

YOUTH II
STUDENTS'
BOOK



PEOPLE ON THE GO

REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. MELBOURNE
FOR TRANSMISSION BY POST AS A PERIODICAL

THIS BOOK is one of the resources in the Christian Life Curriculum for use in Methodist, Presbyterian, Churches of Christ and Congregational Churches in Australia and New Zealand and the Anglican Church in New Zealand.

PREPARED AND PUBLISHED by the Joint Board of Christian Education of Australia and New Zealand, 147 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000, Australia.

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PRINTED by Ramsay, Ware Publishing Pty. Ltd.



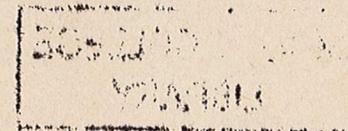
YOUTH II STUDENTS' BOOK
YEAR 1, TERM 1
CHRISTIAN LIFE CURRICULUM



PEOPLE ON THE GO

Patricia M. Baker

Lively, alert, responsible, dynamic — people on the go! All these terms describe Christians as they ought to be. Twentieth-century Christians are faced with many challenges: to express the gospel in understandable terms; to make Christ known in the world; to discover ways of working together with other Christians. This book, and the class sessions in which it is used, will help you to think about these important issues and to prepare for action.



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Unit 1

SPEAKING WITHOUT WORDS



40

we are surrounded by symbols . . .

Can you find these in your church?

One place where we can find symbols is the church. On this and the next two pages are diagrams of symbols that are found in some churches. The Bible references and other notes will help you to understand why they are (or have been) important to Christians. Use the space beside each one to write an explanation of its meaning.



Mark 15:25; 16:2-6.



The Greek word for "Jesus" was IHSOUS.



2 Corinthians 13:14.



In Greek "ch" is X and "r" is P.



John 1:29; Revelation 5:6, 11-13.

Latin "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum" =
"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

John 19:19.



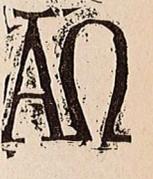
2 Corinthians 13:14.



Mark 1:10.



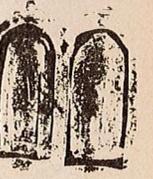
First and last letters of the Greek alphabet.
Revelation 22:13.



John 19:19.



Exodus 31:18.





Luke 22:14-23.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



Add any other symbols you have found in your church . . .

Some of these symbols are very old. All have been helpful to some people at some stage of the church's history. Which of them (if any) do you think are still valuable today?



*Hugo van der Goes
(d.1482)
(Flemish)*

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS
*(from the Portinari Altar-piece) - Uffizi
Gallery, Florence.*

How useful is a symbol whose meaning has to be explained? Has a picture like this any value for modern viewers?

When you have thought about these questions, turn the page for some examples of symbols which speak of life and Christian faith in the modern world. Do they reach you?

*Out of life situations . . .
out of world conflict . . .
out of ancient cultures . . .*

... come **SYMBOLS FOR TODAY**



A vast industrial complex dominates the northern approach to Whyalla, South Australia, where most of the work force is involved in ship-building and steel making. The symbol pictured here is used by one of the Whyalla churches.

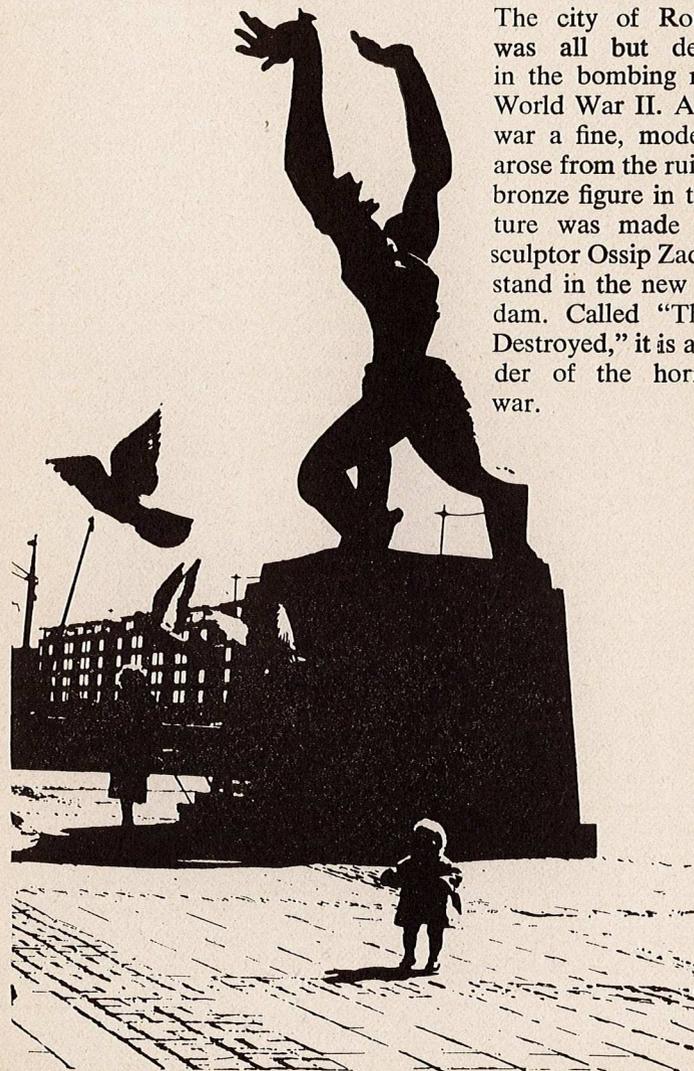
OUT OF LIFE SITUATIONS . . .

A bore casing forms the base of the baptismal font in the John Flynn Memorial Church at Alice Springs, Central Australia. As the underground water means life to the dry inland, so Baptism signifies the beginning of Christian life within the fellowship of the church.



Out of world conflict

The city of Rotterdam was all but destroyed in the bombing raids of World War II. After the war a fine, modern city arose from the ruins. The bronze figure in this picture was made by the sculptor Ossip Zadkine to stand in the new Rotterdam. Called "The City Destroyed," it is a reminder of the horrors of war.

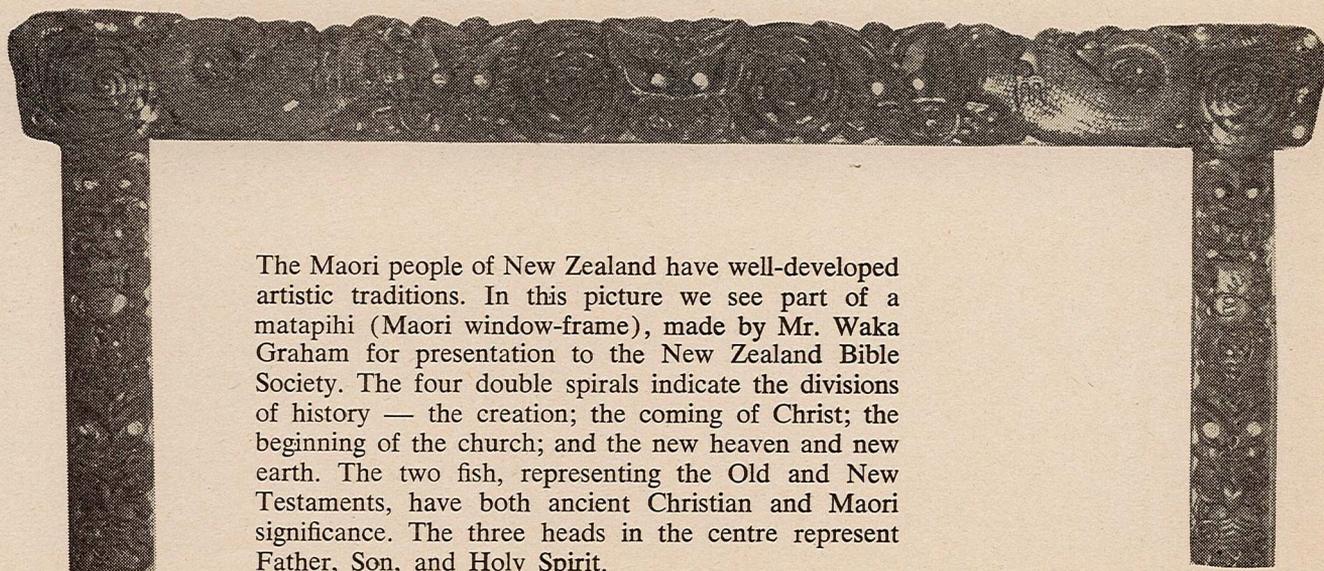


OUT OF ANCIENT CULTURES . . .

THE INCARNATION *a bark painting by Malangi, Milingimbi Methodist Mission, Arnhem Land, North Australia.*

In the artistic style of his forefathers, this aboriginal painter depicts the Christmas story. We see the Holy Family under a wild fruit tree, near the sacred water-hole (cross-hatched border at bottom). As well as shepherds (at right), many of the animals of the area have come. The heads represent the angels singing in the heavens. The large white circle is the bright light seen by the shepherds, and at the top is the star which the wise men followed. The cross, knife, and crown of thorns hanging over the head of the baby foretell his future suffering.

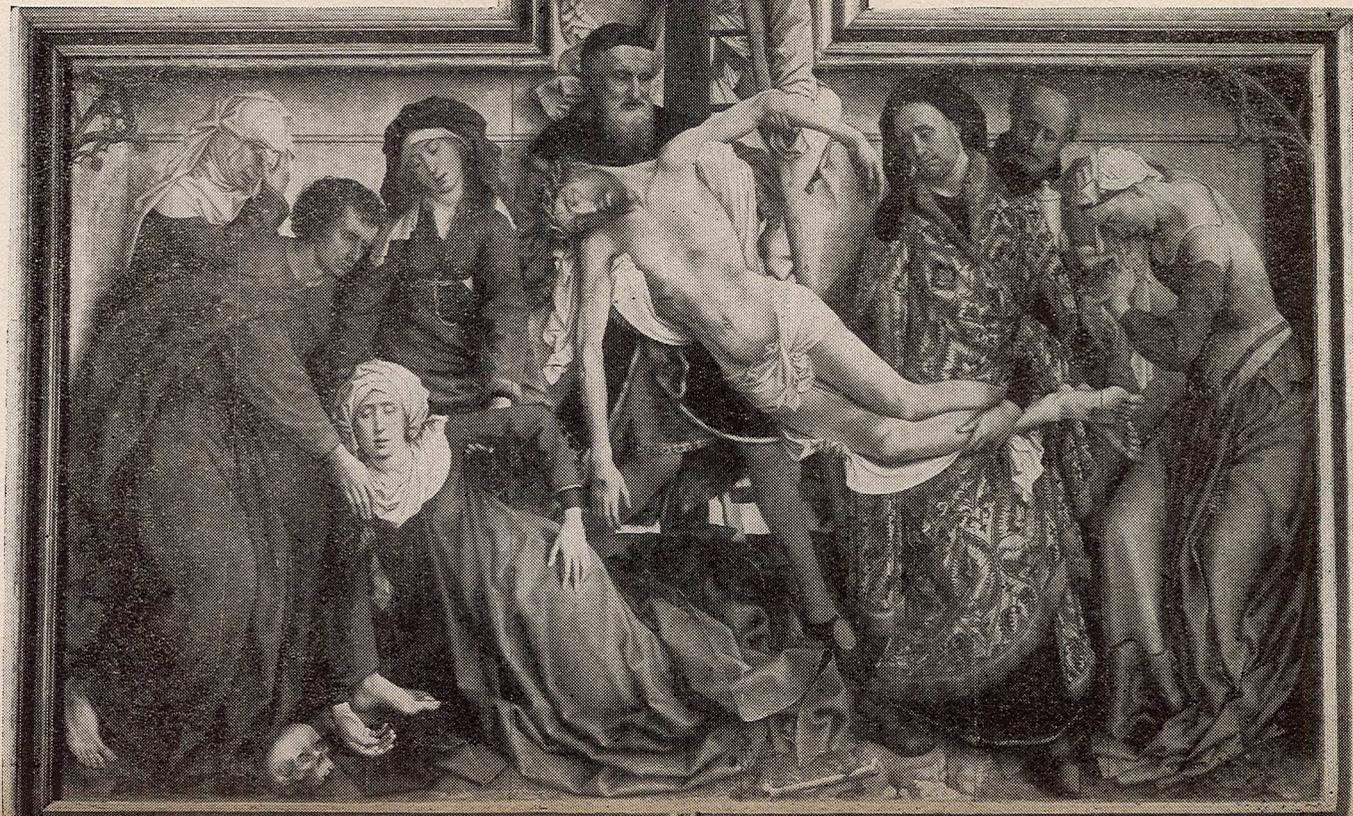
*Reprint of Christmas
card available from
Australian Methodist
Overseas Missions.
Used by permission.*



The Maori people of New Zealand have well-developed artistic traditions. In this picture we see part of a matapihi (Maori window-frame), made by Mr. Waka Graham for presentation to the New Zealand Bible Society. The four double spirals indicate the divisions of history — the creation; the coming of Christ; the beginning of the church; and the new heaven and new earth. The two fish, representing the Old and New Testaments, have both ancient Christian and Maori significance. The three heads in the centre represent Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

Rogier van der Weyden
(c.1400-1464) (Flemish)
Prado, Madrid



The Cross in the Purpose of God

What do you see in these pictures?
What do they say about Christ?
About his death on the cross?

What the Bible has to say:

Mark 8:27-31

What is happening here?
Why does Jesus ask these questions?
Why does he follow them up with teaching about his suffering?
What does this passage tell us about the cross?

Romans 5:6-11

Express the main thrust of this passage in your own words.
What does it tell us about the cross?

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

What are the main ideas of this passage?
What does it tell us about the cross?

Salvador Dali (1904-) (Spanish)
CHRIST OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS
Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum





FORMS OF THE CROSS

Of all Christian symbols, the cross is the most widely known and used.

You are probably most familiar with what is known as the Latin Cross. This is plain, with a long upright and shorter crossbar. It is an empty cross, pointing to the fact that Christ is risen.



When the Latin Cross stands on three steps it is called the Calvary, or Graded Cross. Some people see a significance in the steps, which they say represent the faith, hope, and love of 1 Corinthians 13:13.



Found in most Roman Catholic churches, and some Protestant ones, the crucifix is a reminder of Christ's suffering and death. Instead of an empty cross, we see a cross which still bears the body of Jesus.



Another well-known form is the Celtic Cross, which has a circle around the middle. The Celts had been sun worshippers, and when they were converted to Christianity they "crossed" the round disc of the sun. A circle also signifies eternity, and for this reason the Celtic Cross is often used on tombstones as a sign of belief in eternal life.



The early Christians sometimes used a form known as the Tau Cross (because it is shaped like the Greek letter T, or *tau*). This was used as a secret sign in days when it was dangerous to be known as a Christian: it was not so likely to be recognised by unbelievers.



The Greek Cross has four arms of equal length. The most familiar use of this cross today is as the badge of the Red Cross Society. It has also been much used in Christian art. A combination of five Greek crosses is the symbol of the five wounds of Christ.



The St. Andrew's Cross, the national cross of Scotland, came into use during the Middle Ages. According to tradition, the apostle Andrew died on a cross like this.



The Maltese Cross is sometimes used in church decoration, particularly on pulpit or lectern hangings. It has eight points, which are sometimes taken to represent the beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10). This form of the cross became familiar during the two world wars as German aircraft insignia.



A cross with pointed ends is known as the cross of Suffering. This is sometimes pictured rising out of a chalice (cup), and then symbolises Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane when he prayed "Let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39).



Some beautiful and intricate forms of the cross are used in church decoration. One of these is the Cross Patonce. Whether this kind of cross really helps Christians to remember the self-giving of Christ is open to question.

Do you collect stamps?

You could build up a very interesting thematic collection (i.e., a collection on a particular theme) by concentrating on stamps which feature symbols, or some particular symbol like the cross.



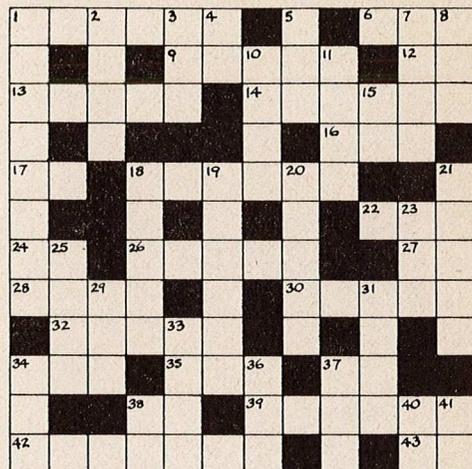
Try this some time

ACROSS

1. Stands for something greater than itself.
6. Age.
9. Symbols of the suffering of Jesus.
12. Short for a surgical or military action.
13. This bird is sometimes a symbol on the lectern.
14. Take heed.
16. A symbol of the church.
17. Greeting.
18. Symbol mentioned in Hebrews 6:19.
22. Symbol of hearing.
24. Seen on French stamps.
26. Symbolized by dove and olive branch.
27. Two-thirds of row.
28. Involved in Pilate's symbolic action.
30. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were symbolic
32. A dirty mark, hard to remove.
34. Symbolic letters often seen in churches.
35. Australian state.
37. Hesitant sound.
38. Alternative.
39. Pictured symbolically as winged beings.
42. Symbolized by something in threes.
43. Symbol of Luke the evangelist.

DOWN

1. Jesus is sometimes pictured symbolically as the Good
2. They brought symbolic gifts.
3. God is, yet three-in-.....
4. Singing sound.
5. An international organization concerned with labour.
7. Symbol of stability.
8. Symbolizes sin (monkey business, perhaps?).
10. One twelfth of a foot.
11. A Christmas symbol, when it has five points.
15. Half of pair.
- 18 & 20. Jesus the first and last (Greek to you?).
19. Symbol of captivity.
20. See 18.
21. Most familiar Christian symbol.
23. Often uses symbols.
25. Symbol used for identification by early Christians.
29. Short holy man.
31. A symbol of the Holy Spirit.
33. Stands for Latin: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."
34. Familiar name for "In Melbourne Tonight." (No problem for bright N.Z.ers).
36. Jesus said: "I am the, the truth and the life."
37. Easter symbol of new beginnings.
38. Upon.
40. Behold.
41. Sounds like an English county.



Solution on page 48

PRAYERS AT THE CROSS

Almighty God,
We stood before His cross,
The Cross of Christ.

We stood with downcast eyes, for we were ashamed.
We stood not looking, for we did not want to see His suffering.
And it was dark.

Almighty God,
We stood before His cross,
The Cross of Christ.

Humbly,
slowly,
we lifted our eyes,
we dared to look.

We saw His love,
with uplifted faces
we saw His love.

And it was light.

Almighty God,
We stood before His cross,
The Cross of Christ.

His suffering spoke love to us,
He reached us,
we knew that there was no separation,
we knew ourselves accepted.
And we knew love.

Almighty God,
We stood before His cross,
The Cross of Christ.

We knew ourselves accepted,
undeserved,
unearned,
but we were accepted
and we entered a strange new freedom
and felt the call of strange new demands.
And we knew life.

Almighty God,
We have known shame before the Cross,
Grant us to know shame before the suffering of mankind.
That we who have seen the hurt of Christ,
May see the hurts of mankind.
That the injustices of Calvary may make us sensitive to injustice
on earth.

Almighty God,
We have seen His love —
the love of Christ.
His suffering love spoke to us,
and we were accepted.
And we did not know why it should be us
for within His love is written the names of all mankind.

We remember others
who have left home
and live in other lands;
who have suffered
and carried others' hurts;
who have gone over to others
and stood where they stood
and lived where they lived
and accepted them
and humbly served them

and in remembering them
we see the pattern of the Cross repeated,
His hurt shared.

O God,
who by the resurrection of Thy Son Jesus Christ,
binds the Cross to us,
give us grace to die to self,
that, hearing the call of strange new demands,
we may give ourselves in obedience,
and make sacrifices for others. Amen.

The Missionary Review, March-April, 1967. Sydney: Board of Missions of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 1967.

Unit 2

MISSION TO THE WORLD



Mission to the world?

Oh, sure — you mean like “Mission Impossible”?

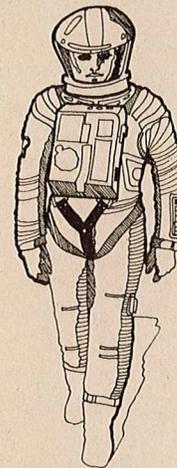
I read in the paper the other day about the government sending a “Trade Mission” to Japan.

That old church in the middle of the city is called a “mission.”

All these rockets and stuff they send into space — they talk about “missions” then, don't they?

A man came to our front door last Sunday asking for money for “missions.”

So?



What do YOU mean by mission?

Right from the time when Jesus said, “Go . . . and make disciples of all nations,” Christians have been conscious of having a **mission** to fulfil. They may not always call it by that name, but the basic idea is the same: that God has given them a special job to do. That job is to spread the gospel — the good news — of Jesus Christ. Over the centuries, Christians have approached this basic task in different ways

THE EARLY DAYS

To begin with, the frightened little group of men who had been the close friends of Jesus received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Inspired, they proclaimed the risen Christ to all who would listen. Soon they were

SCATTERED

far afield by persecution. Wherever they went they took the good news of Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament we read about Paul and his companions on their missionary

JOURNEYS 

But this is only part of the story, for there were many others whose names are forgotten . . .

. . . "Many of the earliest Christians seem to have been traders, slaves, or soldiers. As they travelled, of necessity, or on their own concerns, they carried the word with them; where they went, a community came into being. . . . the first movement of Christian expansion was due in the main to the dynamic quality of the whole community, and not to the work of a small number of outstanding individuals."

TRADERS
SLAVES
SOLDIERS

Stephen Neill, *The Christian Society*. London: Collins (Fontana), 1964, pp. 38-39.

THE MIDDLE AGES —

THE CHURCH AS THE CENTRE OF SOCIETY

There was persecution for about three hundred years, on and off, before the church came into a position of security and privilege under the Emperor Constantine. Now the church that had struggled for existence began to gain wealth and power.

By the Middle Ages, the church had become the centre of society. It seemed to see its mission in the regulation and control of the life of man from the cradle to the grave. Stephen Neill, writing

about western Europe, says of the ordinary man of this time: "Of one thing he was well aware — that the Church was an institution of immense power, holding him in its hands both in life and in death. It had been reckoned that by the end of the Middle Ages one third of the whole land surface was in possession of the Church. The ordinary round of daily life was determined by the Church's year. The only relief from endless toil was in the recurrent holy days, which meant also holidays, strictly enforced as days on which no work might be done, sometimes to the irritation of the farmer, more concerned with getting in his hay than with the strict observance of the Church's law. To the criminal, or to the falsely accused, the Church, with its places and rights of sanctuary, so sacred that only in rare cases did lay lords dare to violate them, offered a hope of protection and security. Such was the power of the ecclesiastical arm that the villager might see his own lord put to a painful and humiliating penance in church before the eyes of the congregation. Even kings like Henry II of England, or nobles like Raymond of Provence, could not claim exemption from what the Church saw fit to impose."

Stephen Neill, *The Christian Society*. London: Collins (Fontana), 1964, p. 120.

THE CHURCH
WAS AN INSTITUTION OF
IMMENSE
POWER

THE MIDDLE AGES—

SWORD AND CLOISTER

There were other approaches to mission during this period. The conversion of the heathen had high priority, and the methods used were often violent. In a letter to Pope Leo III, the Emperor Charlemagne said: “. . . it is our part to defend the holy church of Christ from the attacks of pagans and infidels from without, and within to *enforce the acceptance of the catholic faith.*”

**BE BAPTISED
OR
ELSE**



When Charlemagne decided to convert the Saxons of Northern Germany to Christianity, he used such cruel methods that he would have no representatives of the church to accompany his armies. They were called in afterwards to baptize those who had survived his onslaught. He even went so far as to decree the death penalty for anyone who hid to escape Baptism.

WORK OUT ONE'S OWN



Answer:

The monasteries served a variety of functions during the Middle Ages. In some places they were the outposts of Christianity, the strategic centres from which the gospel message could be carried to the surrounding areas. In other places they were retreats from the world: quiet centres of devotion where one could work out one's own salvation. Often they were centres of commerce, and of art and learning.

Thus the church of the Middle Ages saw its mission in a variety of ways.

Reformation and counter-reformation

The sixteenth century reformers took yet another view of mission. The church had become corrupt in some ways, because

the BIBLE had been forgotten.

The reformers' mission was to restore the church to biblical faith and to call all men to repentance.

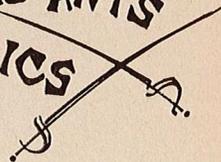
In the Roman Catholic Church there was a reform movement which has become known as the Counter-Reformation. It came partly as a reaction to the Protestant Reformation, and partly because many Catholics saw the need for renewal. There was a determined effort to remove the faults which had led to the Reformation. Doctrine was defined more clearly, and new rules set out for the training of priests. At the same time there was a

**GREAT UPSURGE
IN THE LIFE OF
THE CHURCH**

The mission was to win people back to the Catholic faith.

Both Catholics and Protestants at times resorted to force in their efforts to win converts from the other side, or to discourage people from joining the opposition.

**PROTESTANTS
CATHOLICS**



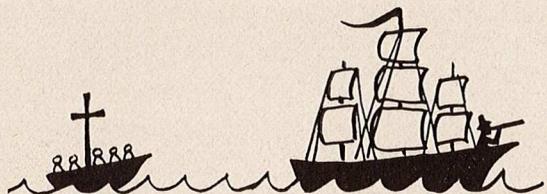
..the Indians have no religion and would readily become Christians, as they have a good understanding.

Yours

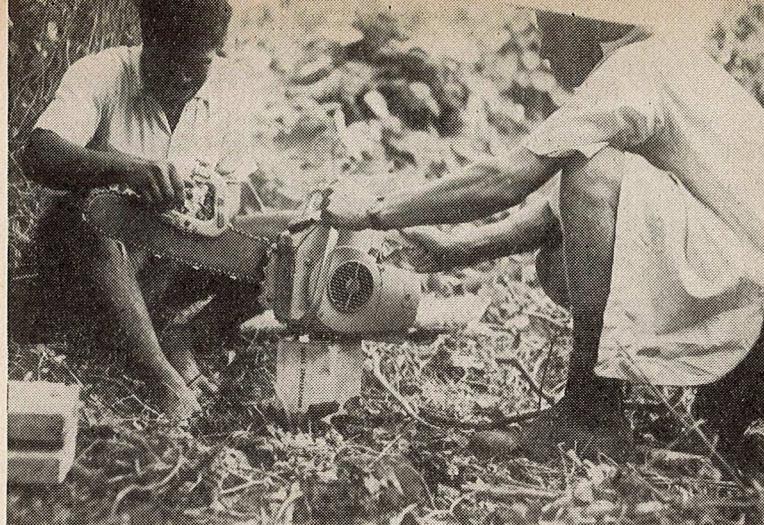
C. Columbus

Into all the world

At the turn of the sixteenth century, men saw open before them the way into great new lands where the church had never been before. From the first, the Roman Catholic explorers and the rulers who backed them were conscious of a mission to spread the faith in newly discovered lands. First the Franciscans and later other Orders, particularly the Jesuits, became missionaries throughout the expanding world.



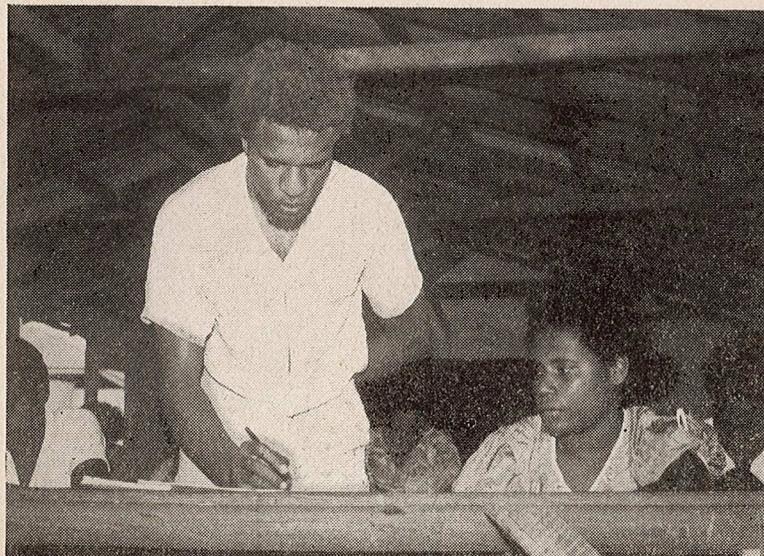
By and large it was not until the eighteenth century that the Protestant churches awoke to the challenge of the distant lands being opened up by governments and trading companies. One of the great pioneers of Protestant missions was William Carey, an English Baptist, who took his stand on the principle that the kingdom of Christ is to be established in the world, but that it cannot be established without the preaching of the Word of God to every nation.



MORE THAN WORDS

Missionaries soon found that there was much more to be done than simply preaching the gospel. In many places there were great needs in the fields of education, medicine, and agriculture, and through sending people to meet these needs the church was able to demonstrate Christ's concern for the total life of man.

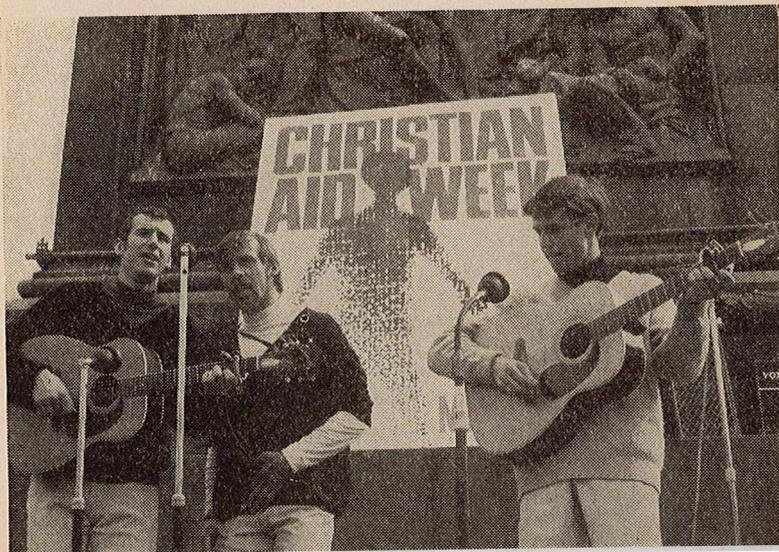
Great changes have taken place in missionary thinking in recent years. It is no longer a case of "us" taking "them" the gospel, together with the benefits of western civilisation. It is a matter of sharing, of coming together and taking mutual responsibility for each other. The churches in developing countries still need help from outside, but increasingly this is seen in terms of technical assistance, training opportunities, and general encouragement.





MISSION TO THE WORLD

The church today is looking at "mission" in a new way. There is a growing awareness of being the "body of Christ" in the world. This means living the life of Christ in the world today, showing his love and compassion to all people, sharing his suffering and their's. The emphasis is on serving and "being there for others." This is being worked out in many different ways — you can read about some of them in the News Sheet which goes with this unit.



Presenting

"MISSION TO THE WORLD"

Share with the whole congregation your insights and concern about the mission of the church. Invite everyone to a "Mission to the World" programme at the end of the unit.

How? When? What? You have a million questions.

Let's look at a sample programme . . .

Scene: The church hall. As people arrive they are greeted by one of the class members. She receives their admission money (a poster pinned to the table explains what missionary cause will be helped by the night's proceeds) and hands out duplicated programme sheets. The walls are lined with posters, charts, and maps. Some people are looking at these, others are taking their seats.

Action: The compere enters. The programme is under way. The compere welcomes everyone, reads Matthew 28:16-20, and says: "Tonight we are going to see how the church has responded to this call to mission." These items follow, linked by explanations here and there, and by recorded music:

- * A T.V. interview in which a first-century Christian trader, a farmer of the Middle Ages, and a sixteenth-century Jesuit missionary are asked what they believe is the mission of the church.
- * A film, borrowed from the denominational Mission Board.
- * Reports on other aspects of missionary work not covered by the film.
- * Another film, this time showing Inter-Church Aid in action.
- * A short drama — in a tense situation a Lifeline trouble team comes to the rescue.
- * An interview with a migrant family who have found friendship at the Church of All Nations.
- * A summary of other ways in which the church is meeting new challenges.

- * Worship — based on the question, “What is *our* mission — *here* — *now?*”

This kind of programme doesn't just happen: it is the result of careful planning and co-ordination. Lack of equipment or numbers may rule out some of the items in the sample programme. It's better to develop your own anyway, taking into account your particular situation and concerns.

Getting in the act

Suppose you do decide to have some kind of programme. What preparation is needed? Who's to do it?

Don't leave it all to your teacher or leader. Form a committee; then work your way through this list:

- * When and where will the presentation take place? (Arrange to book the hall.)
- * What will be the general form of the programme? Will you use films or filmstrips? Is there equipment to be borrowed? (Make someone responsible for ordering and otherwise arranging for what is needed.)
- * What about publicity? Who? When? How?
- * Will there be supper? Whose responsibility?
- * Who will be responsible for arranging the seating, decorations, etc.?
- * Will there be an admission charge or a collection? In aid of what? (Check with your minister or vicar to make sure that this is permissible.)
- * How will the details of the programme be worked out? (Much of the preparation can be done week by week in your class session, but some jobs are sure to take extra time, and someone will have to make decisions about the final form of the programme.)

Sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? It will pay off in terms of a deeper understanding of the mission of the church — for the class and for the whole congregation.

A Survey of Church Organizations

Make a survey of all the groups and organizations connected with your church. First, list them here —

Next, arrange for someone from your class to interview the leader or president of each organization. The following questions should be asked:

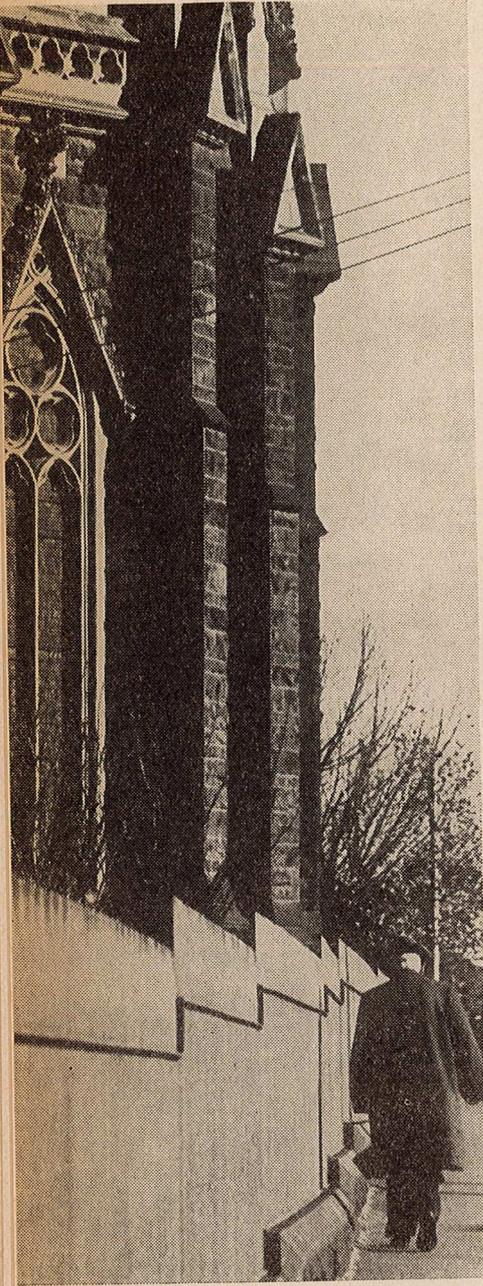
What is the aim or purpose of this organization?

What does it actually do?

Who can belong?

How many members does it have?

If you are one of the interviewers, use the rest of this page for recording your interview.



MISSION TO THE COMMUNITY

Some questions to think about . . . discuss . . .

use as a basis for research

What are the particular needs of the community in which you live? (Gather ideas and opinions from your parents, friends, school teachers, club leaders, local business people, local newspaper.)

Is the church, through its organizations, or through Christians active in the community, helping to meet these needs? Is this really what the church ought to be doing? Is it *all* the church ought to be doing?

Go back to Jesus' commission to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. What does this mean for us today?

Some passages for Bible study

John 17: 6-11, 18-19

Who is speaking?
For whom is he praying?
What does he mean when he says, "I am glorified in them" (verse 10)?

What did Jesus expect his disciples to do when he had gone?

What does this passage suggest about our life and witness today?

Matthew 25: 31-46

Who is speaking?
Why were the two groups of people surprised at the king's words (verses 37-39, 44)?

What did the king's answer mean?

Why did Jesus tell this parable?

What does it say to us today?

Prayers for Mission

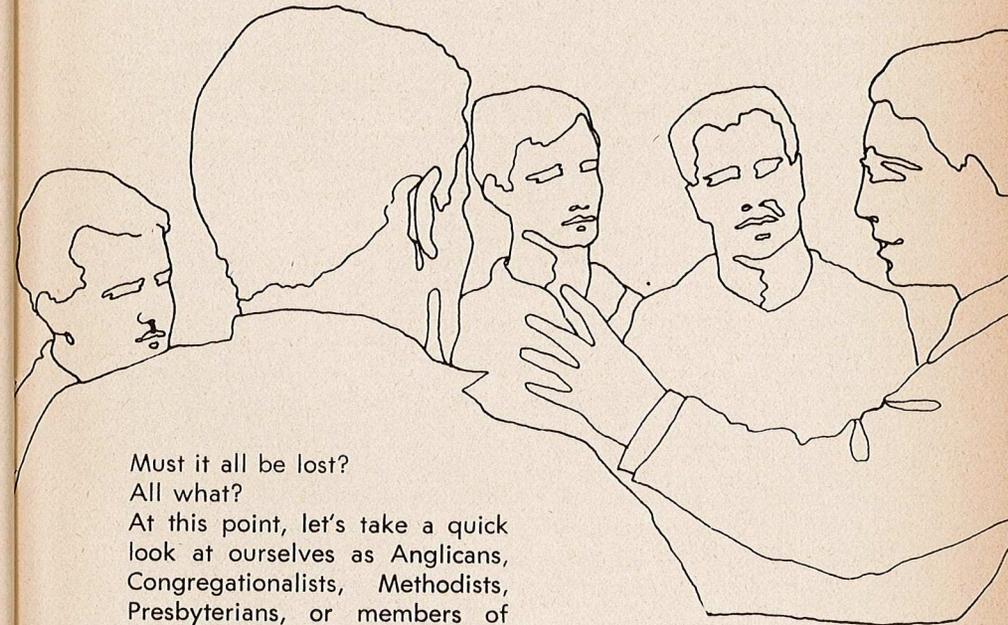
- 1 *Read Mark 16:15.*
Think about what these words must have meant for those who first heard them.
Now think about what they mean for young people today. Think about the "world" (or "worlds") that you know, e.g., the world of family relationships, student affairs, social and sporting activities . . .
Make a prayer (silent or written) asking God to help you to live in these familiar worlds as his representative.
- 2 Think of the missionary work of the church overseas, or in home and inland areas. List the things you have heard or read about for which you would like to thank God. Also list the special problems and points of concern for the church at mission in these areas. Make these lists the basis of your prayer.
- 3 Prepare a brief responsive act of worship relating to world need and the work of relief organizations. Use this framework, or devise one of your own:
First leader reads a news headline telling of human need somewhere in the world (from a newspaper, from literature you have been using in class, or one you have made up).
Second leader tells (or reads) briefly what is being done in this situation through Inter-Church Aid, Corso, or other relief organizations. End with these words: "Our neighbours are in need."
The class responds: "Lord, use the gifts you have given us to ease our neighbours' needs."
- 4 *Read Matthew 25:31-46.*
Hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, a prisoner . . .
Have you always recognised the Lord when he has come to you? Make a prayer of confession, asking God to forgive you for the times when you have *not* known him. Ask him, too, to open your eyes and ears and heart and mind so that you may be alive to his presence.
- 5 *Read Matthew 28:18-20*
In the light of your class discussion about the church's mission to the community, write a prayer of dedication.

Unit 3

TOWARDS CHRISTIAN UNITY

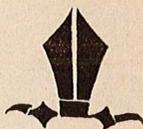
One of the major concerns of the church in the 20th century — and particularly in the years since World War II — is Christian unity. Almost all branches of the church share this concern to some degree. In Australia and New Zealand, negotiations are going on between various churches whose aim is not just unity (working together) but actual union (becoming one). In some other countries, Canada and South India for instance, such unions have already taken place. In many areas (more every year) we find "Combined Parishes" or "United Churches": local working unions of two or more denominations who have combined in order to work more effectively.

Some Christians hail these moves with delight. Others are more cautious. Some have serious misgivings — they fear that in any union more will be lost than gained. They point to their own denomination's particular heritage and historic emphasis. "This is of great value", they say. "Must it all be lost?"



Must it all be lost?
All what?
At this point, let's take a quick look at ourselves as Anglicans, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, or members of Churches of Christ . . .

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH



HISTORY

Christianity came to Britain in the days of the Roman occupation—probably in the first century A.D. Early in the seventh century the ancient British church amalgamated with the vigorous mission established by Saint Augustine. Until the sixteenth century the “Church of England” was naturally part of the Catholic Church of the west. It was during the reign of Henry VIII that the Reformation came to England.

A combination of political, national, and religious reasons caused the English church to break from the authority of Rome. Caught up in the tide of Protestantism, it restored the Bible to the centre of its life, and purified its worship and teaching, but still retained its Catholic creeds, sacraments, and three-fold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons. Most Anglicans today would regard their church as being Catholic but Reformed.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

The altar is central in Anglican churches, and the sacraments, especially the Holy Communion, are the focal points of the church’s life. The services follow fixed “liturgical” forms. The Bible plays a very important part in Anglican worship and teaching, for it is the church’s firm conviction that all that is necessary for salvation is to be found in the scriptures.

One thing that distinguishes the Anglican Church from most of the churches of the Reformation is its three-fold ministry. In fact, this has proved something of a stumbling-block to some other churches when they have come to talk of union. Non-episcopal churches (i.e., churches without bishops) find it difficult to understand the Anglican Church’s insistence on the importance of the historic episcopate (the handing down of authority over the centuries through a long line of bishops). Although the bishops are recognized as the apostolic leaders of the church, they govern in association with the priests and with elected laymen and women, in synods, councils, and committees.

There are very few rules for the laity. Each member of the church is expected to attend the services of worship and to receive Holy Communion regularly. Members are also expected to understand the principles of the gospel and the standards of Christian life, and to apply them intelligently and sincerely in obedience to Christ.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



HISTORY

The Presbyterian Church belongs to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. John Calvin in Geneva and John Knox in Scotland were among those who organized churches on the “presbyterian” system (that is, governed by “presbyters” or elders). In Europe this branch of the church is called “The Reformed Church,” but elsewhere it is “The Presbyterian Church.”

SPECIAL CONCERNS

The Presbyterian system of government comes from what Presbyterians believe about the church. They believe that God himself formed the church and still calls people into his church to carry on Christ’s work, to be “the body of Christ” in the world today. The church does not consist of perfect people, but of forgiven sinners who want to learn how to be better Christians. Thus the church stresses the need for sound teaching, for a life centred in worship and the sacraments, and for discipline and order, so that God’s people can be fitted for their work for God in the world. The distinctive feature of Presbyterian government is that it is government by a series of church courts or councils in which ministers and the representatives of the people—elders—share equally. The eldership is probably the most unique feature of the Presbyterian Church, for here laymen chosen by the congregation are given special responsibility, not only in government, but in care of the church at all levels.

There is great emphasis on preaching and teaching and sound doctrine. The Presbyterian Church accepts the great creeds and confessions of the church, especially the Westminster Confession of Faith, as correct interpretations of the doctrines of the faith; but the supreme standard is always the Word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

There is no fixed order for worship. The emphasis in worship is on God’s action in the revelation of himself in the Bible and in Jesus Christ—hence the importance of preaching and the sacraments. In these the gospel is made visible. God acts in Baptism in cleansing from sin and receiving the baptized person into his church; in the Lord’s Supper he acts in giving—in the bread and the wine—strengthening spiritual food. In worship there is emphasis also on man’s response to God’s action. For Presbyterians these two things always go together.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES



HISTORY

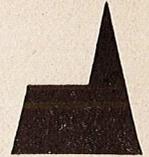
There were some who felt that the English Reformation did not go far enough. They spoke up for greater simplicity of life and worship. Some began to meet in groups for worship, rather than attending the parish churches. Robert Browne (1550-1633) wrote down their beliefs and so they were called Brownists or Separatists (because they separated themselves from the Church of England). In each locality, according to Browne, the church should be a "covenanted" fellowship, i.e., its members should agree in faith to live by God's Word in Jesus Christ. There were others who agreed with this teaching, but who did not want to separate from the Church of England. Eventually (in the reign of Charles II) Congregationalists were forced in conscience to become a separate denomination when it was decreed that the Prayer Book must be used in the Church of England. Prior to this, churches on the congregational pattern had been established in America, where many had gone seeking religious freedom.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

Congregationalists teach that the will of Jesus Christ as understood from scripture is the supreme authority in each church. People who willingly come together and agree ("covenant") in faith to live by God's Word in Jesus Christ and receive the sacraments are truly the church in that place. When such a company is met in "Church Meeting," with the minister and deacons (lay leaders) present, it has "the whole power of Christ" (see Matthew 18:20). Because of this belief the distinction between church and state is emphasized.

A simple confession of faith is asked of those joining local churches. Creeds are not imposed as tests of membership. In the early days there was much opposition to unnecessary ceremonies and set prayers. Today worship is orderly and simple in form. There is emphasis on preaching, the reading of the scriptures, and free prayer by the minister.

THE METHODIST CHURCH



HISTORY

The Methodist Church began as a separate denomination in England toward the end of the eighteenth century. At first it was a society within the Church of England, beginning with the ministry of John and Charles Wesley. John was convinced that there were some vital aspects of Christianity that were no longer being stressed by the Church of England, particularly the personal relationship of the believer with his Lord, the need for frequent Communion, and the preaching of the gospel to those outside the organized church (which was only for "respectable" people). Wesley devoted his life to preaching to these "unchurched" and to organizing converts into small groups ("classes") for Bible study, prayer, and guidance in Christian living, strengthening them to go out themselves to tell the good news to others.

Although Wesley did not want to break with the Church of England, the existence of Methodism as a separate denomination became inevitable when, faced with the refusal of Anglican bishops to ordain men for work in America, Wesley ordained his own preachers for the task.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

Along with acceptance of the traditional beliefs of Christianity as set down in the creeds, there is particular stress on the following:

- * God alone can save us. We depend for our place as God's children not on our good works but on his love.
- * His saving grace continues as the Holy Spirit helps us to do good and to grow more like Christ.
- * God's love is for everyone. Even those who refuse to accept it cannot put themselves beyond his care.
- * It is the privilege and responsibility of all who believe to tell others of God's love.

Methodism has always made considerable use of "local" preachers — laymen (or women) authorized by the church to conduct services.

Social consciousness has been another special emphasis of Methodism. Sometimes this has led the Methodist being regarded as a "wowsler" who disapproves of all man's little pleasures (such as drinking and gambling), but this is only one side of the coin. Along with opposition to those things which degrade is a deep concern for the health and dignity of man, expressed through the various caring agencies of the church.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST



HISTORY

Around the beginning of the nineteenth century there were many Christians who were unhappy about the state of the church. In both Britain and America there were various small groups which came independently to the same conclusion: that what was needed was not a reformation of this or that doctrine, but a restoration of the church of the New Testament. From this "Restoration Movement" came the Churches of Christ (sometimes called "Disciples of Christ").

This movement did not set out to form a new denomination; it was intended to be an association working within the churches. In September 1809 the Christian Association of Washington was formed to plead within the churches for the union of God's people upon the authority of the Word of God. Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian minister, presented his "Declaration and Address" at the meeting from which this Association was formed. Shortly afterwards, his son Alexander arrived in America, and father and son were delighted to find that they had come independently to similar conclusions. They set about preaching for a return to simple New Testament Christianity.

Because their views made it impossible for the churches of the day to feel sympathy, the members of the Christian Association formed a little church at Brush Run in 1811.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

Forms of worship in Churches of Christ have always been simple. Communion at the Lord's table is a weekly service and is presided over usually by elders or deacons or other church members whose abilities fit them for this task. Baptism is for those who believe, repent, and confess faith in Christ. Therefore it is observed only by those old enough to come themselves for Baptism.

As in the past, there is emphasis on the existing and essential unity of the church, and of the restoring of the scriptures as the sole authority for the church and her unity.

Churches of Christ recognise the authority of the local congregations, but these share in representative state and national conferences and in world conventions.

From the brief survey on pages 34 to 38 of this book, together with any other resource material available to you, find out as much as you can about your own denomination's reason for being. Look for and list the following information:

- when it began
- the people involved
- the particular circumstances or concerns which led to its formation
- how it became a separate denomination
- particular points of belief, emphasis, or practice.

Question for discussion:

As a result of its particular history and concerns, what special contribution can this denomination make to the whole church?

COMING TOGETHER

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

One of the greatest concerns in the church today is for unity. There have been times when the different denominations have been like unfriendly neighbours, ignoring each other, or even throwing stones at each other across the fence. Now the neighbours are talking to each other with genuine interest. In some places the fences are down altogether.

WHY THIS INTEREST IN UNITY?

There are a number of reasons for this breaking down of denominational barriers. The following are some of the most important—

EXPERIENCE ON THE MISSION FIELD

In the nineteenth century there was a renewed interest in missions, and since then thousands of Christians have gone to many parts of the world to proclaim the gospel. Often a number of different churches or missionary societies would go to work in one place, to the bewilderment of the people who lived there. What were they to make of these different groups, all trying to win converts, and all claiming that they possessed the “truth” about God?

MIGRATION

The movement towards unity was strongly influenced by the migration to America of millions of people from European countries. From Russia and Sweden they went, and from Greece, Norway, Poland, Germany, Britain, Ireland, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Spain, France, Czechoslovakia and Holland, and they took their churches with them. In the United States today there are more than 250 separate Protestant and Orthodox denominations. In many cases, the things which divided them in Europe seem of little importance in a country which has no “state” or established church. It is little wonder that many enthusiasts for Christian unity have come from among those who are dissatisfied with this situation.

WAR AND SUFFERING

In Europe, and especially in eastern Europe, in the years since the First World War, Christians have suffered some of the greatest persecution in the history of the church. When the whole of life is threatened many old ideas change. In prisons and concentration camps and before firing squads Christians found that the love of Christ which bound them together was more important than the denominational boundaries that separated them.



CHRISTIAN UNITY IN ACTION —

through ecumenical work camps, young Christians from many lands and many churches come together and build together. Sharing a common task, they come to know each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT GETS UNDER WAY

In 1910, 1400 delegates gathered in Edinburgh for the first World Missionary Conference. This meeting was devoted to discussion of the missionary task of the churches in the modern world, and other topics were not permitted on the agenda. Further conferences of this kind were held in 1928 and 1938.

There was some dissatisfaction that other topics could not be discussed, and this led to the first World Conference on Faith and Order, which was held at Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1927, and was concerned with the faith, worship, and government of the church. This conference was attended by delegates from 108 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox churches. A second Faith and Order Conference (Edinburgh, 1937) produced an “affirmation of union in allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Meanwhile, Christians had also been meeting together to consider common concern and action on matters like racial tension, economic justice, and international peace. The first Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work was held in Stockholm in 1925, and the second at Oxford in 1937. This second Life and Work Conference received the same resolution as the Faith and Order Conference in Edinburgh, calling for the two movements to find their way together in a permanent council of churches.

In 1938, representatives of the two movements met to plan the formation of a World Council of Churches. The founding assembly was to have been in 1941, but World War II intervened, and it was not until 1948 that the first Assembly could be held. This was at Amsterdam, when representatives came from 147 churches in 44 countries. Since then, Assemblies have been held at Evanston, U.S.A. (1954), New Delhi (1961), and Uppsala, Sweden (1968). Many more churches have become members, and in 1961 the International Missionary Council was integrated with the World Council of Churches.

The World Council of Churches has created opportunities for Christians to meet together to grow in understanding of each other and of the church's nature and work. Through the World Council, member churches have also combined to take action at points of urgent world need — for example, through Inter-Church Aid and through Ecumenical Youth Camps throughout the world.

THE SHIP



The symbol of the World Council of Churches was devised during World War II by a group of Christians in Germany. They sent it to the World Council of Churches as a sign of the solidarity that crosses all frontiers in obedience to Christ.

The symbol is based on the ancient Christian image of the church as a ship afloat on the sea of the world. In the middle is

a mast in the form of the cross. The symbol bears the word *oikoumene*. This is the New Testament term used to describe the whole inhabited universe. (Our word "ecumenical" comes from *oikoumene*). The circle surrounding the device represents the wholeness of the church's mission to the entire world.

The central idea of the symbol is the total mission of the whole church to the whole life of man and to the whole world. To be ecumenical is therefore to seek the unity Christ wills for his people, "that the world might believe."

CHRISTIAN UNITY IN THE BIBLE

Here are two Bible passages that talk about Christians being united and loving one another. Read them, and write in your answers to the questions.

John 17:20-26

Who is praying?

Whom is he praying for?

What is he praying for?

What is to be the result of Christians being one?

.....

Select what you think is the most important sentence and put it in your own words.

.....

.....

.....

1 John 4:7-11

Who is writing, and to whom?

Why ought Christians to love one another?

.....

If they don't, what does this show?

.....

Sum this passage up in one sentence.

.....

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.....

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ECUMENICAL QUIZ

Use the background article on pages 40 to 42 to help find the answers to these questions —

What does the word “ecumenical” mean?

.....

What are the main reasons for the church today being concerned about unity?

.....

.....

.....

Trace the main steps which led to the formation of the World Council of Churches. What happened in each of these years?

1910

1925

1927

1937

1938

1948

How does the World Council of Churches help to promote Christian unity?

.....

.....

What is the meaning of the World Council of Churches symbol?

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If you had to design a symbol for the church today, what would it be like?

For discussion:

What do you think are the real reasons why people are for or against Christian unity? How much are people influenced by these reasons? What is your own opinion about unity?

READ ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BIBLE PASSAGES and ask yourself this: “What does this passage say to me about the divisions in the church?” Write out your answer as a statement that could be used in worship.

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

Colossians 2: 8-10

Galatians 3: 26-28

.....

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Asking others

Conduct an opinion poll among the members of your congregation. Ask these questions and keep a record of the answers by marking a tick in the appropriate column each time.

	YES	NO	UNDECIDED
1. Do you believe that church union is possible between our church and other churches within the next ten years?			
2. Do you think a united church would make a more effective Christian witness to the world?			
3. Are you in favour of church union?			

Ask your church leaders about church union and united Christian action. Ask these questions and record the answers —

1. Do you believe that union is God's will for his church?

Why?

.....

2. If you do think that union is God's will for his church, how should we show our obedience to God's will?

.....

3. Do you think the churches in this town/suburb ought to be doing more together?

If so, what do you suggest?

.....

.....

PRAYERS FOR UNITY

Confession

Lord, we are not one, but many.

We have divided your church.

We have gone separate ways.

We have thought that our particular way is better than anyone else's.

When the special reasons for being apart have disappeared, still we have stayed apart.

We have been proud of our apartness.

Instead of working together in love, we have worked alone, or even in opposition to one another.

Forgive us, Lord, for our lack of faith in each other and in you. Help us to seek ways of unity, through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

Amen.

Thanksgiving Together (when you have studied or worked with members of another church)

Lord, we praise and thank you for the privilege of being together as members of your church;

for the opportunity of learning from one another;

for the challenge of studying your word together;

for the new vision of our mission and service to your world in our own day;

for the new understanding you have given us of what it means to be Christians;

and for the great joy of meeting you in one another and of knowing that you are at work in and through us and that you go before us.

Amen.

Petition

Lord, we know that we belong together; that all Christians ought to be united in mutual faith and love. Yet so many things seem to stand in the way of unity. Help us to face up to them and overcome them. Keep us from being satisfied with things as they are. As we study, and discuss, and work together, give us the courage to follow your leading. Help us to find ourselves in your service. Help us to find each other in you. Amen.

A Response to the Call to Unity (from the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, New Delhi, 1961)

We believe in Jesus Christ, Saviour of men and the light of the world;

Together we accept his command;

We commit ourselves anew to bear witness to him among men;

We offer ourselves to serve all men in love, that love which he alone imparts;

We accept afresh our calling to make visible our unity in him;

We pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit for our task.

SOLUTION TO THE CROSSWORD ON PAGE 16

Across: 1. Symbol 6. Era 9. Nails 12. Op 13. Eagle 14. Notice 16. Ark 17. Hi 18. Anchor 22. Ear 24. RF 26. Peace 27. Ro 28. Dish 30. Gifts 32. Stain 34. IHS 35. NSW 37. Err 38. Or 39. Angels 42. Trinity 43. Ox.

Down: 1. Shepherd 2. Magi 3. One 4. La 5. ILO 7. Rock 8. Ape 10. Inch 11. Star 15. Ir 18. Alpha 19. Chains 20. Omega 21. Cross 23. Art 25. Fish 29. Sts 31. Fire 33. INRI 34. IMT 36. Way 37. Egg 38. On 40. Lo 41. SX.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Art work and photographs: Cover design, Lyell Dolan; pp. 3, 19, 33, John Howell; 4, 5, 6, 14, 15, Rachel Tonkin; 7, Alinari; 8, Whyalla Central Methodist Mission; Australian Inland Mission; 9, Netherlands Information Service; 10, Methodist Overseas Mission; 11, New Zealand Bible Society; 12, Prado, Madrid; 13, Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum; 25, Australian Board of Presbyterian Missions; 26, Hamilton Aiken; World Council of Churches; 30, Terry Lane; 41, World Council of Churches.

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