



**Northside Parish**  
The Uniting Church  
in Australia

with churches at  
Shirley Rd & Nicholson St,  
Crows Nest  
6 Holtermann St Crows Nest

**Worship Services**

**Sunday**

9.00 am Holtermann Street  
10.30 am Shirley Road

**Last Thursday**

2.30 pm James Milson Home

**1st & 3rd Wednesday**

10.15 am Georgian House

**Groups**

**Every Sunday 7.30 pm**

1st & 2nd 19 Lithgow St  
3rd & 4th 1 Eastview St

(Linda McDonald/John Lee ... 438 2626  
Judith/Allan Watts ... 439 1861)

**Women's Fellowships**

2nd Wed 1.30 pm Shirley Road

(Margaret Sangster ... 439 2602)

4th Wed 10.00 am Georgian House

(Mavis Thornton ... 955 8540)

**Parish**

Office: 10 Holtermann St  
(PO Box 419 CROWS NEST 2065)  
Phones 439 6033, 439 6015

Minister: Rev Tom Plaizier  
11 Lamont St, Crows Nest  
Phone Office: 439 6015  
Residence: 436 4291

Administrator: Bruce Watters  
Office (Mon, Fri): 439 6033  
Residence: 955 7593

**Parish Elders Council**

Secretary: Margaret Sangster ...  
439 2602

**Parish Council**

Secretary: Erica Wyllie... 419 6170  
Treasurer: Allan Watts ... 439 1861

**Shirley Road Congregation**

Secretary: Margaret Sangster ...  
439 2602

**Holtermann Street  
Congregation**

Secretary: Bruce Watters ... 955 7593

*Northsider*

Items for Northsider may be left  
in the manse letter box.



**Colour us in!**



How come that these animals are in the boat?

Do the animals in the water  
like the animals in the boat?

Would you like to be there?

Why do you think that they are all so happy?

Does loving God make you happy  
and want to love animals?

**Warm Welcome to  
Leonie Hill**

We are fortunate to have Leonie Hill working for 6 hours weekly in our parish. Leonie's major area of work is in the Aged Care Complexes attached to Northside. Leonie will also fulfil a monthly preaching engagement to give a balance to her ministry. Leonie has established a ready rapport with staff and residents. Leonie has completed her training for ministry at UTC and is presently

awaiting Ordination. Whilst born in Harden Leonie however pursued her Teacher Training at Macquarie University (early childhood and primary) working with primary school children enjoying particularly retreat work with children. Pitt Street Uniting Church was the Parish Leonie candidated from. We offer Leonie our best wishes for a happy start in her ministry. Welcome, Leonie, may you continue to be aware of our support and God's continuing presence in your life and work.

**Shirley Road Pre-School**

Not all children saw the St. George Big Green Dragon as friendly when this unexpected visitor came to Shirley Road. However the few who were a little tardy soon were won over. Another successful event was a sheep shearing exhibition. The view from the kitchen window of the Manse is always enjoyable. Heidi, the Plaizier's dog, is a visitor to the Pre-School gate. Even the most scared child succumbs to her charms. All in all the children continue to enjoy a variety of happenings.



Local  
Council  
Elections •  
14th  
September:

There will be  
stalls at both Shirley Road and  
Waverton Hall.

Donations of cakes, jams, etc. will  
be appreciated (both Fellowships).

## Northsider Committee

Energetic conversation, planning and production has gone into 3 copies of *Northsider*. The following people were approached and have given a deal of time to writing and producing articles.

Geoff Caton, Jo Melville, Bev Plaizier. Please drop ideas or articles to the Manse or hand on to Rhonda Barker or myself. A weekly news-sheet will be produced and Barbara Eddy has undertaken to produce this. Items for this news-sheet should be about upcoming events and news of pertinence regarding parishioners. Barbara will be happy to receive these or they may be handed to Tom, Bruce



or myself. Many thanks to the contributors to *Northsider* and for those people offering help. Alan Clarke has offered help with proof reading. We are enjoying the task and have been happy with your responses, Please continue to offer support and ideas for both the *Northsider* and the weekly news-sheet that way we can keep well informed about local happenings and challenged in our own faith and outreach.

Bev Plaizier  
(Co-ordinator  
*Northsider* Committee)

*Remember:* Articles for weekly news-sheet to Barbara Eddy. Ideas and articles For *Northsider* to Bev Plaizier or Rhonda Barker by the 2nd Sunday of the even month (i.e. 11th August).

## Opening of Synod Service

2.30 pm 29th September  
Newington College

## World Conference on Religion and Peace

Early in February, Stella Cornelius, Convener of CRN, was invited to Melbourne as a keynote speaker for the World Conference on Religion and Peace. Appropriately, the theme of the conference was Understanding Neighbouring Faiths, Building Peace Among Religions in Australia and our Region.

From Stella's paper: "What is it like to be in their shoes?" Empathy grows as we listen - really listen - and "experience" the other side. (Here, of course, I am not talking about situations of immediate physical danger.)

Really listening is a very active art - that most of us still need to learn and practice. In the face of conflict, instead of choosing to react with anger and aggression, I am learning to listen. My anger and aggression won't get us any closer to long-term resolution - but my listening might be the start.

Each time someone tells me they are right and I am wrong, I listen and

learn. I learn about obstacles that stand in the way of peace. And I tell myself, "ah ha, well at least I can see that obstacle. Now let's get on with the job and see if we can't find a way around it." If I don't listen, it stays hidden, and the opportunity to move one step forward is lost

Will listening to opposing views put me "at risk"? At risk of what? Change? Life is constant change and discovery.

And listening to people whose beliefs are different to my own enriches my life, it does not endanger my faith. Rather, it deepens my understanding of creation in all its diversity. Listening is a privilege - it is also my hope for the future.

To quote Albert Einstein "Central to the advancement of human civilisation is the spirit of open enquiry. We must not only learn to tolerate our differences. We must welcome them as the richness and diversity which can lead to true intelligence."

*-Conflict Resolution Network newsletter*

## Bishop Spong's Tapes and Books

Bishop Spong's recent addresses in Sydney have engaged many people in lively debate. A number of Northside people were present to hear his challenging address at Pitt Street Uniting. Anyone interested in hearing his tapes or reading his books should talk to Tom or Bev Plaizier.

## Taldamunde

Taldamunde residents appreciate an occasional home cooked meal or cookies or cake. Stephen Brand who is a member of the board says whilst the stay may be short, young people are most excited when some special treat is shared.

## The Noisy Heart

A noise is any sound that you do not want or that comes between you and something to which you have chosen to listen. Your wants are at the "heart" of you. The things you do not want to hear make a noisy heart for you. The things you listen to capture your attention. The things you listen to are those to which your deepest desires have committed your attention. Are they really worthwhile? The noises that keep you from listening, paying attention to, or even hearing what your heart desires can be screened out. What, then, will you listen to? Or, can you stand the silence? ...

Purity of heart enables you and me to see God. Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish poet-philosopher of the nineteenth century, spoke of purity of heart as "willing one thing," of having a singular purpose in the love of God and neighbour. He insisted that your and my human cleverness be used to cut out all evasions of commitment, to prevent both the external and internal deceptions that contaminate the heart with the noise of competing loyalties, commitments, and devotions. Commitment is a whole-hearted decision, and a person cannot "by the craft and the flattery of tongue lay hold of God while his heart is far away." Or, in another place in the same work, "As the sea, when it lies calm and deeply transparent, yearns for heaven, so may the pure heart when it is calm and deeply transparent yearn for the Good."

—Wayne E. Oates,  
*Nurturing Silence in a Noisy Heart*,  
pp. 11-12, 17

## Do you know how to find out about becoming a Buddhist?

What is your interpretation of the passage in Revelation 13 about the beast with 10 horns and 7 heads?

Are you a creationist or an evolutionist (and whatever answer you give will be wrong)?

These are just some of the questions that I have come across this year in Special Religious Education (SRE or scripture) teaching at North Sydney Girls' High.

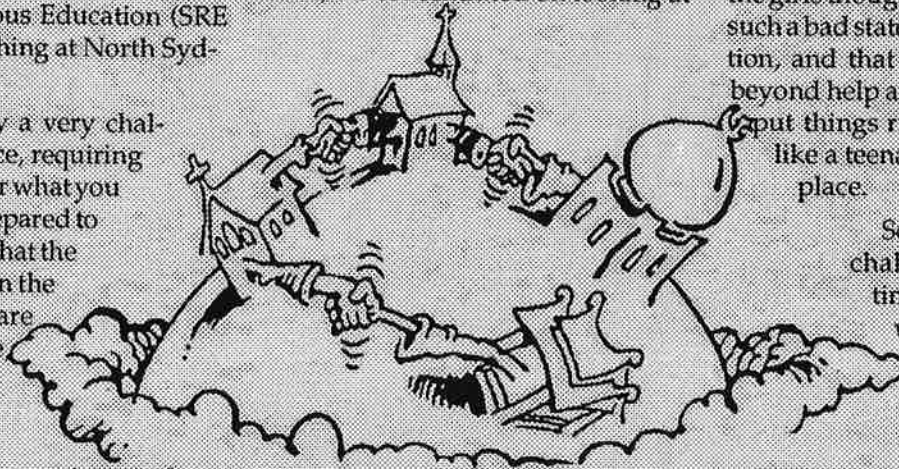
It is certainly a very challenging experience, requiring you to stand up for what you believe and be prepared to defend it. It's not that the girls are hostile, on the contrary, many are very supportive. It's just that 15 and 16 year olds what to

know answers to questions and are working out their own position on a lot of issues.

I believe that I'm there as a scripture teacher to show that Christians (and the church) care about people, and that we are willing to listen to what these girls have to say. I freely admit that I don't have all the an-

swers, and can, at best, guide the students in the right general direction. Many times, however, it is the other students who are doing the guiding (there are a number of keen Christians in the class). I don't go there to preach, even though that is what some people think scripture should be, but I do say what I think and believe.

Tom and I each teach classes of over 30 students every Tuesday morning. For many of the girls, this may be one of the few chances they get to discuss life issues. In second term, we concentrated on looking at



relationships, starting with our everyday friendships, moving to parents and other family, commitment in relationships and finally onto the types of relationship that Jesus had with people, with God and with us. Many of the girls were prepared to share deep and personal thoughts about

their experiences of relationships in a way which I'm sure I would have had great difficulty with at their age. At the end of term, the girls made a poster depicting some of their positive feelings about relationships. Part of this was put up for a few weeks at the back of Shirley Rd church.

One of the interesting contrasts between scripture and church is that at church I am one of the "young people", while at scripture I am considered "old". When discussing the environment earlier in the year, many of the girls thought that the world was in such a bad state because of my generation, and that we 30 year olds were beyond help and it was up to them to put things right - there is nothing like a teenager to put you in your place.

Sometimes I enjoy the challenges, but at other times I wonder if it is all worth it, and I have spent many Tuesday nights discussing with Linda (who did it for a number of years before me) the pros and cons of scripture teaching. In the final wash-up, I'm sure that it is worthwhile, and is a valuable part of the church's mission.

I'll share some more of my feelings and experiences of scripture in a future issue of *Northsider*.

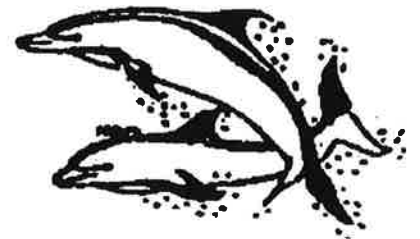
*John Lee*

## Remembering the Future

Leading up to the World Council of Churches seventh Assembly reflections and stories of the dreams and visions and journeys of faith of a varied group of church women were collected. Writing my own story gave me an opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution that special people had in my life. The stories, prose, illustrations and reflections tell of the struggle and longing of many women looking for meaning and hope in their spiritual outreach. It was the hope of the editors that readers and the churches might consider story-telling, dreaming and 'visioning' as legitimate religious activity. "Through this approach we may build a theology for growth into the twenty first century." A variety of stories are told which invite reading and consideration. You may wish to read our copy or purchase, if desired, from the Australian Council of Churches.

(Editors are Ranjini Rebera and Michaela Richards)

*Bev Plazmier*



*O our mother the earth, O our father the sky,  
Your children are we, and with tired backs  
We bring you gifts that you love.  
Then weave for us a garment of brightness,  
May the warp be the white light of morning,  
May the weft be the red light of evening,  
May the fringes be the falling rain,  
May the border be the standing rainbow.  
Thus weave for us a garment of brightness  
That we may walk fittingly where grass is green,  
O our mother the earth, O our father the sky!*

*Tewa Pueblo prayer*

## Make me aware of people

Lord, make me aware of the wonder of people. All kinds of people, old or young, important or humble, neighbour or child or foreigner or stranger on the street. You have made us all so marvellously varied, outwardly so different in face and form and circumstance, yet basically so much alike. Each of us going their own way with such private passion. locked in his tiny universe of self. However we strive to share, give, communicate, we're bounded by the limited horizons of our own concerns.

God, make me more vitally cognizant of these other worlds, spinning behind all these faces. Such complex, fascinating worlds, filled with memories, worries, anxieties, philosophies, ambitions, experiences

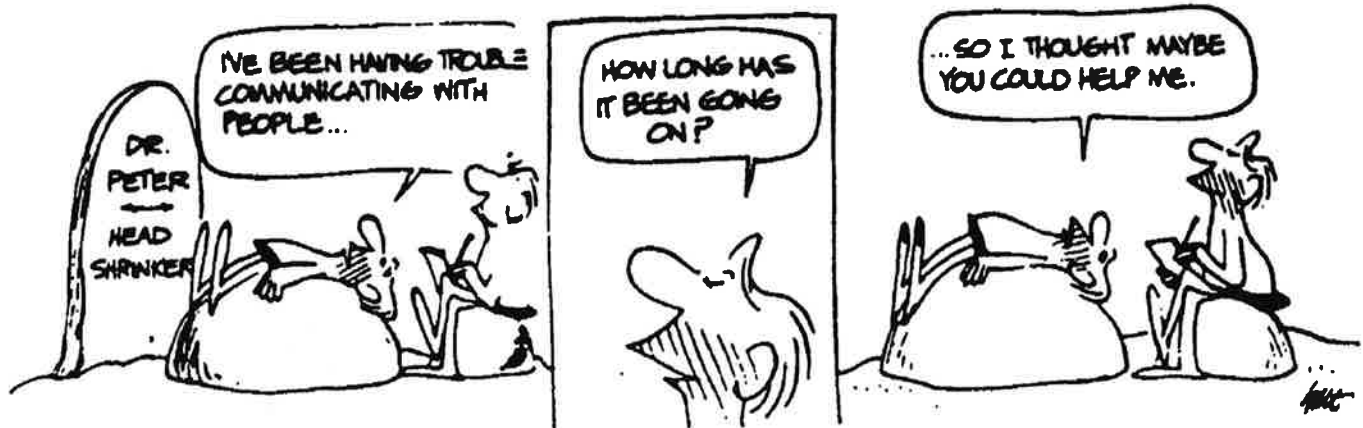
Remind me to listen, really listen, when people open their mouths, like small doors to that world, and try to share what's inside. Remind me to look, really look, into the hopeful windows of their eyes. I can never really enter, no, but how much I can learn from these brief glimpses. How much my own world can be expanded. How much I can give, just by listening.

Help me not to go coasting off on the barge of my own conceits, or wait in half-deaf exasperation for my turn. Help me to realise the marvel of being invited even to the doorstep of another person's world.

Lord, make me always aware of the wonder of people - people who live and think and breathe and feel, the same as I do. People laughing, crying, loving, hurting, touching. People gazing into store windows ... hailing taxis ... scrubbing floors. People with the sand hot against their feet on a windy beach ... or a cold side-walk bitter through broken shoes.

The sheer wonder of people, God. In joy or torment or the little acts of everyday. Your people. My people. An extension of you, and so of each of us.

If I can identify with other people, taste their tears as well as mine, rejoice in their rejoicing, then I can be more completely your creation, and more aware of who I am myself.



## A Sip of Belief

Oscar Wilde was one of them - a professional party goer. He prepared for his rôle at any gathering. A late entrance, a well-honed aphorism or a witty paradox. Quite a few people also have some planned theme or script they will bring up at a party or an evening out.

I met such a one some two years ago at a friend's home. After a brief introduction he, with a quiet smile on his face, asked, "What belief system do you follow in your life, Geoff?" He took a sip from his sherry as he maintained eye contact with me. (*Is he being pompous or serious, I asked myself, and decided on the latter.*)

"You do like to get to know people quickly, Alan, don't you?" I said. O.K., as I hope you are serious I'll tell you. I have based my thinking and my actions over the past thirty years on the words on the wall of a church in Westminster. They were gold on a blue background, and said: 'The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word.' What that has meant for me is that there is no point at which wisdom stops, fulfilled. There is always the 'yet'. The thought that there is more - and more - and more to be understood about God, about life,

about..., well, about everything. To stay still and feel one has reached the ultimate truth is to become lost in a disappearing past."

He sipped his sherry again. "I see. Do you feel that, as you loom back over your life, it has worked?"

"Sure I do, Alan. For me it has emphasised the need to have an awareness to be non-judgmental, to listen more than talk, and to be rebellious to the rigid norms of the world - but not always with success, of course. I've had a lot of fun in challenging and innovating. But now it is my turn. What do you believe in, and how have you used it in your life.

"I am still seeking to know myself, and searching for meaning," he replied.

"Well," I said, "tell me how far you have reached."

He raised his glass in a salute of farewell. I heard him talking to others throughout the night, engaging in the same party game or gambit.

I wonder what other replies he had, or if he remembered them.

Geoff Canton

## Physical and emotional violence towards women and children

'No, it could never happen on the North Shore,' I can hear you say, 'but it can and it does and is not confined to any particular stratum of society or degree of education. Statistics show that one family in four suffers physical abuse and, of these families, one family in three accepts the situation. It is important to note that 98% of physical abuse is by men against women.

When a woman can no longer tolerate her husband's treatment of herself and her children, she now has somewhere to go for safety, i.e. to a women's refuge. There are fifty two of them in NSW. The location of refuges is kept fairly secret for obvious reasons, but victims of violence can be referred to their nearest refuge by the local office of the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), the Police, hospitals, Community Health Centres, Neighbourhood Watch Centres, Homeless Persons' Bureau, Lifeline or other emergency services or by dialling 799 6949 or 000.

Delvena Women and Children's Shelter in Lane Cove is just like any other house in the street except that it is home to four families who share the housework, often on a roster basis. Weekly meetings between staff and residents are held to sort out any problems, while staff administer the running of the refuge. No alcohol, no drugs, and no violence toward other women and children are permitted. Where possible, women are expected to make a small weekly payment.

The all female staff at Delvena are paid by FACS. The refuge is classified as short term (up to three months) crisis accommodation and, as such, is funded by FACS. On arrival at Delvena, the women are assessed by staff as to what needs to be done. In the case of domestic violence, counselling might be needed. In the case of incest, rape etc., victims are referred elsewhere for appropriate counselling. Where the law is involved, the staff have a list of solicitors, whose help is sought and staff accompany women to court. Self esteem raising groups are held and general support is given as the women themselves work out and decide their futures. The women and children usually require several weeks to sort themselves out and to plan their future. Some return home, while others with little money are assisted by refuge



workers in obtaining priority housing. These women have absolutely nothing with which to start a new home and, for this reason, Delvena would always be grateful for any household goods (china, cutlery, pots etc) or monetary donations toward the setting up of a new home. Staff try to do follow up work but this is rather difficult because

of a shortage of workers. Nowhere is this shortage more apparent than in follow up for migrant victims - with a staff of two for all NSW.

Refuge staff are involved in community education, often after hours, addressing school children, Neighbourhood Watch groups, Community Service groups and they hold seminars and workshops and sit on committees dealing with problems such as domestic violence and incest.

Much needs to be done in the community for domestic violence to be understood. Offending men must change their attitude from that of seeing it as their right to beat their wives and women must cease to accept

beatings as a wife's lot in life. Lest I be seen as one-eyed, let us not forget the 2% of men who suffer violence at the hands of their wives; the attitudinal changes here are the converse of the above. The question that runs through my mind as I think about women's refuge and why the women are there is, 'Where did love go?'

*Jo Melville*

### Changing the pattern

Val Watters has undertaken training as a child abuse and parent support counsellor. Intervention, Val says, is an important component in avoiding harm. The parenting process has often been inadequately modeled. So blame can hardly be apportioned.

The service aims to give emotional support and parenting advice. Sometimes demands on other services leave parents under pressure with little recourse. Such a service, Val says, may assist in changing a pattern, thus preventing another child growing to adulthood to express fears and hurts violently.

Creating an accepting atmosphere and simply listening often diffuses a potentially volatile situation.

Val's training has taken six months and she will shortly begin working on an overnight shift. The CAPS service also provides community education and a drop-in centre seeking to alleviate physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Val's usual worklife entails school counseling, which fits her well for the CAPS task.

*Bar Flayler*