Bradley accosted me quite stridently "aren't women in business too? Why aren't women invited to the breakfast? The idea of a men's breakfast is just sexist!" Beryl was right and from that moment on we have simply had an Easter breakfast and an Easter lunch with both men and women coming to whichever they preferred. The Tennebrae service developed and grew into more than 8 Tennebrae services that are now held using the same material and background concepts throughout Wesley Mission centres. And after that first year at the North Ryde Drive in theatre we negotiated with the Sydney Opera House. We knew that our Sunrise had the potential to be seen overseas if produced well and the Opera House was the natural site for not only a national telecast but one which would be seen internationally. I had appointed Rev. John Graham as my colleague. John had been a very talented producer and director of television programmes for the Christian Television Association in NSW. He came on to my staff and immediately started to develop a much better concept of telecasting from the Sydney Opera House. For the next 20 years Martin Johnson was on my staff as senior manager of Communications and was responsible personally for the production and direction of our great telecasts every Easter from the Opera House and at Christmas time from Darling Harbour.

We also began to upgrade the street marches. Instead of motley collections of Christian carrying Palm branches heading around the streets to Hyde park we now have the whole programme conducted by our Wesley Institute for Ministry and the Arts with hundreds of vibrant students, with broadcast music, singing and dancing as they wave their palm branches and travel round the streets behind the escort police vehicles with Jesus riding on a donkey in costume surrounded by his

disciples. The grove of palms is an ideal site and people from all around Hyde Park gather around as our choir and special speakers tell out the Easter message.

A similar thing happens on Good Friday. With all the city shops closed and the streets full of people it is an ideal time to have a Christian witness to what happened on the way to the cross. About 100 actors and singers all in costume form up in Martin plaza. Then Christ in full costume bloodied and bruised, carrying a heavy wooden cross, staggers out between armed guards, to the beat of muffled drums. The procession is sombre as it slowly moves up through Pitt Street with thousands of people watching from the footpaths. The television cameras from all networks, beam this in their news services across the nation.

When the procession on Good Friday moves up Pitt Street and comes to Wesley Centre the whole procession together with hundreds of other people from the footpath go into Wesley Theatre completely filling the thousand seats. This is followed by a production of Christian drama and music featuring on the significance of the day and concluding with the disciples in costume passing the elements of the communion to everyone present.

Throughout the week about 20, 000 people attend Easter Mission and I am now joined by some of my colleagues in proclaiming the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Easter is a tremendous time for people to understand what God is doing and how we can respond to him.

In recent years on Easter Sunday afternoon commencing from Hyde park and marching down to the forecourt of the opera house we have joined with Christians of many churches “marching together in the Aussie awakening” Tens of thousands of people have gathered in the forecourt of the Opera House and we have joined with other Christian leaders in giving the message of Jesus to all those who were present.

Whenever there has been time available we have used our resources of Wesley Theatre to screen Christian Films so that there is an ongoing programme all day everyday during Holy week. Teams of young people knock on doors of all the central business district office blocks and apartment buildings giving people Easter brochures and literature about what Wesley Mission is doing. The whole week is an opportunity for Christians to actively present the key events of the life death and resurrection of Jesus and how that impacts on our life today. Each year millions of people see some part of our witness and hear some part of the Gospel message.

The use of special Christmas and Easter times to do the work of an evangelist was preceded by an earlier evangelistic method that proved to be successful in small rural communities. That involved concentrating on one age group.

For more than two decades I worked as an evangelist in other churches, conducting as many as 35 three-day crusades each year. Every Thursday evening after work I flew off to some remote country church, taking a dozen or more meetings by Sunday lunchtime, then flew back to Sydney for the afternoon to midnight Sunday programme at Wesley Mission. It was with a great deal of regret that I laid aside my personal evangelism in local churches in 1993 to rely on the media. But the doctors had made it clear. I was to stop working 100 hour weeks following the heart attacks and surgery, especially with the stresses of a hundred air flights or more a year, with the handling of heavy luggage, frustration with not finding car-parking spots, and the ever present time deadlines for flights. But across the nation there are some four hundred country towns where I had preached as an evangelist.

A further aspect of my work as an evangelist was when I became part of an international team to join with a great evangelist. When Billy Graham first came to Australia in 1959 he had a tremendous impact upon Christian people in the community in general. His crusades were well attended everywhere he went.

The crowds in Sydney filled both the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Sydney Show Ground. In Melbourne the largest crowd that had ever gathered until that time gathered in the Melbourne Cricket Ground with 120,000 people present. They were allowed to not only pack every seat in the grandstands but also in the grass and far surpassed the previous highest attendance, which was during the 1956 Olympic games.

While Billy Graham was in Melbourne he had a special school for evangelists. I had seen this advertised some months earlier but I was only a Bible College student and didn't qualify. However, I wrote to the Head Office of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in America and requested that I be granted permission to attend the School of Evangelism. I explained that while I was not an evangelist at that time and was only in my third year of training, the fact was that one day I would be an evangelist. It was my ambition to preach the Gospel to many people in public buildings, open air rallies, on radio and may be even on television. I wanted to take advantage of what Mr. Graham would have to teach us. I was overjoyed when I received a letter indicating that I could attend. I

was the youngest by far and in that gathering were all the well-known identities in church leadership and evangelism in Victoria.

At the end of one of his lectures on evangelism I dared ask Mr. Graham a question. I explained that I was only a young man learning to be an evangelist and asked him what are the things about which I should be aware in my life as an evangelist. Billy looked on me kindly and replied, “There are three great dangers. The first is women. You should make sure your life is morally pure and never get engaged in any entanglements with women nor even give the impression that you are friendly with anybody else except your wife. The second great danger will be money. You should always be scrupulously honest in the way you handle money. God will enable a lot of money to pass through your hands, if you allow none of it to stick there. The third danger is pride. If you manage to avoid the first two dangers then you will probably fall into the trap of pride.” I have never forgotten Billy’s answer and I have always kept his warning clearly in my mind.

Twenty years later, Billy Graham again came to Australia, and this time when he came to Sydney, I was the newly appointed Superintendent of Wesley Mission. By this time the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association had already come to know of some of my evangelistic endeavours during the 1970’s and therefore I was invited earlier in the year to join with members of the team to give a lecture to 800 clergy in the Billy Graham School of Evangelism. Again I was among the youngest in the audience and to be lecturing these 800 New South Wales church leaders and evangelists on how to do their own work was a great responsibility and one that could easily have put me off side with so many who were more senior and experienced than I was.

The Sunday of the opening crusade meeting I held a morning service in the Lyceum Theatre with Billy Graham’s special soloist Evie Tornquist. She was a gorgeous blond with a marvellous singing voice and the Lyceum Theatre was packed with 1300 people present. I had asked Dr T W Wilson to speak, an associate evangelist of Billy’s and a man who had become my close friend back in 1959. More than 40 years later we were still exchanging letters and cards with each other. The Sunday afternoon that Billy spoke at the first crusade meeting proved to be a gorgeous day. The stands at Randwick Racecourse were packed and I had been given the privilege of saying the opening prayer which was heard not only by the 50,000 people present but which was part of the world wide radio broadcast and part of a television programme that would be screened to millions of people world wide. This was a great honour and I thoroughly enjoyed the exposure.

After that service I received the message that Mr. Graham would like to see me during the following week. That one meeting turned into three private meetings. Billy Graham asked if I would like to join their team as a special lecturer in the Schools for Evangelism. He had heard reports and had heard me personally and asked if I could come four times a year to wherever he was conducting a major programme anywhere in the world to give some lectures to others on evangelism.

This was a great honour and I was deeply moved. I wrote in my diary on the 18th of May "I have met privately with Billy three times. His friendship was warm and genuine. Every member of the team has been very encouraging. Billy has discussed with me his invitation to be a major lecturer in his Schools for Evangelism Church Growth and Nurture to each of his four major crusades around the world each year. This invitation deeply moved me. The generosity of the travel conditions will be very useful to Wesley Mission and thus should open the way to world contacts with Christian leaders. This is unquestionably a great opportunity and one I want to share with Beverley to the uttermost."

However I was not to accept his invitation in all the details. The work at Wesley Mission in those days was precariously balanced with a great deal of financial trouble. It really needed a consistent and steady hand and to be away four times each year would be too much. I wrote and thanked Mr Graham for his invitation and indicated that I would be honoured to once a year go to a major centre where he was conducting a crusade to give the lectures.

The first such invitation came in October the following year 1980 and it couldn't have come at a worse time.

Thanks to the help of Professor Alf Pollard I had the Mission's finances well structured and therefore to take a week away in America fitted in to the diary quite well. I travelled via San Francisco to San Jose. This is in the heart of Silicon Valley and I was to preach in a number of preliminary crusade meetings before Mr Graham arrived. On the day Billy Graham arrived I was having breakfast with about thirty members of the team. Billy came in to the room, greeted some old friends and went and sat at his place at the head table. After grace he looked up saw me in the distance and came over and asked me to come up to the head table where I was given a position between himself and Cliff Barrows. My first appointment as an associate evangelist was to speak in the San Quentin prison. Hundreds of prisoners sat there listening to the musicians that were with

the team. They were a couple of cowboys called the Agajanian Brothers and could play country music incredibly well. I didn't have a great impact on the prisoners of San Quentin although scores of them spoke to me afterwards with words of appreciation. I gave three lectures, in the large Bethel church of San Jose. There were 2000 ministers gathered there from around the United States to listen to my lectures on evangelism and those of other dignitaries that travelled with the Graham team. I made some very good friends there that have lasted until now. The most recent of these lecturing assignments was in 2005 with a School for Evangelism conducted in conjunction with a Festival of Faith conducted by Billy's son, Franklin Graham.

People who work with Billy Graham, and Billy himself, live a life under threat from crazy gun toting people who believe if they can shoot the evangelists they will get a lot of notoriety. On one trip I preached in one large church seating 2, 500 people to two packed services one after the other. I was met in the car park in Memphis and immediately told by some people to get out of my car and come with them immediately and someone would park the car for me. They whisked me into the back door of the church at a speed of knots that astounded me. I was taken up back stairways until I came into the church vestry. There were several armed guards in the foyer of the church and one outside the door of the vestry. I was told that the police had been notified that that morning an attempt would be made to shoot the preacher during the telecast service. I was the preacher! Only one of the services was to be telecast but on this occasion they were going to telecast both services and I had been asked to prepare two different addresses one of which would be used on a subsequent week. It was not known when the attempt on the life of the preacher was to be made but it would be during one of the two services.

When the time for the service began I had prayer with the elders and the other ministers and walked onto the platform and sat in the pulpit while other people led the opening exercises of the service. There was a large orchestra accompanying the organ, piano and the magnificent choir of some 250 voices. The church was packed for both services. Sitting in the pulpit with me was an armed guard holding a firearm. Immediately in front of the pulpit facing the congregation was another armed guard. I preached the sermon surrounded as I was with such armed protection and at the end of my sermon was immediately ushered out through a back door of the pulpit and into the protected vestry. I was not allowed to meet people at the front door of the church or greet anybody. Obviously nothing happened that morning but it was an illustration of the queer events that surround us when we proclaim the gospel. Needless to say I was not shot at either service.

Another unusual thing that happened to me during the Billy Graham Crusade in San Jose had also to do with security. I was assigned a car driver and a security man. The security man was a senior police official from the San Jose County who had volunteered his time and like other members of the force were given security tasks of caring for various speakers. This meant that whenever I went on an official function I had to have a security guard travel with me. The other was the driver who drove a big American limo. I was not allowed to walk to the crusade entrance or to go in through any of the gates, I had to be driven and we were taken in by a different entrance which was a high security entrance and driven to the back part of the platform from which we spoke. I obviously understood how Dr Graham had to live in this tight web of security but I didn't understand why one of his associates or helpers should have to also have that high degree of security. But unfortunately the number of people in America who are crazy enough to make an attempt on the life of such a person in such a public place is sufficiently large to warrant such security. I became close friends with my senior police security and also with my driver.

One day when I was travelling in the limo with my driver I said to him "Now I know you are a volunteer doing this service but it is obvious you are not a taxi driver. What were you doing before you started doing this work of driving as a volunteer for the Billy Graham Association?" He looked at me and said, "I was in prison". "Why were you in prison?" I asked, and he replied, "Because I had failed in my Christian duty. Because I became swelled up with pride. Because I forgot the Ten Commandments. And because I was guilty of a serious crime."

Later that night we had coffee together and he filled me in on the details. He was the son of a judge in an affluent New England State. He had a privileged life and it was expected he would go into law. He went to Harvard Law School and graduated with the highest possible honours. He was immediately made an associate of one of the most distinguished judges in his home state. He had a career path clearly set before him and it would be possible that he could have become a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. He was intelligent, extremely dedicated to the law and highly competent. He married a very fine woman from one of the best and well connected families in New England. In law or politics his future was guaranteed. He had a large home, horses, a farm, and a beachside house. He used to invite people there for holidays and it was there he found some of his guests involved in taking cocaine. After a period of time he succumbed to the temptation to try cocaine and began to sniff cocaine himself. Then some of his friends had difficulties in getting quantities of cocaine. They needed large sums of money to buy the cocaine in the purity and quantity that they needed. Within a matter of a year or so he had financed several very large

importations of cocaine from South America. That returned enormous amounts of money to him and he enjoyed the benefits of being so wealthy.

Of course eventually, he got caught. He and learned lawyers connected with his father put up a spirited defence but he was a convicted felon, convicted on the grounds of importing and distributing prohibited drugs. He went to prison. It was while he was in prison he was converted through watching a Billy Graham televised Crusade. Other Christians within the prison helped him grow in his faith. At the end of his prison sentence upon release, the Billy Graham organisation accepted him as a volunteer and gave him the task of driving me around during the San Jose crusade.

I kept in contact with him over the years that followed and eventually rejoiced when for the first time in history the bar association in his state accepted him back into practise as a lawyer, even though he was a former convicted felon.

That story had an interesting sequel. About six months later, I was preaching in a large Anglican church in Sydney when I met an intelligent and competent man who told me he drove taxis for a living. I told him that having listened to him speak to me during our discussion that he had an education and a background that didn't fit in with his occupation as a taxi driver. He told me he was a lawyer but had been disbarred. I told him about my friend in San Jose and within a week or two had offered him a job. It was my privilege some years later to help support an application for him to be re-admitted to the bar. God's grace is seen constantly in the changed lives of people who give themselves to Him in total commitment.

On the Sunday morning of the San Jose crusade I was invited to speak at the Crystal Cathedral with Dr Robert Schuller. I had met Dr Schuller several times before, the first being back in 1972 and then subsequently when I spoke on the platform with him at some Church Growth and Evangelism workshops in Australia. Dr Schuller very generously invited me to share his platform. His interview guests that day were Bonnie and Jack Wraith. They were millionaire film producers from Hollywood. Gathered with us was Roger Williams the pianist. Bonnie Wraith was the producer of all of the "Lassie" films and Jack Wraith had produced the series "The Lone Ranger" and many other television specials. He was the man who had purchased the famous "Spruce Goose" the largest wooden plane ever to be flown by the eccentric multi millionaire Howard Hughes. Jack had also purchased the "Queen Mary", then the largest floating vessel in the world

and tied her up to a wharf near the Spruce Goose. Together they owned the Disneyland Hotel and had a million acre ranch in Western Australia about which they wanted to talk to me.

Schuller explained his current problem. Veterans day was coming up and he wanted to buy a 32-foot American flag. He was saying that financial pressures were so great that he wasn't able to afford the \$6000 price tag. I instantly recognised what Bob Schuller had in mind and opening my wallet took out a \$20 US note and put it down on his desk and said to Jack and Bonnie "Why don't we buy Schuller the flag together. I'll put a deposit on it and you can handle the instalments." Jack Wraith laughed and promised Schuller he would pay him the remaining \$5980 on the flag upon which I had placed the \$20 deposit. So together Schuller stated his need, two men used their resources and the problem was solved. Schuller has his flag and you will see it in every telecast each Veterans and Memorial Day from the Crystal Cathedral.

However things were not happy at home. When I had left to go to San Jose for the week, Beverley was very troubled about her sister Gwen. Gwen lived in Melbourne with her husband Jim. They didn't have children and were Uncle and Aunt to our children whom they loved dearly. Gwen had developed cancer in the pancreas and very quickly became weak. She was quite ill the day I left for the San Jose Crusade but in the first three or four days that I was away she went downhill quickly. Beverley spoke with her every few hours on the telephone but the disease rapidly advanced throughout her body. While Beverley was talking to Jim on the phone Gwen quietly died. Beverley immediately left Sydney and flew to Melbourne and my secretary, Fay Overton shifted into our home at Roseville to care for the four children. Gwen had been a wonderful sister and she and Beverley had been as close as two sisters could be. Gwen was a tremendous friend to us all, an ideal sister and a wonderful Aunt to the kids. I was so shocked to hear on ringing the family that she had passed away so quickly.

I rang Beverley in Melbourne and immediately made inquiries of Qantas to get the first flight back home. But there was no way in which I could get a plane back home in time for the funeral. I not only lost a day flying back across the International Dateline but the difference in time between America and Australia meant I couldn't have arrived in time for the funeral. It was a most unusual experience that night at the crusade in Spartan Stadium. I was sitting next to Mr Graham at his request. Cliff Barrows had announced that my wife's sister had just died in Melbourne and in the opening prayer Gwen's life and death were remembered. Billy Graham preached a powerful sermon that night to 25,000 people present. Some 980 came forward in commitment to Christ. But

the point that I will never forget was that while I was on the platform and Mr Graham was speaking in San Jose, Beverley and our loved ones were in Melbourne attending Gwen's funeral. My eyes were filled with tears as across the miles and across the ocean our hearts were united. Our faith had united our hearts. I wrote in my diary that night "It was a sad time. I was in tears often. Billy started speaking at 8pm which was 1pm Melbourne time the exact starting time of the funeral. I imagined the church, the people in it, the family and friends gathering and every moment that went past I imagined what was happening back home. I prayed and shared in the events half a world away. It was a queer experience to be on a Wednesday night 8pm in a stadium in California when in Australia it was Thursday afternoon 1pm and all of my loved ones were in a church mourning the death of my wife's sister."

I was to meet with Billy Graham on many other occasions in other crusades. It was also a privilege on his behalf to attend a number of Schools on Evangelism, Church Growth and Nurture and to lecture students at Wheaton College and on behalf of the BGEA to speak in great churches in Memphis and Fort Worth and Norfolk Virginia.

Mr Graham followed those lectures with an invitation to lecture in 1984 in Amsterdam to 10,000 evangelists who gathered there for the first International Conference on Evangelism. This was followed by another such conference in 1986 when another 10,000 evangelists from around the world gathered. On each occasion I was asked to speak on the theme of 'The Social Responsibility of the Evangelist'. It was a privilege to meet with leading evangelists from around the world and a network of friendships developed between these men and women who give their lives to proclaiming the gospel in every corner of the earth. I interviewed all of these great people for my radio and television programs back in Australia. However I never saw myself as an itinerant evangelist. I was the pastor to the people who met at Wesley Mission and the Superintendent of Wesley Mission exercising a ministry of social responsibility as well as preaching the gospel in a settled place.

My personal knowledge of over forty years is that in Billy Graham we have seen one of God's great preachers, one who has honestly and fearlessly proclaimed the gospel and fulfilled in the most honourable of ways the work of an evangelist. Now in frail health we still honour Billy Graham not only a great evangelist, but also a good man. Thirty years after starting to teach other evangelists, I am still doing the same with his son, Franklin.

Another aspect of my work as an evangelist has been seen every week in Wesley Theatre, on television and radio, which has changed people's lives. Letters and messages come to me every week telling me of the changes. A taxi driver who picked me up at mid-night outside 2GB told me that one Thursday night he was in despair. His marriage had broken up and his wife and children had left. In a small flat after work at 4am, he decided to blow his brains out with a shotgun. He loaded the gun, and took two cans of beer out of the fridge for a last drink. While he drank the cans he idly switched on the television, and by chance, it was my program that is repeated in the early hours of the morning. I was saying: "It does not matter how deep the hole is that you are in or how dark the outlook, if you ask God to tackle your problems together, you will overcome them." That is all he heard or remembered. But that was the voice of God speaking to him that night. He put away the gun. He went to sleep and has been strong ever since He asked God into his life to help him. God speaks through the evangelist.

Let me tell you about two special friends of mine. Jayk-e Zedras and his girlfriend, Samantha walked into the Sunday Night Live service in Wesley Theatre a few months ago. Samantha is extremely attractive and vivacious. She is a hairdresser with hair that only a hairdresser could hope for. Jayk-e is also a hairdresser, but most of his head is shaved except for an intricately shaped top piece. He has very broad shoulders, typical of a man who pumps iron. He has a barrel chest and I was not surprised to know he was a wrestler of some international note.

A couple of weeks later Samantha and Jayk-e were baptised. They have been part of one of our Bible study and prayer groups, and a new members class. At his baptism Jayk-e said, "I would like to thank everyone in this congregation for their prayers that have made me the man I am today. This is one of the greatest achievements of my life. Before I became a Christian and long before I met Samantha I was a sinful man, wicked and a very selfish individual. I took other people's lives for granted, treading on them for my own gratification. This carried on for most of my life however when I turned 21 it was all taken away from me just when I thought I had achieved in my own vision everything that I wanted which was success in night clubs, use of drugs. God swept my life away and I was basically left for an ambulance crew to salvage. I have been reconstructed from my hips down and it took seven years for me to recover from that fatality.

"I also took God for granted and by the time I had recovered I went back into the night clubs, took more illicit drugs and returned to abusing my body and the people around me. This pattern continued for many years.

However I have since learned that during this time the Lord knew what was in my heart, He knew that deep down inside I needed something else but in his own precious time He gave me my past life to learn from and use as wisdom today.

Much later in life God blessed me with Samantha my soul mate. She's my everything. I would not be here today if she did not pray for me. God knew that Samantha was the perfect partner for me that I would listen to a person such as her. She took me to see *The Passion of the Christ* movie. I can't explain to you what it's like to see someone not only suffering but being tortured for hours and that it was done for me and all of you.

Jesus did it to save us so that we might have a chance of eternal life. And through Samantha taking me to that movie we came to Wesley Mission and with no hesitation gave our lives back to Jesus and to God right there. Dr. Gordon Moyes blessed us, which is when we decided and realised Jesus is our saviour. He forgives no matter what you do in life; no matter how bad you are, and no matter how down you get in life.

I have also discovered that when you are down your salvation is actually up before you. Grab it when that little voice inside you, that many people call conscience, but which is the voice of God, speaks. You will be richly blessed as Samantha and I and our families and our friends have been.

Jayk-e has consistently witnessed to his faith to his old friends, and already several have now become Christians. That really is new beginning...new hope! Recently a meeting of the International Wrestling Federation was held in Sydney, and Jayk-e was invited to speak about how the amazing change in his life had occurred.

An evangelist is never off duty. Many a time the passenger in an aircraft has turned the chitchat into a discussion about salvation. Once I was driving to Newcastle. At 6.45 am, I was at Swansea. I saw a green garbage bag stuffed with garbage by the side of the road only a metre from my wheels. As I drove past I thought it must have fallen from a truck, but a casual glance revealed a legless bare pair of men's buttocks sticking out the open end of the garbage bag covered with human excreta and bloody fingermarks.

I could not believe what I had seen! I drove on, shaking my head in the early morning light. Then the conviction grew that that is exactly what I had seen. Then I turned the car and drove back. It was a pair of bare human buttocks, covered with excreta and bloody finger marks! They were stiff and cold. But there was no bulge in the garbage bag where a head should be! I thought I had found the remains of a dissected corpse. I carefully rolled the bag over to see if there were any legs. They were curled up inside the bag in a foetal position. The rest of the body then groaned and moved.

He was a 25-year-old man, severely battered about the face and covered with blood. He fell there after being pushed out of a moving car while drunk. During the night he crawled into a plastic garbage bag to get out of the rain. He curled up tight inside the bag and had pulled his trousers down to relieve himself. The blood on his buttocks was from his own fingers as he tried to pull up his trousers while he lay there. I pulled the garbage bag off and checked if he was all right. How he did not suffocate with his head curled underneath his arm in the end of the garbage bag I do not know. He immediately swore at me and threw a punch at my face.

He argued with me to leave him where he was. I helped him off the road into the bushes where he pulled the green garbage bag over his head again. I then drove on towards my speaking appointment at a businessmen's breakfast. I drove on relieved but not happy. So I drove back again, and found him where he had curled up again inside the garbage bag. I called to him to get out of the bag and helped him up. He threw another punch at me and said "You're the second person to wake me up!" I pushed him over to my car to take him to hospital.

I took him with me to the Apollo Motor Inn where I was met by a surprised waiting crowd. In the gents' toilet I helped him clean up, dropping his soiled underwear into a bin and having to dry him off under an electric hand dryer! I took him upstairs and introduced him to some of the men as my friend John. He had cups of black coffee to sober him. Some of the businessmen surrounded him with interest and support.

As I was talking later about how society does not really see the homeless, he interrupted to tell his story. He was homeless. He was terminated as a ladder maker and had gone to find a cheap caravan to live in near Newcastle in the hope of finding work. He had a wife and six year old daughter somewhere in Sydney.

They had been separated since he lost his job. He had been drinking with friends until a fight developed and they dumped him bleeding by the side of the road. He sheltered from the freezing rain in the garbage bag. I had called him out of the garbage bag, which had almost become his tomb. In fact, he was almost as good as dead. Unless his life changed, he was headed straight back into the tomb be it in a caravan or a plastic garbage bag. Unless he turned to Christ, he was dead!

Only Christ could give him life! The Christian businessmen determined to continue to help him, until in a clear mind they could present the claims of Christ. Only Christ gives to the alcoholic and the homeless and the city a life that is meaningful and eternal.

As I presented a Gospel message to the crowd that morning in the Apollo Motor Inn, he shouted out as mentioned to me to let him tell his story. That was a big risk, but I did. He told most of what I have just told you. When he finished, the Belair Baptist Church minister said he could stay in some temporary church accommodation until things worked out, and a businessman present said he owned an aluminium extrusion factory, and he would give him a job. Jesus Christ still saves lives in a permanent and wonderful way. The work of an evangelist is full of wonderful experiences.