
A CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN CHURCH LIFE

By

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The House of the Gentle Bunyip was an ecumenical Christian community that existed from 1975 to 1996 in Clifton Hill, an inner Melbourne suburb. Founded by a Baptist theologian, Athol Gill, it drew many of its members from the Baptist and evangelical traditions. Mostly young adults, they perceived deficiencies in their churches and wanted to explore some of the radical implications of the Christian faith in a non-traditional setting. The Bunyip was influenced by the worldwide Christian community movement and changes in Australian society in the 1970s. It sought to respond to a decline within the institutional church evident from the 1960s and, in particular, to Victorian Baptist neglect of Melbourne's inner city churches.

The Bunyip established a range of mission projects in response to the poor and needy including the homeless, aged, mentally ill and children disadvantaged by poorly-resourced inner city schools. It developed educational initiatives for clergy and lay people and sought to reclaim the communal aspects of the Christian faith by introducing its own pattern of corporate worship, community housing, membership agreements and leadership structures. The Bunyip established centres in Victoria and interstate, and developed links with a range of church and community networks. Over 150 adults and 30 children joined the Bunyip and the average length of stay was a little over four years.

The community made a significant contribution to Australian church life by offering a viable alternative to the institutional church. It provided men and women with training, and opportunities for leadership and relevant practical service. It challenged Christians to take seriously the radical implications of the Gospel, especially in the areas of justice, care of the poor and community. Countless people were assisted through its mission programs. Many of its members and others influenced by Gill and the Bunyip completed degrees in theology and moved into ordained ministry, denominational leadership and urban or overseas ministry. Some used their Bunyip experience in community development, welfare work, education and peace-making. Although the Bunyip eventually declined and closed, its legacy continues through Fintry Bank, a supported accommodation program for sufferers of schizophrenia.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that -

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work except where indicated in the preface,

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is 20,000-22,000 words in length, inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of tables, maps, appendices, and bibliography.

Signed

[Signature]

Date: 11/12/02
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This thesis is dedicated to all who were members and supporters of the House of the Gentle Bunyip.
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INTRODUCTION

In her book, *True Stories*, Inga Clendinnen wrote: ‘[W]hile the past is past, it is not dead. Its hand is on our shoulder’. I think this is true for all of us. I know it is certainly true for me.

I grew up in Brisbane and attended a Baptist church. Queensland Baptists are conservative evangelicals. While my brother was studying at the Baptist College in the early 1970s, Athol Gill was one of his lecturers. Gill was not conservative and he made a big impact upon some of the students. With Gill’s leadership, my brother and others established the House of Freedom. It was a para-church ecumenical community.

I met Gill while I was undertaking a Bachelor of Arts course at Queensland University and I became aware of conflicting attitudes among Baptists towards Gill’s teaching. Not long afterwards, I started attending a coffee house run by the House of Freedom in the old Jireh Baptist church hall in Fortitude Valley. Here I met young people looking for alternatives in their lives. Although I enjoyed my involvement in my home church, I had some concerns. The first related to intellectual issues raised by my university studies; the second concerned attitudes to Christian mission.

My university lecturers were often outspoken in their opposition to the church. Their criticism was directed at the established church in countries where religion had been oppressive, and also at the Bjelke-Petersen National Party Government. A committed Lutheran, Petersen openly declared his support for conservative

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2 Jireh Baptist Church was the second oldest Baptist Church in Brisbane. It was formed on 2 December 1861, John E. White, *A Fellowship of Service: A History of the Baptist Union of Qld 1877-1977* (BUQ, 1977), 228.
evangelicals and received their loyalty in return despite clear evidence of corruption in his government.

When a French lecturer asked me to explain the Christian doctrine of the ascension of Christ, I realized that my ability to interpret the Bible was hopelessly inadequate. How did one reconcile the theory of a flat earth assumed by the writers of the New Testament with contemporary scientific knowledge that clearly made nonsense of it all?

My church's view of mission was fairly limited theologically and focused on the conversion of individual souls through local evangelistic crusades and overseas missionary service. The notion that the Christian faith might have an impact upon socio-political issues or ethical concerns beyond personal morality did not seem to rate a mention. Because I felt there had to be something more, I was drawn to the House of Freedom, a place in contact with young people unlikely to come within the orbit of most Queensland churches.

These were exciting times for a nineteen year old. I completed some units in theology in my arts degree, and was introduced to compelling theories about the construction of the Hebrew Bible, modern methods of Biblical hermeneutics and the cultural background of the New Testament. My lecturers included Jewish and Christian (Protestant and Catholic) scholars. It was an eye-opening experience for me and, together with Gill and the House of Freedom, introduced me to a new world of Christian thought and experience.

I had not seriously considered the possibility of ordination to the Christian ministry. There were no ordained Baptist women in Queensland. In the early 1970s

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3 Australian Baptists are organized on state lines. State Baptist unions are autonomous and accredit and/or ordain their own ministers.
few, if any Baptist churches, appointed women to their diaconates. Women served as missionaries, members of missionary committees, Sunday school teachers and superintendents of infant and primary religious education departments and church caterers, not as preachers.

The House of Freedom asked me to consider pursuing theological studies in Melbourne with a view to ordination, and to be part of the establishment of a community. Eagerly I entered Whitley College, the Baptist College of Victoria that had a reputation for greater openness to modern methods of scholarship than its counterparts in other states. The Gill family had already moved to Melbourne; others had come from Sydney's House of the New World and together we helped establish the House of the Gentle Bunyip. Thus I embarked on a long journey into intentional Christian community as a staff worker and member of the Bunyip.

At another level the journey has continued, as I seek to understand and relate the history of a community that irrevocably changed my life and the lives of people too numerous to mention. The path has also included ordination to the Baptist Union of Victoria, continuing theological studies and ministry among Victorian Baptists, particularly through my work as a member of the Whitley College faculty.

Although my own story is unique, as are all of our stories, there are many common threads woven into it. I was not the only person to be inspired by Gill. There were many like myself, who, raised within the framework of conservative evangelical Christianity, sought something more. Rather than abandoning our Christian heritage, we looked for other ways of expressing our faith.

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4 Diaconates in Baptist churches usually consist of lay people elected by the congregational meeting. They work with the minister in pastoral oversight and administration of the local congregation.
5 Hereafter referred to as the Bunyip.
6 I was ordained to the Baptist Union of Victoria on 1 October 1978, the first woman to be ordained by Baptists in Australia.
CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND BEGINNINGS

The Bunyip was an ecumenical Christian community that operated from 1975 to 1996 in Clifton Hill, an inner city suburb of Melbourne. Although the Bunyip's founder was a Baptist, the Community drew many of its members from outside the Baptist tradition. During the course of its existence more than 150 adults (and 30 children and teenagers) joined and commitments ranged from twelve months to twenty years.¹ The majority were tertiary students or graduates. Many perceived deficiencies or even a crisis in their churches and sought an expression of the Christian faith that encompassed justice, training, worship and community. Some had already been members of alternative Christian communities, interstate and overseas. Most resided in shared households in Clifton Hill, Collingwood and North Fitzroy. Some of the Bunyip's property belonged to the Baptist Union of Victoria² and the Clifton Hill Baptist Church. The Community developed a range of mission and educational projects, a corporate worship life, a pattern of community living, membership agreements and a community housing trust. It established centres in Victoria and interstate and developed links with other church and community organizations.³

¹ chs 2 and 3.
² Hereafter referred to as the Union.
³ ch. 2.
Monasticism, and with Anabaptist traditions. Yet the 1960s and 70s saw a worldwide movement towards alternative communities, both religious and secular. In his review of communal experimentation in Australia, Bill Metcalf wrote that thousands of attempts were made at communal living in the late 1960s and early 70s. Most were short-lived but a rare few endured. It was a period of socio-political upheaval in Australia and a time of crisis for mainstream Australian Christian denominations, including Baptists. The Bunyip encapsulated trends evident in other parts of the world and was a response to challenges confronting the church in Australia. It became part of a worldwide Christian community movement, although many of its members were not aware of the fact at the time of joining. Contacts were made with members of some of these communities who, on occasion, visited the Bunyip.

From the first century CE new models of Christian communities have arisen and attracted special attention. Some emerged as protest movements in response to particular developments in the church and society and were sometimes labelled 'heretical' because they were perceived to represent a challenge to the theology, practice or structures of the official church. These groups included the second century Montanists, the medieval Cathars, Waldensees and Lollards, sixth century Anabaptists and, in the seventeenth century, the Baptists – who were one of the

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radical sects that emerged at that time of fervent civil unrest in England.\textsuperscript{9} Monasticism flourished from the early fourth century, partly in protest at the growing wealth and power of the Constantinian church. As the coenobitic model became institutionalized, there were many attempts to reform it.\textsuperscript{10} David Clark explored the way in which early monasticism originally functioned as a lay protest movement providing men and women with opportunities to specialize in community living, spirituality, self-sufficiency, arts and crafts, learning and caring for the needy. He noted their attraction for intelligent and articulate people in pursuit of holiness.\textsuperscript{11}

In recent decades, sociologists have shown great interest in communities, religious and otherwise. Benjamin Zablocki traced the development of the Bruderhof from Germany to Paraguay and North America during the twentieth century and commented on the flowering of American communitarian movements as an outworking of fraternité, the third plank of the French Revolution.\textsuperscript{12} He asserted that the social and political upheaval of two World Wars created waves of intentional community building in America and Europe.\textsuperscript{13} The Fellowship of International Communities developed the following definition of an 'intentional community', namely:

a group of persons associated together voluntarily for the purpose of establishing a whole way of life. As such, it shall display, to some degree, each of the following characteristics: common geographical location, economic interdependence, social, cultural, educational and spiritual inter-exchange of uplift and development. A minimum of

\textsuperscript{11} Clark, \textit{Basic Communities}, 261-3.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 18-19.
three families or five adults is required to constitute an intentional community.\textsuperscript{14}

Rosabeth Moss Kanter's study of nineteenth and twentieth century American communities from the perspective of commitment mechanisms\textsuperscript{15} pointed to their profusion in the United States particularly during the first half of the nineteenth century. She identified three motivating impulses - religious, politico-economic and psychosocial - and asserted that utopian communities were based on the ideas of human perfectibility (the possibility of 'heaven on earth' or the realization of the Kingdom of God).\textsuperscript{16}

In his exploration of the nature and origins of individualism in American society (particularly its religious expression), Robert Bellah concluded that life in the twentieth century has been divided into a number of separate functional sectors, leaving individuals detached from their social and cultural contexts and struggling to fit a larger context.\textsuperscript{17} He recognized the role of communities in giving qualitative meaning to life and argued that processes of individuation and separation to overcome oppressive structures needed to be balanced by a renewal of commitment and community if they were not to end in self-destruction.\textsuperscript{18}

Several studies of Christian communities reflected similar explanations. According to Thomas Rausch, the appearance of Christian communities in the twentieth century was partly connected to the greater movement towards community,

the causes of which lay in the isolation of individuals, family instability and growing secularism within Western culture. He argued that sociological reasons were not sufficient to account for the growth in Christian communities and concluded that radical Christian communities fulfilled contemporary desires for a deeper spirituality, a means of structuring life, a vision of community in a fragmented world, and the celibate life. In his analysis of five different European Christian communities operating in the early 1970s – a study commissioned by the World Council of Churches, Andrew Lockley observed the ways in which they sought to integrate the Christian faith with the whole of life and concluded that the communities both challenged and reflected developments in Western society.

David Clark studied British communities pioneering alternative models of church and establishing networks. Focusing on those formed in the 1960s and 70s, he linked their emergence to accelerating processes of urbanization, industrialization, bureaucratization, mobility and secularization, all of which left the official church feeling stranded and anachronistic. Clark concluded that the basic community movement championed the personal, affirmed the importance of love, passion and engagement, and committed its members to the ideal of an open church and society. He reserved his strongest criticisms for the institutional church: ‘But the Church, as Western man [sic] has known it, cannot continue as it is without being a denial of the Gospel for our age. It has to change, and to change in a fundamental way, if it is to

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20 Ibid., 191-2.
22 Ibid., 73.
23 Clark, *Basic Communities*.
24 Ibid., 216.
25 Ibid., 265-75.
avoid being a heretical social system.\textsuperscript{26} Clark interpreted community to mean a sense of significance and solidarity for its participants. He aimed to explore ways in which basic communities dealt with fundamental issues of authority, personal awareness, and interpersonal relations while engaged in a number of key communal pursuits.\textsuperscript{27}

Some Australian studies have been conducted using Clark as a reference point. Mary Britt pointed to disenchantment with institutional churches and alienation from the social order as key factors in the development of new models of Christian community.\textsuperscript{28} She noted the New Testament basis for the idea of community and analysed a range of communities including Latin American base (grassroots) ecclesial,\textsuperscript{29} charismatic, ecumenical, non-denominational and para-church, renewal and parish based independent house churches and new developments in religious orders. She categorized Australian Christian communities, defining the Bunyip as ecumenical.\textsuperscript{30} Britt argued that the communitarian movement did not necessarily represent an attempt to recover something old but to create something entirely new.\textsuperscript{31}

Jim McKnight adopted a different stance from Britt's, and asserted that Christian communes\textsuperscript{32} in Australia differed from their secular counterparts quite markedly.\textsuperscript{33} He argued that the former were basically past-oriented and essentially conservative in orientation as a reaction to the process of secularization. McKnight found the subjects of his research threatened by the seeming irrelevancy of

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 275-6.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{28} Mary Britt, \textit{In Search of New Wine Skins: An Exploration of Models of Christian Community} (Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1988).
\textsuperscript{30} Britt, 31-3.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, 52.
\textsuperscript{32} McKnight referred to communities as communes.
\textsuperscript{33} McKnight, \textit{Australian Christian Communes} (Cobbitty, NSW: Trojan Head, 1990), 7, 26-7.
Christianity in Australia and involved in creating a separate social reality away from the so-called corrupting influences of the institutional church. He concluded that the longevity of Christian communes depended on their ability to sustain a life of mutuality and accountability in the face of pressures to maximize personal freedom, privacy and income security. His study included the Houses of the New World and Freedom, two communities closely related to the Bunyip, and he estimated that in 1987 there were more than 180 (Christian) communities in Australia with between 2,500 and 4,000 members. Located mainly in capital cities on the eastern seaboard, over half were Roman Catholic, the rest mostly Anabaptist in ethos.

Leavey and O’Neil partly concurred with McKnight’s findings in their assessment of the conservatism of many contemporary religious communities, especially those emanating from the charismatic movement. But their study also pointed to the existence of several communities that had deliberately moved away from a hierarchical structure to a more egalitarian model. They were concerned with the decline in traditional religious life and sought insights into the experience of Christian community by exploring a diversity of Australian communities including some that commenced during the 1970s. The authors concluded that the communitarian movement in the western world was larger than religious life issues.

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34 McKnight began visiting large communities before slanting his study towards single-household communities and the conservative, Catholic, charismatic network known as the Related Christian Communities Network.
35 McKnight, 29-30.
36 McKnight’s study did not include the Bunyip.
37 Ibid., 37-40.
and represented a critique of the whole social symbolic system of western Christianity.39

II

From the beginning of its operations, the Bunyip faced a rapidly changing social climate and welfare scene. The era of unprecedented growth in population and economy during the third quarter of the twentieth century had come to an end with the uncertainties of the 1970s. Labelling the former era the 'Golden Age', Stuart Macintryre observed that 'decision-makers would never again enjoy such luxury of choice or feel the same confidence'.40 Accompanying economic growth and affluence was a fear of communism, generated during the era of the Cold War and the wars in Korea and Vietnam. This limited opportunities for critical dissent and creative innovation. Social security had been long neglected in the encouragement of private affluence. During the decades of industrial and urban growth, governments had neglected health, education, welfare and housing. Inner urban areas had particularly been overlooked.41

The election of the Whitlam Labor Government (1972-1975) had ended twenty-three years of conservative federal rule. Whitlam had a broad vision of citizenship and community. He saw the purpose of state action as the provision, growth, elevation and consolidation of individuals and community: "The quality of life depends more and more on things which the community provides for all its

40 Stuart Macintyre, A Concise History of Australia (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 197.
41 Ibid., 204,227.
members from the combined resources of the community'.\textsuperscript{42} Eighteen year olds already had the vote, conscription came to an end, and Australian troops were withdrawn from the Vietnam War after huge anti-war street protests led by people who became ministers in the new Labor government. University fees were abolished, broadening access to tertiary education, and the introduction of the Family Law Act in 1975 saw major changes to divorce laws and the late twentieth century phenomenon of single-parent families. The Whitlam Government's program was extremely ambitious and implemented at great speed. There were new employment schemes, childcare centres, urban renewal plans, Medibank, support for the arts and a host of other initiatives. New diplomatic agreements were made with China, independence plans arranged with Papua New Guinea, and international conventions on nuclear arms, labour and racism ratified. Ethnic diversity was welcomed, the status of women was elevated and there was improved representation for indigenous people.\textsuperscript{43}

The Henderson Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, commissioned by Whitlam's Liberal predecessor, William McMahon, delivered its findings in 1975. Poverty was flagged as a political issue for the public agenda. The 1950s and 60s had contributed to a political culture of affluence, ignorance and relative indifference to the welfare state, but the Henderson Report 'blew the whistle' on that.\textsuperscript{44} When the Bunyip commenced operation in 1975, therefore, the so-called 'Golden Age' of the 1950s and 60s was over. The Whitlam Government was in its third and final year. Fraser's conservative government was in office from 1975-83.

\textsuperscript{42}As quoted in Peter Beilharz, Mark Considine and Rob Watts, Arguing about the Welfare State: The Australian Experience (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992), 47.
\textsuperscript{43} Macintyre, A Concise History, 230-5.
\textsuperscript{44} Beilharz et al, Arguing About the Welfare State, 91.
In the 1960s Australian churches experienced a period of crisis during which the relevance and authority of traditional institutions and formulations of belief were under challenge, especially by the young. The church's early confidence was shaken as it was forced to confront a host of changes reflected in theological writings such as Harvey Cox's *Secular City* and Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God*. These books sought to reformulate the original message of Christianity in terms of contemporary secular culture. Some welcomed the changes; others were fearful and defensive. Evidence confirmed that the upswing among Protestants had halted by 1964 and attendances had dropped. For example, communicant membership of the Presbyterian Church declined from 2.933 to 2.407 percent of the total Victorian population from 1961 to 1971. Young people were no longer so interested in conventional church youth activities and university students were drifting away from organized religion. The numbers of Australians identifying with the Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian or Uniting churches dropped from 2.2 million to 1.7 million between 1966 and 1986. Those identifying with the Church of Christ, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations declined in absolute numbers between 1966 and 1971. Most denominations experienced decline between 1971 and 1976 in

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terms of their proportion of the Australian population, a trend that continued for Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians until 1981.48

From the mid 1960s there was perceived to have been a malaise among Catholic and Protestant clergy. Many resigned or moved sideways into welfare work and education in response to socio-political and theological challenges.49 In an era of declining church membership, attendance and financial contributions, clergy struggled to make the church appear relevant to society when their own ranks were rapidly being depleted.50 The ratio of clergy planning not to continue in ministry was highest for Baptist and Anglicans followed by the Presbyterians and Methodists.51

The 1960s marked ‘the beginning of the collapse of Christian morality in an increasingly secular society, though the emergence of secular Christianity also sapped Christian moral energy’.52 Prior to this, the church had seen itself as society’s moral guardian,53 allotted a cultural role of defending moralism and promoting individualistic pietism that was not generally allowed to intrude on others’ spaces nor have a great impact upon society.54 But that role was undergoing revision as some churches became involved in wider social issues such as Aboriginal rights, overseas aid, nuclear war and Vietnam. Others, notably the Baptists, superficially seem to have

50 Norman W.H. Blaikie, The Plight of the Australian Clergy: To Convert, Care or Challenge (Brisbane: University of Qld Press, 1979), 22-35.
51 Ibid., 210-11.
been hardly troubled by these. But the picture is more complex than this. There is evidence that a minority of Baptists – principally, those who had been influenced theologically by more progressive British and European Baptist thought rather than by the Southern Baptist tradition – were indeed troubled by these issues. Gill was one of them.

III

The socio-cultural context and prevailing thought forms shaped Australian Baptist (and evangelical) identity and mission. Yet Australian Baptists vary from region to region. These variations may be attributed to different historical influences. During the nineteenth century, British Baptists were most influential in the development of Australian Baptist churches and Victorian Baptists were the largest Baptist community in Australia with many of their pastors and leaders reflecting liberal but evangelical Baptist qualities. Dr William Whitley, the first principal of the Baptist College of Victoria (1891-1901), was educated at Cambridge University and Rawdon College in England. He established high academic standards and initiated moves for cooperation with the Methodist Queen's College. Melbourne Baptists had a strong tradition of Rawdon-trained men. The more academic model of theological education that it fostered was also followed in South Australia.

56 Manley, 'Shapers,' 28.
Dr John Clifford, the general superintendent of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, represented such a tradition. Open to modern methods of biblical interpretation (higher criticism) and new theological and scientific developments, he was a political activist, outspoken in social issues.60 Clifford's visit to the Australian colonies in 1897 elicited various responses and revealed clear differences among Australian Baptists in their approaches to modern questions about the Bible, science, social issues and theology.61 Many Victorian and South Australia Baptists welcomed Clifford but others associated him with socialism and liberalism and supported Charles Hadden Spurgeon, the eminent British Baptist pastor and preacher who led the charge against theological liberalism in Britain.62 Australian Baptists (and other evangelicals) followed this theological controversy with great interest.63 Spurgeon's influence was clearly evident in New South Wales where the Baptist College drew upon the Spurgeonic model.64

From the beginning of the twentieth century Australian Baptists were influenced by North American evangelical developments including revivalist preaching techniques, pre-millennial teaching (emphasis upon the second coming of Christ) and fundamentalism. This tradition rejected the relevance of the Social Gospel and limited the church's activity in society to evangelism. After World War II the

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64 Manley, "Shapers," 17.
influence of the Southern Baptists of North America became quite marked, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland.\textsuperscript{65}

At the beginning of the 1970s, Victorian Baptists were facing challenges about future directions. These related mainly to questions of vision, ministry and resources. News from overseas confirmed that Australia was not unique in this. Small, aging congregations in inner-city multi-ethnic, multi-faith communities needed to consider whether their properties should continue to be used in the traditional way. The front page of the July 1973 edition of the \textit{Victorian Baptist Witness}\textsuperscript{66} featured an article prepared by the British Council of Churches, entitled 'Bricks and Mortar: the Churches' Burden'. It raised the question of the use of church resources and noted the growing tendency for outside groups - such as members of other faiths and minority Christian sects - to use inner-city church property.

Growth and decline among Melbourne Baptists reflected broader demographic trends.\textsuperscript{67} Baptist churches were most successful\textsuperscript{68} when, in their respective areas, the housing development was saturated, and where, in the ensuing decade, there was settlement by young and middle-aged families. Baptist people left older urban areas for newly developing middle class areas. For example, the CHBC, founded in 1890, peaked in membership in 1920 (220), halved within the next two decades and dropped to its lowest number (15) in 1970. The membership of neighbouring inner city Baptist

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\textsuperscript{66}Hereafter referred to as the \textit{Witness}.
\textsuperscript{68}Criteria for successful churches included healthy membership figures, baptisms, budgets and programs.
churches, Fitzroy and Collingwood, peaked in 1885 and 1945 respectively. Fitzroy closed in 1940 and Collingwood in the early 1960s.69

Victorian Baptists were a denomination of small churches, with only forty-two having more than 100 members.70 After World War II, the number of churches had increased more rapidly than Baptist membership, leading to a decrease in the average size of congregations. By 1972, there were sixty-four churches with a membership of fifty or less71 and most of these were declining. Older ones (especially those in Melbourne's inner and western suburbs) struggled to pay full time stipends and maintain aging buildings; newer ones struggled to meet mortgage repayments. These responsibilities detracted from the task of effective Christian witness.

Theological education and ministerial formation among Victorian Baptists were also under scrutiny in the 1970s. There were those who considered Whitley College's training of its ministerial candidates not practical enough.72 This attitude reflected the mistrust and suspicion that some Baptists held about the place of the academy - and intellectual pursuits in general - in ministerial training. From the foundation of the Baptist College of Victoria in 1891, there were often tensions generated by the role of the college in training candidates for ministry.73 When it moved from Errol Street, North Melbourne to its present site at 271-3 Royal Parade, Parkville in 1965, the shift signalled a change in context, a theological community within a residential university college. Whitley's first principal, Revd Mervyn

69 By contrast, Baptist churches founded in the 1950s in Blackburn and Blackburn North had grown by a thousand percent within 30 years. Bissett, Appendix I; 2002 Union Yearbook.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
Himbury (1959-86), worked hard to counter opposition among the leadership ranks of Victorian Baptists. Himbury, a Welsh graduate of Regent’s Park College, Oxford, was a product of the British Baptist pattern of preparing candidates for the ordained ministry and valued highly the role of a university college in ministerial formation.

Illustration 1

Not long after Himbury’s arrival in Melbourne, a Union conference on ordination in December 1959 highlighted tensions between ‘calling’ and academic education. Criticism of Whitley’s university orientation re-emerged on a number of occasions. An influential Baptist leader, Revd Jack Manning, disagreed with Himbury over the idea of a university-based theological college being the best preparation of candidates for the ministry. Manning was the director of the Victorian Baptist home missions’ department (1946-66) and general superintendent (1966-70). In 1968 his survey of future ministerial needs led him to conclude that a university degree was

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75 Tape 30.
less relevant to a congregation than personal qualities or devotion 'to a supernaturalistic concept of the Christian faith'.

At its 1972 annual assembly, the Union commissioned a review of ministry. Manning’s influence as president in 1972 lay behind the establishment of the Commission. Its brief was far-reaching and included candidate numbers and qualities, denominational requirements, preparation for various ministries and the effects of training within a university college. In its report a year later, the Commission recommended diversity in patterns of ministry to cope with churches’ changing economic circumstances, a large decline in ministerial ranks, and dissatisfaction among younger ordained people. It affirmed the university college as a suitable training context.

The Commission emphasized the need for churches to work together cooperatively. There were 114 Victorian Baptist churches with fewer than 100 members; a third of these churches required specialist pastoral leadership to meet the challenge of the present environment. The Commission recommended that the Union seek out and train clergy and laity in part-time and full-time ministries that included social work in addition to normal pastoral responsibilities. It urged Whitley College to introduce evening training courses in biblical studies and pastoral evangelism for lay people. The Commission recognized the changing profile of ministerial candidates, including the role of women in ministry, and underscored the importance of relating academic training to the experience of the local church. It addressed causes of ministerial dissatisfaction in an effort to reduce attrition rates, noting the impact of

77 Otzen, 137-8.
78 Of the 109 men trained for the ministry in the previous 20 years, only 42 remained in pastoral charge.
economic, family and work pressures, local church politics, loneliness, frustration and lack of professional development.

Promptly in February 1974, the Union's general superintendent (1971-5), Revd Norman Pell, produced a blueprint for the future of the Union. It recommended changes in administrative structure, aggressive evangelistic campaigns for church growth, small groups, decentralization, more effective use of the Baptist associational principle, and the employment of regional ministers. In December 1974 the Revd Kingsley Smith was appointed regional minister for the Inner City Baptist Association with pastoral responsibility for the South Yarra Church. Smith acted in an advisory role with eleven churches and Pell hoped that the appointment would lead to a 'consolidation of resources and the development of imaginative and social ministries that would touch segments of society previously unreached by our Baptist churches'. Smith appealed for people to move to the inner city to support these languishing congregations and churches and he encouraged experienced ministers to offer their expertise. He also envisaged government assistance in youth and welfare services.

79 The Commission hoped that local churches would be receptive to Union involvement.
82 Accommodation was more affordable in the 1970s and some responded to Smith's appeal.
Pell was theologically conservative but innovative in his vision to reverse Victorian Baptists' decline in the inner city and western suburbs. He envisaged the development of Baptist headquarters at Clifton Hill. In 1970 the Union had purchased properties at 94 and 106 Hodgkinson Street, adjacent to the CHBC and hall, when prices were low. It was prior to the process of gentrification and there was ready access to public transport. The Union paid $35,000.00 and $13,500.00 for the two properties respectively. The remaining property in the precinct, 104 Hodgkinson Street, was deemed too expensive at its asking price of $28,500.00. Pell planned a centre incorporating administrative, training, counselling and mission facilities as well as accommodation for country travellers and a cafeteria. It was intended to support inner-city churches with regional evangelistic and youth services. The Clifton Hill congregation agreed to donate its church buildings in return for a small chapel seating fifty. As Pell's vision grew, so did budget estimates until, nearly four years later, the Baptist general council decided against the plan and rented premises in Hawthorn, deemed more in keeping with the Union policy of de-centralization. Inflation was one of the factors in the decision. The oil crisis had had a huge impact on the economy, and building costs rose over ten per cent during 1972.

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84 Property Files, Union, Hawthorn, Vic.
85 According to lead articles in the Witness, April 1972, the whole project was geared to the 70s!
86 Costs were estimated at $700,000.00
87 General council meetings referred to meetings of the Baptist assembly. During the 1980s all general council meetings were called assemblies. Representatives include local church delegates, officers and ministers of the Union.
88 The Union rented temporary premises at Burwood Road, Hawthorn for three years (1973-6) before establishing its headquarters in 1980 at 227 Burwood Road (its present location), for a cost of $460,000.
There were other reasons for the rejection of Clifton Hill as a site for Union headquarters. It was not sufficiently enticing to Baptists who were moving eastward, not towards the inner city, northern or western suburbs. The centre was clearly in the wrong place after all! One correspondent wrote to the *Witness* in April 1972:

> Baptist men will not walk five minutes from a station to a committee meeting, whereas Baptist women will travel by public transport and walk to attend a worship service. I would not let my wife or daughter travel there by public transport at night, and I am sure many others would not also.

The argument of the *Witness* correspondent proved convincing and apparently was a factor in the decision of the February 1974 general council to abandon the idea.\(^8^9\) Leo Hicks, the secretary of the Clifton Hill church recorded his thoughts on the outcome:

> I fear that this decision is the beginning of some sort of division in the Baptist world with the river a kind of dividing line between the well-to-do suburbs and the generally spoken of 'working class' suburbs. ... Maybe we will have someday two Baptist main offices - one West and the other East. \(^9^0\)

Clifton Hill was not regarded as a desirable place to live in the early 70s. A socially and economically depressed area, children roamed the streets, senior citizens lacked aged care amenities, housing was in poor condition, schools were under-resourced and churches struggled for survival.

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\(^8^9\) The Union secretary, Revd J.T. Farmilo, was urged to investigate the Clifton Hill property as possible temporary headquarters. Executive Council Minutes, 29 May 1973. In its report to the general council, the Union's planning council noted that the Kew Baptist site had also been explored but the local council had refused building permission. General Council Minutes, 15 February 1974.

\(^9^0\) Tape 35.
Clifton Hill came under the jurisdiction of the Collingwood Council. In his historical study of Collingwood, Bernard Barrett noted demographic changes during the 1960s and early 70s. As Collingwood’s population declined by twelve percent between 1961 and 1966, the Australian-born component fell by twenty-four percent and the overseas component rose by thirteen percent. Collingwood lost many of its British-born migrants and saw big increases in the number of Greek and Yugoslavia-born. According to Gillian Hibbins, with the impact of post-war migration, the proportion of Australian-born fell to just over fifty percent in 1971.

Housing changed as the Victorian Housing Commission slowed its policy of constructing detached houses in the outer suburbs for low-income families, and replaced Collingwood slums with low, medium and high-rise accommodation between 1958 and 1972. Down the road from Clifton Hill, the high-rise Housing Commission flats dominated the Collingwood skyline. These were among forty-five towers constructed by the Victorian Government for public housing tenants. High-rise development led to big increases in residential density and basically halted Collingwood’s population decline at about 23,000 by 1971. This new density created problems such as overcrowded schools (already aging and substandard), inadequate recreational facilities for children, youth and adults, and lack of social workers, youth and community workers to deal with a largely transient, poor, migrant population.

92 Hibbins, *A Short History*, 55.
93 The towers were built of concrete blocks, constructed in Holmesglen, and varied from sixteen to thirty storeys. Playing space was windswept and crowded with parked cars. Blainey, *Our Side*, 198.
In 1970 the Collingwood High School was destroyed by fire and the new Collingwood Education Centre took a decade to be completed. Neil Horbury taught at the Collingwood High School during the early 1970s. He recalls that after the school burnt down, 600 students were located temporarily from 1973-6 in portable classrooms on the edge of the Darling Gardens, Clifton Hill, directly opposite the Bunyip. The school approached the CHBC for the use of its hall for a temporary gymnasium to help relieve pressure on the school’s sporting facilities. The hall had been condemned by the Collingwood Council for unsatisfactory electrical wiring, however, and was unusable.94 In 1976 new school premises for the Collingwood Education Centre were opened at the base of the Collingwood high-rise estate.

Government plans for the construction of three new freeways (the F-1, F-2 and F-19) and the widening of key roads such as Hoddle Street had major ramifications for Collingwood, by effectively carving up the suburb into a number of pedestrian islands and causing considerable noise and air pollution.95 Eventually, the F-19 (Eastern Freeway) was constructed despite local protests and separated Clifton Hill from Collingwood. Politically the City of Collingwood was undergoing change. Until the early 1970s, the Australian Labor Party had dominated local government by filling vacancies with their own members, thus obviating the need for council elections. The situation frustrated many residents, and a reform group that included local clergy was elected to local government. It addressed issues of social services, migrant support, controlled housing development and urban renewal.96 The Collingwood Residents’ Association emerged in 1972, the same year Collingwood’s

94 Tape 16.
95 Barrett, The Inner Suburbs, 170-1.
96 Hibbins, A Short History, 67.
first social worker, Edith Morgan, was appointed. The Whitlam Labor Government (1972-74) made money available to Collingwood for community services and facilities. Revd Graeme Nicholls, the minister of the Clifton Hill Presbyterian Church (1970-83), noted the growing interest in local politics in the 1970s with the development of the Fitzroy Residents’ Association and the involvement of future federal and state Labor politicians such as Brian Howe.97

From the 1960s demographic changes had also affected churches in the area. Protestant churches declined, amalgamated, closed and were sold or redeployed while Catholic churches flourished.98 The Croatian Catholic Centre, School and Church Office were established on the site of a former Wesleyan Methodist Church and Parsonage at 61 Hodgkinson Street, Clifton Hill and in 1976, the Collingwood Council bought the Collingwood Church of Christ property for a municipal library.99 Nicholls commented on the changing nature of the community during his ministry there: ‘We stayed put and the world around us changed’.100 His church conducted its ministry primarily among elderly Anglo-Celtic residents as the neighbourhood came to be dominated by members of the Italian, Greek and Yugoslav migrant communities. He recalls: ‘We were surprised to hear English spoken at the local shops’. 101 By 1975 Abbotsford and Clifton Hill were the only two remaining Baptist churches in Richmond, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Abbotsford and Clifton Hill. They had

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97 Brian Howe’s Methodist congregation amalgamated with the Clifton Hill Presbyterian Church during the 1970s.
98 Hibbins, A Short History.
100 Tape 33.
101 Ibid.
a combined membership of forty-eight$^{102}$ and faced the prospect of imminent closure.$^{103}$

Illustration 2

The Union's delay in making a decision about its headquarters was costly for the Clifton Hill church. Effectively, the congregation's future plans had been put on hold. The church was concerned about the rapidly deteriorating state of its buildings, but had not felt free to consider other options. The regional minister, the Revd K. Smith, expressed his concern to the Union that the Clifton Hill properties not be lost.$^{104}$ The Union secretary, Revd T. Farmilo, urged Smith and Hicks to consult with the local Collingwood Council about the possible development of welfare programs using Union property. The church's future was not promising. By 1974, the mainly elderly membership of eleven had decided to close. Over half were no longer local

$^{102}$ Bissett, "Baptists in Melbourne," Appendix I.
$^{103}$ Peterson, *Brimstone to Bunyip*, 6, 56-60. For information on the establishment of these churches, see F. J. Wilkin, *Baptists in Victoria: Our First Century* (East Melbourne: Union, 1939).
$^{104}$ Smith to Farmilo, 18 October 1974, Hicks Collection.
residents. There was no minister and the church manse had been rented commercially. The secretary and treasurer managed the church's business, and members of the Baptist Lay Preachers' Society, theological students and visiting Baptist ministers conducted its worship services.

Clifton Hill was not alone in its parlous situation and not all Baptists were oblivious to challenges facing inner city residents and churches. The *Witness* published articles on the discrepancy in educational resources and matriculation results between schools in the eastern and inner suburbs.\textsuperscript{105} Some creative attempts to awaken interest in the inner city were already beginning to emerge.\textsuperscript{106} There were other new approaches to church ministry developing in the northern suburbs at the Dallas Life Centre\textsuperscript{107} and later in Geelong, with the commencement of Breakwater Baptist Community.\textsuperscript{108}

Less than two years after the release of his blueprint and the decision of Victorian Baptists against relocating to Clifton Hill, Pell resigned to take up a position with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in the United States to promote links between Victorian Baptists and the Southern Baptist Convention of the United


\textsuperscript{107} Began as the Dallas Baptist Church, Broadmeadows, constituted in 1968. In 1973 it established the Dallas Welfare and Youth Service, 'This Month's Home Missionaries,' Union Archives. From 1974 Dallas was influenced by the charismatic movement and went on to establish a community, 'Commonlife', a range of community services and small business ventures, *Witness*, July 1989, pp. 8-9; April 1993, pp. 10-11.

\textsuperscript{108} The Community of the Transfiguration developed out of the Breakwater Baptist Community, Geelong under the leadership of Brother Graeme Littleton who had joined the church's ministry team in 1978. *Witness*, April 1993, p. 4. The community is a fascinating blend of Russian Orthodox and Baptist traditions with a focus upon prayer and hospitality.
The office of general superintendent was vacant for two years leaving the burden of leadership on the Union secretary, Revd J.T. Farmilo. With the resignation and retirement of other Union leaders, there was a leadership crisis; deteriorating Union finances did not help the situation. Proposals to reorganize Union structures were presented, and Farmilo was appointed acting general superintendent for twelve months at the 1977 assembly. A year later, Smith was appointed the Union's secretary for church life and ministry.

Not only were inner city churches causing the Union to reconsider its policies for church planting and strengthening. Churches in the inner northern and western suburbs were also languishing. At its 1977 annual assembly Victorian Baptists appointed Ross Langmead as Western Suburbs Commissioner. His brief was to enquire into the effectiveness of existing Baptist work in Melbourne's western suburbs and to assess needs in the churches and the community. Langmead documented a decline in membership and lack of ministers. His report showed that working-class people were hardly represented at all, a trend common among Anglo-Celtic Protestant denominations in most western industrial societies. He suggested that some of the reasons lay in a style of Christianity that clashed with working-class ways. The report recommended sweeping amalgamations, expansion in new growth areas and the relocation of ministers and members to churches in the western suburbs.

During the 1970s some Victorian Baptists had been considering a range of social justice issues. At the 1973 Bendigo Family Convention study groups were held on human rights for aborigines and migrants, population and poverty. There were sessions on the Jesus Revolution, worship styles, creative arts and sexuality. In 1973 the Union’s Public Questions Committee prepared study material for the denomination on a range of ethical and socio-political subjects. The articles published in subsequent editions of the Witness were well-researched and fair-minded, indicating the existence of a small but significant group raising the level of Baptist social awareness. The 1974 Lausanne World Congress on Evangelization brought the question of Christian social responsibility before the attention of Victorian Baptists. Four years later, the Revd A. Marr convened the first meeting of the Victorian Baptist Social Justice Group (and the first of its kind among Australian Baptists), at Whitley College.

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The challenges that confronted the Union in the 1970s opened the way for some innovative approaches to ministry such as the establishment of the Westgate

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111 The so-called 'Jesus Movement' was a worldwide phenomenon emerging originally in California. George Marsden noted that by the end of the 1960s many counter-cultural young people in America were being swept into the 'Jesus people' movement and staying away from liberal (mainline Protestant) churches in droves. Religion and American Culture (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 243.

112 Witness, 5 June 1973, pp. 1,7,8.

113 Named after Dr John Clifford, the Fellowship began in 1955 with the aim of serving Baptist tertiary students and graduates. See Witness, October 1973, p. 27.


115 Marr was appointed general superintendent (Director of Ministries) of the Union in 2001.

116 The initial group of 15 (including Whitley faculty) addressed the state of Melbourne’s health services and aboriginal welfare. BSJG Minutes, 21 August 1978, Union Archives.
Baptist Community, Yarraville, by Marr, a former minister from Victoria’s largest Baptist church (Blackburn). Gill saw an opening for some experimental work in Clifton Hill. He had arrived in Melbourne in October 1974 with his family, to take up a position at Whitley College. When he read about the critical state of inner city Baptist churches in the Witness, he began attending the Clifton Hill church. The congregation received him warmly and soon Gill, together with the founding members of the Bunyip, were invited to conduct its Sunday morning worship while overall responsibility for the church remained with its committee of management.117

Principal Himbury employed Gill to fill the role of dean of the residential college and lecturer in New Testament.118 The appointment enabled him to return to ministry within the Baptist denomination as a distinguished New Testament scholar and teacher following the decision by Queensland Baptists not to reappoint him as college lecturer at the end of 1972.119 Although controversy continued to dog him for much of his life, he discovered in Whitley College, and among many Victorian Baptists, some kindred spirits, greater academic freedom and a more congenial situation in which to work than the one he had left.

Gill’s theological perspectives had been radicalized during the course of his studies in Baptist institutions in Britain and Europe. Born into a working class family in Wauchope, near Port Macquarie, NSW in 1937, he attended the local school and Methodist Sunday school before moving to Sydney in 1951. His early introduction to

117 Hicks – secretary, Doris Dowdle – treasurer, CHBC Minutes, August 1975.
118 Roslyn Otzen, Whitley: The Baptist College of Victoria, 143; David M. Himbury, 'How Athol Came to Melbourne,' Greenshoots (BSJG), April 1992, p. 2.
the Gospels \textsuperscript{120} made a deep impression upon him. In 1960 he experienced a strong sense of 'call to the Christian ministry' and entered the Baptist College of New South Wales (Morling College). The Baptist church in New South Wales was a conservative evangelical denomination in the 1950s and early 60s.\textsuperscript{121} Yet, during Gill's college days he was exposed to some excellent teaching and more progressive ideas than might otherwise have been the case. Dr John Thomson, later to become head of Melbourne University's Middle Eastern Studies Department, was his lecturer in Hebrew literature and language. The newly-appointed principal, Dr Edward Roberts-Thompson, was an active ecumenist and participant in the Melbourne College of Divinity who wanted his students to be exposed to the latest currents of theological thought and broader world issues.\textsuperscript{122} As a student minister of some small Sydney Baptist churches, Gill preached at least once a week. His preaching was thoroughly prepared, biblically-based, largely theoretical and conservative; the socio-political implications of the Gospel were a later development.\textsuperscript{123}

Gill excelled in biblical literature and languages and prepared for a future ministry in theological teaching, especially biblical studies. He pursued theological study at Spurgeon's College, London, then at the International Baptist Seminary, Rüschlikon, Switzerland and the University of Zürich. Spurgeon's College, named after the prominent nineteenth century British Baptist preacher and pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, had a reputation for being an independent Baptist


\textsuperscript{121} Piggin identified 1914-59 as a significant period in the development of evangelicalism in Australia, in which Baptists declined in influence in South Australia and Victoria during the collapse of Liberal Protestantism while NSW Baptists grew through an aggressive, evangelistic church extension approach. "The Role of Baptists in the History of Australian Evangelicalism," \textit{Lucas: An Evangelical Historical Review} 11 (1991), 5-27.

\textsuperscript{122} Roberts-Thompson did not enjoy the full confidence of NSW Baptists and was not re-appointed. Harold Pidwell, "Athol Gill," unpublished manuscript in author's possession; Tape 30.

\textsuperscript{123} Handwritten sermon manuscripts in author's possession.
college with a conservative evangelical emphasis.¹²⁴ Given the historical connection between NSW Baptists and Spurgeon's College, it was the obvious place for him to go to further his academic career.¹²⁵ Not all British Baptist colleges were of this ilk.¹²⁶

The Rüschlikon experience had a profound influence upon the Gill family, as they were exposed to students and ideas from many different parts of the globe for five years while Gill completed masters and doctoral qualifications.¹²⁷ Rüschlikon was a residential Baptist seminary that had been established in 1948 by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States in conjunction with the European Baptist Federation.¹²⁸ Its purpose was to support the rebuilding of Baptist life in Europe after the devastation of World War Two through the provision of theological education of a reputable standard.¹²⁹ The Gills became friends with Baptist students who knew first-hand the difficulties of living under authoritarian and oppressive state churches. They were not totally insulated from world events during the turbulent but exciting period of the 1960s. Well trained in the classical traditions of western biblical scholarship, Gill reflected on the way in which the Jesus of the

¹²⁴ Piggin noted the influence of C. H. Spurgeon among Australian evangelicals during the nineteenth century, ‘[T]he majority of Baptist ministers who came to Australia from Britain trained at Spurgeon's College, far ahead of those trained by the Baptist Missionary Society or the Baptist Union’, Evangelical Christianity, 58.

¹²⁵ Gill completed the University of London BD degree with honours in 1965 and was awarded Spurgeon's senior Greek and Hebrew prizes. In the same year, he was ordained to the Baptist ministry of NSW, by special arrangement at London's South Norwood Baptist Church.

¹²⁶ The Bristol Baptist College is the oldest Nonconformist theological college in England. It grew from a small academy operating out of the Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol from 1679 and later developed a reputation for embracing modern trends in theological and biblical thought. Harry Leon McBeth, The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Witness (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 120, 193, 299.


¹²⁸ McBeth, The Baptist Heritage, 799-800.

gospels 'seemed to work with the precision and think with the absolute logic of a
Swiss reformer . . . [who] was very much at home in the university setting, holding
his own in debate – even in the debates of the radical 1960s he was always one step
ahead!' Later he recognized that it took exposure to people living in poverty in first
and third world countries to realize how much he had been biased when he had
studied biblical literature.

In 1968 he was appointed lecturer in biblical studies at the Queensland Baptist
College, a position he took up in 1971 upon completion of his doctorate. Like Gill,
the principal, Dr Edward Gibson, was a New South Wales Baptist and graduate of
Morling College. There the similarities ended. Appointed principal in 1967, Gibson
had a vision to develop the college as a conservative evangelical Bible college.
Under his leadership, student enrolments grew quite rapidly and the Baptist Union
of Queensland sold its small inner-city property near the University of Queensland to
build a residential theological college on Baptist property at Brookfield, one of
Brisbane’s growing outer suburbs.

It soon became apparent that the teaching styles, personalities and theological
approaches of the two men were not compatible. Although Gibson was popular
among many Baptists, a few were concerned about his conservative theological

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131 Gill wrote about the way he was trained to use the methodologies of western biblical scholarship to
shed light on a text's formation, socio-political background, literary structure and function within the
132 Gibson was well regarded around Australia as a traditional evangelical, a staunch premillennialist,
often speaking at advent conferences and a Keswick platform speaker, critical of most modern
of premillennialism, advent teaching and Keswick see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, chs 3 and 5
and *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), ch. 4. For the
Australian Keswick context see Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia*, 57-8,105-7.
133 Nickerson, "Baptist Theological College of Queensland," ch. 10.
135 Nickerson, 'Baptist Theological College,' 268-72; *Queensland Baptist*, January 1971, pp. 1,14.
emphasis and sought a greater balance in the Queensland Baptist Union. Gill was outspoken on the need for Baptists (and other evangelicals) to assume their social responsibilities in the world. He promoted theological study among members of a younger, less conservative group and organized a folk fiesta in the grounds of the new campus site to appeal to such a group; an ambitious undertaking but one that drew positive comment and support from many Queensland Baptists. There was a vocal group of Baptist theological students, however, including senior ordination candidates who were dismayed by Gill’s use of modern methods of biblical interpretation and favoured Gibson’s conservative approach. They voiced their concern to Gibson. According to Nickerson, it was Gibson’s difficulty in relating to his staff, particularly those whom he perceived to be undermining his authority and 'his unbending theological orthodoxy (which) resulted in a series of unhappy conflicts and dismissals, the first of which involved Gill. Gill found work lecturing at the Methodist Training College and the University of Queensland Divinity Department in 1973-74 before moving to Whitley College at the end of 1974.

136 Revd Jack White, Secretary, Qld Baptist College Council to Gill, 30 April and 25 August 1969, Gill Collection.
137 Queensland Baptist, August 1971, pp. 5-6.
138 The 1972 Christian folk fiesta attracted 1,500 young people with a program of non-stop Christian folk and rock music, evangelistic speakers and social issues forums. Positive reports were received. Queensland Baptist, April 1972, pp. 1-3.
139 Nickerson, "Baptist Theological College of Qld," 274-5.
140 Ibid., 273.
Two of Gill's students who welcomed his approach to biblical studies claimed that some of the ideas he was teaching could not be implemented in the typical Queensland Baptist church. In their view, the radical nature of the message and mission of Jesus Christ, as they interpreted Gill's teachings, would not be tolerated. From their initial conversation with Gill grew the House of Freedom, a centre for experimental Christian evangelism, social concern and training which met initially in 1972 in the hall of Jireh Baptist Church, Fortitude Valley, before relocating to Highgate Hill. The group found inspiration in Gill's teaching and in the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. They met weekly for training (using an action-
reflection model), ran a coffeehouse and social justice forums and later extended their operations to include arts and crafts, a drop-in centre, school and university meetings, concerts, church services and emergency accommodation. The House received positive publicity in Queensland newspapers but was named in state parliament. This was not unusual given the radical political views of its members in a state renowned for political conservatism.

The House leaders encouraged Gill to attend the 1974 Congress of Evangelization in Lausanne and to visit alternative Christian communities in Europe and Great Britain working among people of various subcultures such as drug-dependent youth. The Congress represented the culmination of efforts to bring together evangelicals throughout the world. The British evangelical Anglican leader, Revd Dr John Stott, steered the conference and was responsible for editing the Lausanne Covenant. It affirmed that evangelism and socio-political involvement were both part of Christian responsibility, with evangelism being primary. Many participants at Lausanne came from member churches of the WCC. Stott appealed for a note of evangelical repentance over hardening of ecumenical-evangelical relations that had occurred between WCC assemblies at Uppsala in 1968 and Bangkok in

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147 Brisbane Telegraph, Tuesday, October 15, 1974; 'The City Street Samaritans', The Courier Mail, Monday, June 2, 1975, p. 5.
148 W. Ross Johnston argued that the political conservatism of Queensland was particularly evident during the 1970s when the Queensland community endorsed the Bjelke-Petersen style of government – strong leadership, intolerant of dissent. Call of the Land (Brisbane: The Jacaranda Press, 1982), 205-6; Gill, The Fringes of Freedom, 85.
1972.150 The final covenant enabled a wide spectrum of Christian believers to identify with it. It was warmly received by ecumenical leaders and studied at the Fifth Assembly of the WCC held in Nairobi in 1975.

Gill was one of a number of Australian evangelical leaders at Lausanne representing the ‘radical discipleship’ movement in Australia. This was a term coined to indicate the more left wing socio-political stance of a group that included John Hirt and John Smith. Hirt was a Baptist minister and one of the founding leaders of the House of the New World, a Christian counter cultural movement in Sydney engaged in creative mission activities among people from a number of subcultures including ‘bikies’ and ‘surfies’.151 Smith was the founder of the Melbourne God Squad and the Melbourne-based para-church movements, Truth and Liberation Concern and Care and Communication Concern. Various leaders from Scripture Union, a more mainstream Australian evangelical movement, joined them.

Successful in attracting interest in the radical discipleship movement in Australia,152 the group collaborated with some young and emerging two-thirds world evangelical theologians including René Padilla153 and Samuel Escobar to have the radical socio-political dimensions of the Gospel placed firmly on the Congress 

151 After conversion to the Christian faith at the 1958 Billy Graham Crusade in Sydney, Hirt gave up his trade as a panel beater to train for the Baptist ministry. Queensland Baptist, November 1972, pp. 4-5. See John Hirt, "Radical Discipleship: Towards the Theology and Sociopolitical Implications" (PhD thesis: University of Sydney, 1998).
152 “Radical Discipleship at Work in Australia” pamphlets were distributed at Lausanne, Bunyip Collection.

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agenda. The group produced a paper\textsuperscript{154} that Stott commended to the conference delegates as a helpful contribution to ongoing debate on the nature of evangelization:

We affirm that ... the \textit{evangel} (Gospel) ... is Good News of liberation, of restoration, of wholeness, and of salvation that is personal, social, global and cosmic ... but we must repudiate as demonic the attempt to drive a wedge between evangelism and social action.\textsuperscript{155}

In spite of the group's expressed reservations with the Lausanne Covenant, the church's socio-political responsibility came back firmly onto the evangelical agenda and stayed there.\textsuperscript{156} In his later reflections, Gill contrasted Lausanne's concerns with those of its predecessor in Berlin in 1966, in which issues of evangelism and social action were not adequately debated and where racism was condemned purely in personal terms.\textsuperscript{157} After the Congress he wrote:

\textit{The new face of evangelicalism}, emerging from Lausanne may be seen, in part at least, in this renewed emphasis upon socio-political involvement as a constituent part of the church's mission of sacrificial service.\textsuperscript{158}

Gill continued his involvement in post-Lausanne discussions. The theme of radical discipleship permeated Gill's writing, teaching and living. Using the Synoptic Gospels as his framework, he explored the various implications of the Christian

\textsuperscript{154}"Theological Implications of Radical Discipleship," \textit{Let the Earth Hear His Voice}, 1294.

\textsuperscript{155}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{158}Ibid., 92.
Gospel for believers living in a western context. His base at Whitley College enabled him to develop his ideas in the context of the Bunyip Community.
CHAPTER TWO
EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The Bunyip’s founding membership of seven began attending the CHBC and planning the Community’s future. Aged between twenty and thirty-seven, they included two families. Most had tertiary qualifications and came from the Houses of Freedom and New World. Only one was Victorian. Five were Baptists, including two ordained ministers; the others came from Methodist and Anglican traditions. Some had already studied theology; the rest were about to enroll with the MCD. They joined the Bunyip because of a commitment to its ideals and the belief that they could make a difference to church and society. Gill’s charismatic leadership was a factor. By the end of the first year, four of the founding group remained. Two returned from overseas study several years later.

Attendances at the Sunday morning services soon increased and the church’s membership rose from eleven to twenty in the first six months; the majority aged between twenty and thirty-five years. Pastoral arrangements evolved throughout 1975 to the point where the church invited Gill and members of the Bunyip team to take responsibility for its pastoral work for the following year. This formal arrangement

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1 The MCD was established in 1910 by an Act of Parliament of the State of Victoria for the purpose of conferring degrees in theology. In 1972 representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Victoria and the Churches of Christ were included in the College, MCD Annual Report 2000; Stuart Piggin, "A History of Theological Education in Australia," in Geoff Treloar, ed. The Furtherance of Religious Beliefs: Essays on the History of Theological Education in Australia (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1997), 32. In 1975 the ETA was formed, comprising CCTC (formerly College of the Bible) and Whitley. This body became one of the ATIs of the MCD and met its criteria for teaching degrees in theology, Piggin, "A History of Theological Education," 36.
continued, with modifications, for over fifteen years. During 1975 the Union allowed the Bunyip to use its properties rent-free at 94 and 106 Hodgkinson Street for its operational centre, mission activities and accommodation, an arrangement that continued for about ten years.

The founding group met regularly to decide upon a name, aims and objectives, constitution, staffing and finances. The inspiration for the name, Bunyip, came from a popular award-winning children’s book, *The Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek*, the story of a Bunyip emerging from the depths of a billabong in search of its identity. Along the way it encountered various Australian animals that laughed at it and a man in a white coat that discounted its existence entirely. Discouraged, the Bunyip prepared to return to the billabong, when another shape emerged from the swampy depths – a second Bunyip. It greeted the first and the two lived happily ever after.

![Illustration 4](image)

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2 CHBC Minutes, 20 August 1975, 4 February 1976.
3 Union Executive Minutes, 29 April 1975.
The name was quaint. There was no doubting its Australian connotations. It lent itself to the creation of imaginative names for various aspects of the Community. Frequent enquiries about the name’s origin provided opportunities to tell the story and comment on issues of identity and community that it evoked. Soon the Bunyip’s stationery and advertising material included an endearing Bunyip in various poses. At times, the humorous name belied the more serious nature of the Bunyip’s purpose and achievements. Friends and observers commented on the irony of the name, because they considered some aspects of the Bunyip’s life and personalities as anything but gentle at times!6

The leadership board of the Bunyip developed a constitution and draft manifesto with aims and objectives substantially based on those of Brisbane’s House. The draft manifesto’s preamble stated:

The Bunyip is a place of positive Christian evangelism, of social involvement and community action ... a place working for the reconciliation of secular twentieth century philosophy, psychology, literature, art, politics and commerce with a biblical Christianity.7

These were high ideals and reflected the background of the founding members and their desire to hold in creative tension, the two prongs of Christian mission: evangelism and social action. The draft manifesto stated the distinctive emphasis of the Bunyip to be 'the liberating lordship of Jesus Christ over the totality of life and the need for a dynamic and creative commitment on the part of the believer' and articulated ways in which this commitment might be expressed. The aims were clear

6 Tapes 32 and 34.
7 Appendix I.
and ambitious - to prepare the person of faith for action in and beyond the walls of the church.

II

The Bunyip’s founding group and church volunteers worked hard with minimal resources to make 94 Hodgkinson Street fit for use. Built in 1866-67 on a large block of land before most of Clifton Hill was settled in the prosperous 1880s, it was an early Victorian double-fronted brick villa. George Curtis later extended it and lived there until his death in 1965. Five years later, the Union purchased the property but it mostly remained vacant until the Bunyip’s arrival. The house and garden were neglected and the house’s occupation by squatters proved a source of embarrassment to the Union.

The Bunyip focused its initial energies in the areas of mission and education, borrowing and adapting ideas from the Sydney and Brisbane Houses. It transformed the ground floor of 94 Hodgkinson Street into offices, a cassette library and multi-purpose meeting room for a Saturday evening coffee house, weekly craft workshops and Monday evening team training. Three or four Bunyips occupied the upstairs flat. Within twelve months the Union leased the old weatherboard cottage at 106 Hodgkinson Street, Fintry Bank to the Community for a household. Access to two properties for minimal or no rent was a great help and the arrangement clearly benefited both bodies. The Bunyip gained a base of operations, while the Union

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8 See Peterson, Brimstone to Bunyip, 58-9.
pointed to the way in which it was supporting languishing inner city Baptist ministry.⁹ Early Union reports were glowing and the Community received regular favourable coverage in the *Witness*,¹⁰ owing in large measure to Hicks, a faithful and supportive church secretary.

The church rewired its hall¹¹ for use as a youth club, Humpty’s Dump (the ‘Dump’). Helen Hoffman established the ‘Dump’ in response to the needs of local street youth and developed a team of volunteers to assist her in running the club. The ‘Dump’ aimed to cater for teenagers who did not easily fit into a more traditional youth club. It provided them with opportunities for recreation, social interaction and the development of potential, personal responsibility and spiritual awareness. Team members ran regular camps,¹² excursions, sporting activities and a tutorial program.¹³ Open several afternoons and evenings during the week, the ‘Dump’ functioned for ten years.

In 1975 the Bunyip established the coffee house and craft workshops. Coffee houses were hardly new. From the 1960s, a growing number of churches had introduced them as a way of providing a non-threatening environment for young people who eschewed more traditional church programs and buildings. The Bunyip coffee house décor was basic – woven sea-grass matting, candles, discarded State

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⁹ The Union provided a grant of $2,500.00 to its Home Mission Committee for use by the CHBC to assist the Bunyip, Union Assembly Minutes, 25 September 1975.


¹¹ Built in 1913 at a cost of less than £2,000.00, the hall was an impressive brick building that had supported a large range of activities. See Munro, “The Clifton Hill Baptist Church from 1890 to 1980,” 45.

¹² The Bunyip had the use of Everton Farm in Whittlesee for two years from June 1981. Bunyip Community Minutes, 8 May 1981. The farm provided an outlet for the ‘Dump’ youth.

Electricity Commission spools\textsuperscript{14} for tables, and cushions for sitting on the floor. The menu was simple – toast and coffee. The entertainment varied – folk music from Christian and secular bands and drama depicting some of the challenges of modern living. A compère provided continuity, introduced current issues for consideration and offered a Christian perspective. The emphasis was on being 'non-directive' and workers were designated 'conversational evangelists'. This meant that they attempted to get to know those who visited the coffee house, engage them in conversation, and, if the opportunity arose, communicate 'sensitively' their understanding of the Christian faith.

This approach to evangelism differed somewhat from that of the revivalist style of mass rallies associated particularly with Billy Graham's evangelistic crusades. Effective in certain circles during the 1950s and early 60s in gaining converts,\textsuperscript{15} the crusades had begun to lose their impact in the west from the mid 1960s.\textsuperscript{16} Gill pointed to the 1970s as a time of 'fervent evangelistic talk and feverish evangelistic effort'\textsuperscript{17} and lamented the modern tendency to skip over the theological foundations and react unthinkingly to the latest evangelistic techniques. He argued for the need to employ relevant ways of communicating the Christian Gospel to different groups of society without compromising the message.\textsuperscript{18} The coffee house operated most Saturday nights from 1975 until 1995. The original clientele were mainly university students and included visitors from various church groups.

\textsuperscript{14} Electrical cable had been coiled around wooden spools that were then discarded.
\textsuperscript{15} Stuart Piggin, \textit{Evangelical Christianity in Australia}, ch. 9.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 7.
The Bunyip ran weekly craft workshops. The use of arts and crafts has been a feature of many alternative communities. At times they have functioned as a symbol of the rejection of aspects of modern industrialized society in which the value of the individual has often been overlooked in the interests of efficiency and profit making. Jane Barr (Spark), the Bunyip’s first staff worker, organized and led the workshops. A trained diversional therapist, she had been influenced by the New World and a meeting with Gill at the 1973 Nimbin Alternative Lifestyles Festival. Barr combined her staff work with part time theological study and quickly established a small but effective program involving members of the Bunyip, the CHBC, team trainees and several local women and children. A room at the back of the church hall was renovated for use as a craft workshop, Billabong Arts and Crafts, to relieve pressure on 94 Hodgkinson Street. Some of the old sheds (stables) at the back of the centre were renovated for craft workshops. A pottery kiln was built and an electric pottery wheel purchased. Billabong Arts and Crafts occupied the church hall until 1982.

Illustration 5

19 Tape 5.
21 Bunyip Community Minutes, 5 November 1976.
The church regularly made available its worship building\textsuperscript{22} for Bunyip training weekends, conferences and special events, such as concerts and evangelistic youth rallies. In April 1975 the Bunyip held its first discipleship weekend. About seventy people attended and, from that initial group, the Bunyip’s first team training group of twenty-five formed. Team one comprised mainly young tertiary students and graduates from a range of Christian denominations. Discipleship weekends and team training courses became a mainstay of the Bunyip’s operations. A typical discipleship weekend would be held in the church, run from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon with worship, lectures and discussions on radical discipleship, using Mark’s Gospel as a basis.\textsuperscript{23} Team training ran two or three times a year.\textsuperscript{24} Participants met one night a week for four to six months for introductory instruction and discussion on a range of topics that included biblical inspiration and interpretation, Christian discipleship, thinking theologically, world religions, social ethics and apologetics, contemporary evangelism, pastoral care and counselling.\textsuperscript{25}

Teachers were drawn from Melbourne’s theological colleges, church agencies and Baptist churches. Trainees were exposed to a range of ecumenical and scholarly teaching. According to Britt:

Through the scholars, teachers, preachers, spiritual directors it engages, the Bunyip community is providing for its members and those who attend its courses ... a stimulating ecumenical diet that picks up some of the best ingredients available in theology, scripture studies, ethics and spirituality.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{22} See F. J. Wilkin, \textit{Our First Century}, 95-6.
\textsuperscript{23}Appendix J.
\textsuperscript{24} Team numbers ranged from 10-20 people. By July 1980, 13 teams had been trained. Report, Bunyip Community Minutes, 18 July 1980.
\textsuperscript{25} Appendix K.
\textsuperscript{26}Britt, \textit{In Search of New Wine Skins}, 34-5.
Course participants joined a Bunyip mission area to integrate theory with practical engagement and staff workers were usually drawn from its courses. By 1977 post-team training opportunities were in place, including a period of membership training. The underlying philosophy was that 'if we are to prevent our community from stagnating', then a well-developed educational program was essential.27

Teaching events provided educational opportunities often lacking in the institutional church. The Bunyip ran weekends and intensive sessions on Christian community, urban and third world mission, creative arts and theology.28 Through Gill’s influence and contacts, guest speakers of international reputation regularly came to the Bunyip to speak at its various teaching weekends and schools. They included Dr William Jones, an influential black Baptist leader from the United States who had worked closely with Martin Luther King Jr in the Civil Rights Movement.29

28 Appendix L.
29Rev Alan Marr, General Superintendent (Director of Ministries) of the Union was significantly influenced by the 1978 Bunyip School of Urban Mission, “The Gospel in the Ghetto” with Dr Jones. Tape 31. See also Witness, June 1978, p. 1.
Gill and the Bunyip accepted speaking and preaching engagements at churches, universities, schools and camps in Melbourne, Victoria and interstate. They aimed to introduce people to the radical implications of the Gospels and help fill a vacuum in training opportunities for Christian lay people.

Protestant Church decline by the 1970s was reflected in the crisis in churches' religious education programs.\(^{30}\) As access to tertiary education gradually improved during the 1970s, many lay Christians were seeking a higher quality of religious education and theological awareness.\(^{31}\) With the crisis in clergy vocation, denominational leadership recognized the need for a well-trained lay leadership. The Master's Workshop,\(^{32}\) a branch of Scripture Union, also responded to the need for training and a good relationship developed with the Bunyip. In 1976 the Bunyip established the Platypus Cassette Library with funding from the assets of the defunct Victorian Baptist Training Institute.\(^{33}\) The Library commissioned a series of 'Let's Study' cassettes on theological topics and recorded by reputable scholars.\(^{34}\) All

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\(^{30}\) The Baptist Federal Board of Christian Education Board closed down in the early 1980s.

\(^{31}\) Whitley College taught the MCD licentiates and diplomas in theology and religious education until the introduction of the BTheol in 1973. For the older examination based qualifications, see *MCD Handbooks, 1965-* for curricula. For Whitley's B.Theol. curricula, see *ETA Handbooks, 1976 - 2002.* For emerging trends in theological education, see Treloar, *The Furtherance of Religious Beliefs.*

\(^{32}\) Established in 1974 under the direction of Revd Peter Corney (later Vicar of St Hilary's Anglican Church, Kew), the Master's Workshop introduced the Christian Volunteer Service, a twelve month training and service program. Some participants did their voluntary service at the Bunyip. John U'Ren, "History of Para Church Movements in Australia 1965-89 and onwards," 19 February 2000. Unpublished manuscript, Uniting Church Centre, Melbourne. Used with the author's permission; Tape 34.

\(^{33}\) See Mung-Lat, "The Historical Development of Theological Education," 151-4. The BTI (1950s-75) was formed to train Australian Baptist women as missionaries and deaconesses. It also accepted private students who did not possess the minimum college entrance requirements. Gill outlined the details of Platypus Cassette Library. Assembly Minutes, 9 October 1976. The Union Executive proposed that the (BTI) Platypus Cassette Library be investigated as the source of non-ministerial training. Union Executive Minutes, 30 November 1976.

\(^{34}\) Appendix M.
Bunyip conferences were taped and an extensive collection was available to ministers and lay people for purchase or borrowing.\textsuperscript{35}

The relationship between the Clifton Hill Church and the Bunyip was mutually advantageous. In 1976 the Bunyip gained the use of the church manse at 229 Gold Street, Clifton Hill rent-free, on the understanding that its occupants would provide pastoral support for the church, and that it be used for church activities.\textsuperscript{36} The manse's bungalow provided accommodation for Bunyip staff workers and overseas guests. The church's old weatherboard back room was redecorated in bright reds and yellows for music workshops, Berkeley's Creek Music Hall (1976-80)\textsuperscript{37} and later, a pre-school playgroup, Possum Play Time (1981-2).\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{III}

During the first two years of its operation, thirty adults joined the community. Of equal gender numbers, they ranged in age from seventeen to fifty with most aged between twenty and twenty-five years and included twenty-one single people and three families. Most resided in Community households. Over one third came from a Baptist or Church of Christ background, the remainder from a range of denominations including the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions. Not all had previous church affiliation. Over half came from interstate, some with previous involvement in the Sydney and Brisbane Houses. Well over half were tertiary students or graduates and the length of stay averaged four and a half years. Reasons for joining

\begin{itemize}
  \item Tape 18.
  \item CHBC Minutes, 4 February 1976. The Manse was rented for $25.00 per week.
  \item Appendix N.
  \item Bunyip Community Minutes, 18 November 1981.
\end{itemize}
were similar to those of the founding group. In addition, the Community’s perceived connection with real life, its training and practical mission opportunities and a perceived purpose behind community living proved attractive.\textsuperscript{39} Some learnt of the Bunyip through Gill’s speaking engagements at the University of Melbourne’s Christian Union.\textsuperscript{40} Jennifer Liggett (Paterson) and Gavin Mountjoy were two such people.

Illustration 7

They found Gill inspiring. He was interested in people, particularly young adults and they responded to his intellectual strength, creative vision for the church and healthy disrespect for authority.\textsuperscript{41} Mountjoy was an agricultural engineering student who had met Gill while a Whitley resident. As a young man, he had been

\textsuperscript{39} This material has been gained from Bunyip minutes, interviews, telephone conversations and completed questionnaires from former Bunyips. It does not pretend to be fully comprehensive but impressionistic. See Appendices A-F.

\textsuperscript{40} Otherwise known as the Evangelical Union, it was established by Inter-Varsity Fellowship, a conservative evangelical tertiary students organization originating from Cambridge University in 1928. Bebbington, \textit{Evangelicalism in Modern Britain}, 259-60.

\textsuperscript{41} Ironically Gill did not like his own authority to be challenged.
heavily involved in the life of his local church, the Church of Christ in Geelong, but like many contemporaries had come to a point of seriously questioning the Christian faith. He found it difficult to reconcile modern scientific studies with uncritical (conservative) theological and biblical teaching and considered abandoning his church. As one of the University's CU leaders, he invited Gill to give a series of lunchtime addresses to its students on the theme of Christian discipleship in early 1975. Mountjoy found Gill's approach refreshing because it took the Bible seriously, but was by no means fundamentalist. He saw in the man an evangelical with a more 'liberal approach' that was intellectually rigorous, and with a political edge. In other words, Mountjoy understood Gill to be teaching the view that the Christian faith did not only apply to private ethical matters, and that a Christian need not be apolitical or politically conservative. As Mountjoy came from a politically conservative family and church background, this was a revelation to him.

After graduation and a brief period working as a university tutor, he was appointed a Bunyip staff-worker and employed in its Shepparton centre from 1978 - 81. There he replaced Glenn Farquar-Nicol, an arts graduate who, like Mountjoy, had been inspired by Gill. During his involvement with the Bunyip (1975-82), Nicol was part of its socio-political working group, and joined the Communist Party of

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43 'He presented a series on the call to discipleship and set the cat among the pigeons ... A lot of my friends at Whitley were theological students. I discussed with them at night 'flat earth' theories and studied engineering by day. Athol helped me put a framework back together ... Athol was a risk. I was moving to the edge of CU at the time. Some said I'd gone too far,' Tape 21.


Australia with two other Bunyip members. The Shepparton Bunyip (1976-85) provided accommodation for homeless people, ran an after school club for local youth and sought to engage local Shepparton church ministers and members in practical mission activities. On his return to Melbourne, Mountjoy established the Bunyip's Evening Quail food cooperative and its peace ministries group.\(^{46}\) He remained involved for ten years.

Liggett was twenty-one when she joined the Bunyip in 1975. A music student, she came from a sheltered Anglican upper-middle class family in Melbourne's southeast. Upon graduation, she joined the Bunyip staff in 1976 and moved into the recently vacated household at 106 Hodgkinson Street. The property had been terribly neglected by its previous tenants and Liggett was shocked by her first real exposure to the effects of alcoholism, poverty, and parental neglect. 'Everything had to be taken out and the insides hosed down and painted' before the new occupants took up residence.\(^{47}\) Liggett recalls being appalled by the clear evidence of truancy in Clifton Hill and the low level of literacy among the local youth who frequented the 'Dump'. Her upbringing had not exposed her to such social situations and she believed that she had a responsibility to use her education and skills to make a contribution to the lives of others. Liggett established Berkeley's Creek Music Hall and was a prime mover in the Bunyip's involvement in Cameron House Day Care Centre for the elderly. Her involvement with the Bunyip spanned seven years. Both she and Mountjoy exercised leadership roles in the Bunyip and completed degrees in theology with the MCD.

\(^{46}\) Tape 21.
\(^{47}\) Tape 17.
By 1975 the Bunyip was employing three full time workers in arts and crafts, coffee house, graphics and woodwork, administration, training and counselling. There was also a part-time worker in property maintenance. Full-time single staff earned $40.00 a week and received rent-free accommodation in the Bunyip centre. Later this was raised to $50.00.\textsuperscript{48} Community finances were stretched in the early years. The main income sources were sharepartner contributions. Members and associates were expected to contribute a percentage of their income\textsuperscript{49} but as most were students or staff workers, contributions were small. Friends of the Bunyip joined a scheme known as the Supporters' Club\textsuperscript{50} and made donations. Income was generated from the sale of horseshoe nail crosses that found a ready market among those who identified with the more counter-cultural atmosphere of the 'Jesus Movement'.\textsuperscript{51} The Bunyip also received payment for speaking engagements and a small weekly stipend from the CHBC. Sometimes the CHBC made a special donation or interest-free loan to the Bunyip.\textsuperscript{52} Household members who were not staff workers paid rent on a graduated scale. Staff salaries were kept to a minimum but even so, there was not always enough income to pay them.\textsuperscript{53} At times, financial difficulties raised the question of applying

\textsuperscript{48} Bunyip Executive Minutes, 25 September 1975. No provision was made for superannuation, workers' compensation or sick leave, although staff workers were entitled to holidays.
\textsuperscript{49} Appendix O.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} See "Radical Disciples Meet the Establishment," \textit{Witness} August 1976, p. 6 in which Genevieve Cutler examined the impact of the Jesus revolution upon some Melbourne groups. She interviewed several (male) leaders of Radical Discipleship groups who expressed their frustration with a church establishment more concerned with structures, comfort and dogma than with the needs of powerless people.
\textsuperscript{52} $100.00 approved, CHBC Minutes, 4 February 1976; $1,000.00 approved, CHBC Minutes, 21 September 1977.
for government grants. By 1976, the Bunyip was employing six full time and three part-time staff.

Illustration 8

Occasionally Bunyip projects proved financially disastrous like the Carringbush Country Fair, an ambitious project designed to bring the country to the City of Collingwood before the advent of the Collingwood Children's Farm. It rained on the day in December 1976, just enough to dampen the occasion but not enough for an insurance claim. One of the staff workers, David Wong, recalls:

We didn't know what we were doing ... The Country Fair jelled the Community [Bunyip] ... We didn't do too well on the business side of things. We were financially naive. We over-catered ... There was a debt for a while but we demonstrated to the local community that we could do

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54 Ibid., 5 March 1976. At the time, the idea was rejected but was revisited on several occasions. See ch. 3, 81.
55 'Bunyip's Progress II' (Bunyip Newsletter), February 1976, Bunyip Collection.
56 Bunyip Community Minutes, 12 December 1976.
something. Don’t know how well we got our message across to the people of Collingwood.57

The Carringbush Country Fair was preceded by a two week 'Pole Sit'. With the co-operation of a friend in the State Electricity Commission, two thirty feet poles were erected at the foot of the Collingwood high-rise flats and two empty volvo car packing cases mounted on the poles to provide homes for two intrepid staff workers. The project’s aim was to raise public awareness of, and money for Melbourne’s homeless. It attracted a lot of media attention.

In 1976 the Bunyip instigated a twelve-month internship program, School of the Prophets. It was designed to immerse participants in all aspects of the Bunyip’s life - community living, worship, manual work, mission and organized study. Initially participants spent three months in each of the centres - New World, Freedom and Bunyip - and also a brief period in Canberra under the supervision of the ecumenical chaplain of the Australian National University, the Revd Brian Phillips, a friend and colleague of Gill and a regular visitor to the Bunyip.58 Phillips later gave leadership to a Bunyip centre established in Canberra.59 As the program developed, participants remained at the Bunyip for training. Numbers varied. In the first year there were four men and four women.60 The program provided the Community with a young energetic labour force.61 They were expected to be self-supporting and received regular time off for casual employment. Most were young, single, tertiary graduates or students taking

57 The Collingwood Council was struck by the amount of work we did without visible gain. We got to know them through the Fair ... A lot of people came from the high-rise flats to have a good time but we were more effective when we opened Vere Street shop-front years later. Tape 24.
58 Formerly minister of the Pilgrim Uniting Church, Adelaide, Phillips was interested in contemplative prayer. He conducted seminars at the Bunyip on community and prayer before his appointment as ANU chaplain in 1977.
60 Three quarters came from interstate.
a year out from their university courses to consider their futures. A few joined the Bunyip and remained for several years.

The Bunyip made early unsuccessful attempts to establish work among elderly people in the local Clifton Hill community. When the opportunity arose to become involved in a larger church-based operation initiated by the Presbyterian Church, the Bunyip responded. In 1976 the Presbyterian Social Services Department established Cameron House at 225 McKean Street, North Fitzroy as a centre catering for the needs of the elderly residents of Fitzroy, Clifton Hill and Collingwood. Formerly the Presbyterian Sisterhood, the large two-storied Victorian residence, set in an acre of garden, had functioned for nearly four decades as a home for unmarried mothers. By the 1970s, with the widespread availability of the contraceptive pill and medical abortion, and the introduction of a range of social welfare provisions under the Whitlam Labor Government, the need for services like the Presbyterian Sisterhood ceased almost overnight. It closed in 1976. Church welfare agencies began to move into different areas of service. Society’s attitudes towards unmarried mothers and children born out of wedlock were rapidly changing; the social stigma was gradually disappearing.

Cameron House Day Care Centre opened in September 1976. It was soon operating Monday to Friday, 10.30 am – 3.00 pm under a management committee, Cameron Council, comprising a local medical practitioner, representatives from the

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62 School of the Prophets was adapted and used elsewhere. Revd Jim Barr, member of the 1976 program established the church’s Urban Mission Unit at the Collins Street Baptist Church while minister (1991-2000). Revd Tim Costello is the current director of the program, “Urban Seed”.
63 The house was bought in 1913 by Revd Donald Cameron, Director of the Presbyterian Social Services Department for the accommodation and care of unmarried mothers. It operated under the name of the Presbyterian Sisterhood until 1976, Submission to the Health Commission of Victoria from the Cameron Community Council, 1982, Bunyip Collection.
64 According to Nicholls, there were 15 church-run homes for unmarried mothers in 1970. By 1975 there were none. Tape 33.
Fitzroy Council, the Presbyterian Social Services Department and the local Presbyterian church. Fitzroy Council mini buses provided transport for elderly or disabled patrons. Volunteers served an inexpensive three course hot meal and engaged the elderly in a recreational program of craft, singing, dancing, music, games and outings. The centre could accommodate up to sixty people and often did, particularly on Fridays, when fish and chips, a particular favourite, were on the menu. The local ministers’ fraternal conducted a short weekly worship service.

The Bunyip provided voluntary workers, did basic cleaning and garden maintenance. In return, it had the use of the upstairs residence at a reduced rental and the use of the ground floor for meetings outside the centre’s hours of operation. It was also represented on the Cameron Council. The arrangement was renegotiated the following year after some ‘teething problems’, but overall it proved a mutually advantageous arrangement. Janette Shepherd (the Bunyip administrator) and Ligget were primarily responsible for negotiating the agreement with the Cameron committee. They were convinced of the needs of inner city elderly residents for social interaction, companionship, recreation and nutritious food, and persisted in their efforts to persuade other members of the Bunyip of its significance. The Bunyip affirmed it as one of their areas in mission in 1977. This was a departure from previous experience. Ligget established a music and movement program, visited local

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65 Nicholls often did the ’milk run’, transporting elderly residents to and from Cameron House.

66 See Cameron House Agreement in C. Black, (Director, Cameron Community), Report on Cameron Community Requested By the Uniting Church Social Services Task Group Appendix 3, October 1979, Bunyip Collection. The report included a positive evaluation of the Bunyip’s contribution. See the 1982 Cameron Community Council Submission to the Health Commission of Victoria for a full statement of its operation and history.

67 Report of the Board of Management, Cameron House and Dickins Lodge, March 1978; Correspondence between Bunyip administrator and Cameron Board, 20 and 27 June 1977, Bunyip Collection.

68 Bunyip Community Minutes, 24 June 1977.
residents in their homes and represented the Bunyip on the Cameron Council from 1976-80.

Cameron House became widely known in the local communities and received referrals from local medical practitioners, social workers and councillors. According to Nicholls, 'It was the only place some of them ever went. Some lived in terrible conditions.' This local initiative in aged care corresponded to community concern that large numbers of older people were destitute or living in unpleasant institutional environments. With increased pressure from lobby groups for governments to provide better services for senior citizens, the Fraser Government’s attempts to reduce expenditure in this area failed. When the Uniting Church was formed in 1977, its Division of Community Services became responsible for the operation of Cameron House and the Bunyip maintained its regular involvement until 1985.
In 1976, Liggett established an innovative music program known as Berkeley’s Creek Music Hall. This consisted of a range of free music workshops for local children aged from pre-school to secondary years, and a monthly schedule of concerts and evangelistic youth events, called 'corroborees'. Liggett ran twelve weekly music workshops at the Bunyip, involving more than sixty children and adults. The program provided opportunities in the creative arts often denied to poorer members of the local community. Inner city government and Catholic schools in traditional Labor electorates had suffered from years of government neglect, a situation that only began to change in the 1980s. The monthly music concerts and corroborees were specifically designed for church youth groups. They featured modern Australian Christian bands – electric rock, folk and acoustic Latin American - drama and an address from a contemporary youth speaker like the leader of Melbourne’s God Squad, John Smith.72

The Bunyip was one of the early agencies in Victoria to respond to the issues of youth homelessness. The Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul provided overnight shelters and hostel accommodation for older, often alcoholic, homeless men but these facilities were unsuitable for young people made homeless through family pressures, violence, abuse or psychiatric illness. Their numbers were steadily increasing.73 After the Union made 106 Hodgkinson Street available to the Community, it turned the house into emergency youth accommodation.74 The project took almost a year to eventuate and Fintry Bank officially opened in June 1977.75 It was a

74 Bunyip Community Minutes, 12 December 1976.
75 Bunyip Executive Minutes, 12 May 1977 announced the opening of Fintry Bank as 1 June 1977.
four-bedroom weatherboard house with a lounge room, kitchen, outside toilet,\textsuperscript{76} laundry and backyard. Two of the bedrooms were for Bunyip members or volunteers, one for homeless young men and one for women. Sue Kirkegaard, a social worker from the House of Freedom was employed by the Bunyip to oversee the operation.\textsuperscript{77} She envisaged three Bunyip members living in the house, caring for a maximum of six young people (three males and three females) for specific short periods of time, while recognizing that some might need to stay for two to three months.

 Kirkegaard was diligent in bringing the issues of youth homelessness before the Community but Fintry Bank's existence was precarious. The work was demanding and it was a struggle to find and keep a team of volunteers. Two years after Fintry's establishment, federal and state governments introduced funding for youth refuges

\begin{flushright}
Illustration 10
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{76} The outdoor toilet was eventually brought inside!
\textsuperscript{77} Kirkegaard's Report, Bunyip Community Minutes, 12 August 1977; Bunyip Executive minutes, 17 November 1978; 20 March 1979.
under the Youth Services Scheme for an initial twelve-month period. The scheme was later extended.\textsuperscript{78}

At the end of 1978, the Ashley family moved into the house and assumed responsibility for its operations for nearly two years.\textsuperscript{79} By 1978, the major providers of youth emergency accommodation in Melbourne were Blackburn Baptist Church, the Salvation Army (Tranmere Street, North Fitzroy), the Jesuits, Ascotvale Church of Christ and the Bunyip. In his report to the Bunyip, Ashley indicated that they had received one hundred and eighty referrals in four months and admitted twenty percent. Between five and six homeless youth passed through the house every six weeks during this time. The majority of funding the operation came through Bunyip share partner contributions and Ashley stated that they had no intention of applying for government funding at the time, a sentiment echoed by later Fintry staff. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
We also value our exceptional position socially/politically as a result of our financial base and alternative ecumenical Christian structure. From this position we have the freedom and the statement to make to both the existing Government and Welfare structures as well as those that are trying to develop in this new field; and the average person in their own home who must share the responsibility for our youth’s homelessness if the situation has any chance of improving.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

Ashley’s report pointed to the substandard overpriced state of private housing and shortages in public housing. He mentioned the links between the Bunyip and government and church run housing services.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{78} Homeless Youth, 31.
\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{81} Stopover Housing Service, YAC and Brunswick-Coburg Accommodation Service.
In 1981 Fintry staff worker, Andrew Tiver, prepared the Bunyip submission for the Senate Standing Committee on Homelessness. Members of the Senate committee visited to see the work first hand and meet some of its residents. Among its many findings, it stated that youth refuges had been able to provide low cost, basic, often free accommodation for several hundred homeless youth throughout Australia, providing homeless youth with a breathing space. Importantly the report acknowledged that youth refuges had brought to the public's attention, the plight of homeless youth throughout Australia and the need for access to low cost medium to long-term accommodation. Like Ashley, Tiver had a strong sense of the political vocation of Fintry Bank and the Bunyip and challenged the idea of accepting government funding for homeless youth on the grounds that it would have compromised the community's stance: 'We did more than agencies with funding ... We picked up the problem kids who failed to make it in the welfare system ... Fintry, the Salvation Army and the Sisters of Charity were the three agencies that would take those kids'. Fintry operated on a shoestring budget with support from volunteers and helpers outside the Bunyip residents. Sometimes workers found themselves out of their depth. Tiver and Bunyip volunteer, Debbie Mountjoy recall some of their experiences: 'We had dealers trying to bust in ... the son of a Yugoslav, supposed to do military training at a secret camp to go back to the homeland to fight'. 'As a counsellor now, I'm pretty appalled at the lack of safety that was there for workers.

82 Witnesses included 5 former and current Bunyip members. The Bunyip (Shepparton and Melbourne) was noted as one of the refuges not receiving funding under the Youth Services Scheme that had made a submission to the Commission. *Homeless Youth*, 34.
83 Tape 23.
84 *Homeless Youth*, 43.
85 Tape 23.
86 Ibid.
We were thrown in the deep end and the risks of someone suiciding or having a go at us were pretty high. Over the seven years of its operation, hundreds of young people found emergency accommodation in Fintry Bank and former Fintry staff workers and Bunyip members continued to make a contribution in the area of youth homelessness and housing. In 1985 Fintry Bank closed for renovations and opened eighteen months later with a different purpose.

Bunyip staff workers received low wages and accepted restrictions on their lifestyle. The Henderson Poverty Line was used as a guide in the determination of wage levels. Staff did not necessarily view their work as diminishing their quality of life. It was chosen freely and represented a natural outworking of their commitment to the Bunyip’s philosophy. Some staff members were critical of government social workers on good incomes expecting agencies like the Bunyip to provide a level of support that they were unable or unwilling to offer. There was the perception that some of these workers were making a living off the poor. Bunyip staff did not perceive their work primarily as the delivery of welfare but as carrying out the work of a Christian community for whom justice and care for the poor was important. Probably Bunyip attitudes towards material security in the 1970s reflected a naïveté or innocence that proved unsustainable in a later period of high unemployment and excessive interest rates. In the early stages of the Bunyip, most staff workers were

87 Tape 20.
88 Kirkegard, J. and K. Ashley and Tiver were involved in the establishment and running of YAC. It lobbied solidly for the homeless at state and federal levels.
89 ch. 3, vi.
90 Staff Salaries Proposal, Bunyip Community Minutes, 10 July 1980. Rates: Single staff - $70.00 per week; marrieds with up to two children - $120.00 per week (all including rent free accommodation in a Community household).
91 Tape 23.
young and single. Later, marriage and family status needed to be considered when staff salaries were determined.
CHAPTER THREE

GROWTH AND DECLINE

As the Bunyip grew, it turned its attention to issues of membership, governance, worship, ecumenism, housing and economics and embarked on new mission developments.

In 1978 there were thirty-eight adults in the Bunyip with the majority living in five Community households in Clifton Hill and North Fitzroy.\(^1\) By 1981 the Community totalled eighty-two people.\(^2\) About thirty-seven adults and eleven children joined from 1981-2. The influx of people included equal numbers of males and females, seven families and twenty-one single people. The majority came from interstate. Over half were tertiary students or graduates. The Uniting Church's National Christian Youth Conference in Sydney (January 1981) and the para-church Melbourne Easter 1981 conference 'Servants in a Strange Land', attracted new members. Bunyip centres established in Shepparton (1977), Albury-Wodonga, Canberra and Tasmania (1978) also drew people who were interested in coming to Melbourne.

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\(^1\) Bunyip Community minutes, June 1978.
\(^2\) Bunyip Membership records, October 1981.
There was greater ecumenical diversity among those who joined the community during this period, including six Roman Catholics, some from the Pentecostal and Salvation Army churches and an ordained Baptist minister. Twelve people were studying theology. The average age at time of joining was twenty-five to thirty and average length of stay, four years.

Numbers peaked in 1982\(^3\) and began slowly to decline. Fewer people joined and several key people left the community. During 1983 and 1984, eleven adults and two children joined the community while twenty-one adults and five children left for various reasons including overseas travel. A few returned at a later date. By May 1984 there were thirty-one adults and twelve children in the Bunyip.

One of the Bunyip’s aims was to secure enough affordable local accommodation to foster community life and facilitate its growing ministry. By 1977

\(^3\)Bunyip Community minutes, February 1982 list 18 members, 6 associates and 17 household members. Bunyip Financial Records, September 1982 list 49 adults.
there were five households in Clifton Hill and North Fitzroy accommodating at least twenty-two adults. Of the properties used for community households, two belonged to the Union, one to the Clifton Hill Church, one was rented commercially and one rented cheaply from the Presbyterian Church. All residents of community households, excepting Bunyip staff, paid rent. Rentals varied according to income and status and helped to subsidize the cost of Bunyip operations.

When the issue of owning private property arose during 1976, a task group was established to investigate the issues. Some members argued that ownership of property might weaken the group's identification with the poor and the inner city working classes; others believed that private property would tie the group down and make it difficult to move on, operating on the Biblical image of the people of God as a 'pilgrim people'. Some of the arguments against ownership of property approached a Biblical fundamentalism. They also reflected the age and family situation of the members at the time. Most were single people or young married couples with no children. Some of the views revealed a genuine suspicion and rejection of the great Australian dream of home ownership.

The Bunyip's most senior member, Revd Leo Ball, a retired Anglican priest with previous experience of religious residential communities in New Zealand, prompted the Community to buy property. Ball wanted the Bunyip to develop a more

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4 Bunyip Executive minutes, February 1977.
5 The Bunyip agreed to the following weekly rentals: workers - $20.00; students and pensioners - $15.00; staff - $10.00; married couples - total of single rates. Bunyip Community minutes, 22 July 1977.
6 Bunyip Community minutes; 5 November 1976; 22 April 1977.
7 According to Kerreen Reiger, the increasing cost of property had put the dream of home ownership out of the reach of many Australians, Family Economy (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1991), 26. Cf. Lionel Orchard, "Housing Policies" in Head and Patience, eds, From Fraser to Hawke: Australian Public Policy in the 1980s (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1989), 367,370. The proportion of home owning households fell from 71.4 per cent in 1966 to 67.7 per cent a decade later because of high interest rates.
secure residential base in Clifton Hill and, for this purpose, he bought a house at auction at 425 Wellington Street, Clifton Hill in 1977. He paid half the cost and the Bunyip secured interest free loans and gifts for the other half. This purchase marked the establishment of the Bunyip Community Housing Trust - to purchase affordable housing for Bunyip members and those in need of accommodation. In total, the Trust purchased four properties between 1977 and 1988 and had a flat built at the back of one of the houses for Ball and his wife.

Illustration 12

One of the early experiments in Bunyip household life was the creation of an artists' household in Fitzroy in 1979. Bunyip artists wanted to see if the context of an artists' household might be an inspiration to their creativity. Thus the Bunyip adjusted the normal criteria for membership of a household and the artists' group of six set up house. There was no space for guests; their primary purpose was to gauge whether the intensity of community living contributed to artwork. According to one member

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8 The Union loaned the Bunyip Trust (through the Clifton Hill church) $8,000.00 for 4 years at 6.75% interest. CHBC minutes, 15 August 1979.
9 Bunyip Community minutes, 21 October 1977.
10 Appendix P.
11 Bunyip Community minutes, 25 August 1978.
of the household, the exhibition at the end of the year showed evidence of change and commonality in work.\textsuperscript{12} Close and enduring friendships developed throughout the process.

Bunyip households were usually full. By 1982, the Community's membership and occupancy of households peaked. There were seventy people, including a number of children, living in ten households in Clifton Hill, North Fitzroy and Collingwood.\textsuperscript{13} Three of the ten properties were commercially rented. Singles, married and families with children shared accommodation. Traditional gender roles were questioned. Each family unit was free to determine its own way of operating, but it was expected that the sharing of household responsibilities would be fairly equitable.

![Illustration 13](image)

Each adult was rostered to cook and if people did not know how when they joined a household, they soon learnt. Household members ate together, shared household expenses and set regular time aside for meetings to deal with issues as they arose, and for family devotions. Each household held a 'family night' once a week when

\textsuperscript{12} The exhibition was held in September 1979. Tape 25. 
\textsuperscript{13} Bunyip Sharepartner and Rental sheet 1982.
everyone was expected to be present. Bunyip members who lived independently were linked to a particular household and shared in its family night.

Although members tended to be fairly conventional in their view of family life, some questioned the emphasis placed upon the nuclear family in Australian society and particularly within the church. From the late 1960s, patterns of family formation had been changing dramatically; the number of single parent families was growing rapidly; more and more individuals were forming their own households. It was becoming much harder for people to buy their own homes and the philosophy of home ownership was under challenge in some quarters.14

The Bunyip probably appeared quite conservative, even prudish, to outsiders in its sexual ethics. Undoubtedly there were different views about sexual practices and orientation but a member's sexual ethics were regarded as primarily a private matter unless it caused problems in a household. Issues of sexuality were not openly discussed at meetings and discretion was encouraged. Normally couples did not share households until they were married, a policy also extending to visitors.15 One or two members openly declared themselves to be homosexual; others maintained their privacy. Probably the Bunyip encouraged conventional (conservative) sexual ethical conduct in order not to alienate itself from a more conservative church constituency and support base.

Households accommodated short-term visitors, such as those doing 'Monk for a Month' or 'Friar for a Fortnight' programs,16 and those in need of support or emergency accommodation. Visitors often brought a fresh and interesting dimension

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15 Bunyip Community minutes, 24 February 1978.
16 Appendix Q.
but sometimes the influx of new people proved a strain when Community life was already very full. In the changing composition of households, the idea of the 'strong' supporting the 'not so strong' was a challenge.\textsuperscript{17} Inner city housing stock was not always suitable for community living and this sometimes added pressure to household life. If the Bunyip did not own a particular property, it was limited in its options to renovate. Finances were usually too stretched to allow significant renovation of property that it owned and rising interest rates were burdensome.

The question of household pets and the consumption of alcohol sometimes created tensions.\textsuperscript{18} In its early days, the Community decided against ownership of pets in Community households in the belief that household membership was too unstable to provide security for a pet. This view later changed as households stabilized and acquired animals. The Bunyip recommended that consumption of alcohol not take place within the Community or at public functions because of the widespread nature of alcohol abuse within society and the presence of drug or alcohol dependent people within the Community.\textsuperscript{19} Not all were convinced by these arguments and a few argued for the rights of households to determine their own position. Alcohol was not served at Bunyip functions.

There was no formal 'common purse' arrangement, although, from time to time, some members proposed various forms of economic sharing and entered into them.\textsuperscript{20} The Bunyip's economic task group investigated issues of equity, use and

\textsuperscript{17} Tapes 15 and 20.
\textsuperscript{18} Bunyip Community minutes, 11 February 1977. Some members were hurt by inconsistent application of the rule. Tape 7.
\textsuperscript{19} Bunyip Community minutes, 12 November 1980.
\textsuperscript{20} e.g. a car cooperative. Perceived and real inequities in the Bunyip's economic life sometimes caused tensions. Tapes 8, 15 and 20.
ownership of property and goods, income sharing and wealth creation schemes.\textsuperscript{21} Eventually the Community decided against adopting common purse on the grounds that it would be applicable to members only, thus creating the possibility of division, and that the administration of such a scheme was fraught with problems.\textsuperscript{22} At various times the issue of government funding was vigorously debated. The principle of not accepting government monies was defended on the grounds that the Community should not be beholden to the government or dependent upon its budgetary whims for the commencement of new programs, or for the continuation of existing work.\textsuperscript{23} It was also argued that members needed to fulfil their financial responsibilities.\textsuperscript{24} The issue was revisited on several occasions and sometimes the Community applied for funding for specific projects.\textsuperscript{25} However, apart from the Community School,\textsuperscript{26} government funding did not figure prominently in the Bunyip’s income. It mainly relied on share partners, supporters and rental income for financing its operation. In 1982 the Bunyip gained tax deductibility for its Counselling and Care Centre.

\section{II}

In the first two years membership categories were fairly fluid. Those who agreed with the basic emphasis of the Bunyip normally joined the team-training program. They might then move into a household at the conclusion of, or even during, the course of their training. Before 1978, the categories of full and associate membership were open

\textsuperscript{21} Bunyip Community minutes, 3 July 1981.
\textsuperscript{23} The separation of Church and State is a venerable Baptist voluntarist tradition derived from the UK. Baptists mostly rejected state aid on these grounds.
\textsuperscript{24} Bunyip Community minutes, 3 May 1979.
\textsuperscript{25} The Bunyip applied for a government grant of $34,000.00 for its food-co-operative at 41 Vere Street, Collingwood. Bunyip Community minutes, 29 July 1983.
\textsuperscript{26} ch. 3, 92,94-7.
to people who agreed with the Community's basis as set out in its draft manifesto. Soon other conditions relating to worship, finance and mission applied. Full members were required to have had a longer period of involvement than associates and be willing to make a longer commitment. Agreements were gradually revised and expanded. A new category, members-in-training, was introduced in 1978. Members-in-training were eligible to attend Community meetings and participate in discussions but not vote. When the issue of five-year membership was raised at the end of 1977, some expressed uneasiness about the commitment that this involved and the issue was deferred and adopted two years later, but not before a few members had resigned. There was always flexibility in living arrangements. Members and associates did not have to reside in a Community household, and a few chose this option. Agreements were reviewed from time to time and certain changes adopted. A controversial proposal for life membership was discussed but, in the end, not adopted.

The impact of membership agreements varied. It was generally recognized that there was a need for commitment, discipline and accountability to ensure the group's survival and influence. However, the agreements were demanding and, at times, could be oppressive as the Revd Jim Barr recalls:

We had to build alternative structures. We retreated into it. We were a bit rule bound ... partly Gill's personality, for example, classes of membership ... rules about this and that.

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27 Appendix O.
28 Bunyip Community minutes, 10 November 1977.
29 Ibid., 8 November 1979.
31 Ibid., 18 October 1983; Tape 8.
At one level, it threatened to strangle the life out of us. On the other hand, we were frightfully anarchic. 33

There was not a lot of free time and Community life could be rather intense. Some struggled with the structure of household life and membership requirements. Those with demanding jobs, heavy study schedules and family commitments did not find it easy to juggle different responsibilities and maintain relationships with family and friends living outside the Community. 34 Some were susceptible to 'burnout'. Members wishing to save for overseas travel or explore other options, found the membership agreements too inflexible. One of the attempts to overcome the impasse created by this perceived inflexibility was the development of a Draft Rule, 35 an idea mooted in 1979 with serious work beginning in 1981. The aim of the Rule was to express the Community's basic ethos and members were encouraged to participate in its preparation.

Bunyips who were members of churches other than the CHBC found it difficult to sustain relationships in yet another community. 36 Some felt under pressure to join the CHBC because it was the easiest option, although they did not come from a Baptist tradition and were unfamiliar with Baptist polity. 37 The Bunyip did not regard itself as a church but, in reality, it fulfilled most generally recognized

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33 Tape 6.
34 Bunyip Executive minutes, July 1977. 'We were so busy. Would have liked more time for relaxation, more time for the family.' Tape 12. Cf. Tapes 9,12,13,15,18,20; Telephone Interviews 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 18 and Questionnaires 3, 4, 5.
36 Tape 19.
37 Bunyip Community minutes, 22 April 1977; Tape 23; Telephone Interview 4.
The CHBC introduced an 'open membership' policy in 1982 and changed its name to the Community Church of St Mark (CHBC). CHBC minutes, 20 September 1981.
ecclesiological functions. Bunyip membership agreements probably suited those best that had come from interstate or overseas, were not employed full time outside the Community, and had joined the CHBC. They were also more likely to look to the Bunyip for the fulfillment of a wider range of needs than others.

The Community was highly structured. Its leadership board and members met regularly (initially weekly, then fortnightly). Each mission area and household had its own leader. These leaders met regularly together to discuss business related to their own operations. There were various task groups for worship, education, membership, administration and hospitality that met regularly to ensure the smooth running of their various areas. A membership committee was appointed to provide membership training and recommend individuals for full or associate membership. Each mission group was expected to meet regularly to review its day-to-day operations and undertake long-term planning. Groups appointed their own office bearers and kept meeting records. Mission groups were encouraged to take time each year for a period of prayer and retreat. All groups were free to prepare proposals for Community meetings. Normally proposals were processed first by the Bunyip executive but sometimes, they would come directly to the Community. Groups were expected to report regularly to the Community.

The positions of leader and administrator were officially acknowledged Bunyip roles. Gill was recognized as the founding leader of the Community from the Bunyip’s establishment in 1975. The Community did not vote on the matter, similarly with the position of administrator. If people became unhappy with this type of

38 worship, pastoral care, education, koinonia (fellowship) and mission.
leadership arrangement, they did not tend to stay too long in the Community. In 1976, areas of responsibility were defined for the two official positions and accepted by the Community. The leader was responsible for determining policy, vision, pastoral care and staff appointments; the administrator was leader of the Bunyip staff and responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the Community. Janette Shepherd from the House of the New World fulfilled this role from 1976-8. The Community meeting normally made principal decisions. Sometimes members' only meetings were held to decide on long-term matters. In 1977, the Community appointed Liggett as deputy leader to support Gill and carry out his responsibilities when he was unable to function in this capacity. Gill resigned from leadership on 6 April 1978, citing the Bunyip's semi-anarchic stance as one of his reasons. A series of meetings followed and he was invited to resume the leadership, which he did on 22 June 1978. Liggett found the role of acting leader of peers demanding and she 'had to learn how to lead from the front when she felt more comfortable leading from the group'.

Inevitably there were leadership tensions and personality clashes. Effective conflict resolution skills were lacking and some found the leaders distant or inaccessible. Although Gill trained and encouraged young leaders, especially women, he was perceived as dominant. A reserved personality, he had a style that rarely allowed for expression of feelings or signs of weakness. Thus the leadership appeared at times to be remote, untrusting, and even capricious. Some of the males in the community experienced a sense of disempowerment from leadership and resigned

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40 Bunyip Executive minutes, 17 June 1976.
41 Bunyip Community minutes, 6 April 1978. Gill's attitude struck a dissonant note. In reality, the Bunyip was quite highly structured.
42 Tape 17.
from the executive. One former member observed an analogy between the Bunyip's leadership structure and a family therapy model. There was a strong head (leader), two younger malleable female deputies in awe of the head and susceptible to his influence. Males with leadership abilities and aspirations were not granted the status of deputy leaders. Community (family) secrets were kept in-house. Alternative leadership structures were introduced from time to time. An interim board consisting of associate members was instigated in 1982 for twelve months as an experiment in leadership development.

At the end of 1982, Bunyip members affirmed a new leadership structure: leader, two deputy leaders and the administrator. Gill indicated his desire to resign from leadership of the Community at the end of 1982, marking the conclusion of ten years' leadership, beginning with the House of Freedom. It was agreed that Hoffman would assume the mantle of leadership until leaving for overseas service in the Dominican Republic in 1984. Her departure once again raised the vexed issue of leadership. Gill's role was revised in the light of the new arrangement, to focus on overall vision, theology, direction and maintenance of unity of the three Bunyip centres in Melbourne, Shepparton and Canberra, and to leave the day to day running of the operations to others. Gill seemed unable to relinquish control of the

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43 Mountjoy, Barr and Wren expressed their sense of disaffection with Bunyip direction and leadership in particular. Bunyip Members minutes, 12 April 1983.
44 Tape 20. For a discussion of different leadership styles and functioning of authority, see Graham Little, Political Ensembles: A Psychosocial Approach to Politics and Leadership (Melbourne: OUP, 1985); Gary Bouma, "By What Authority? An Analysis of the Locus of Ultimate Authority in Ecclesiastical Organizations," in Black, ed. Religion in Australia, 121-32; Clark, Basic Communities, passim.
45 Bunyip Members minutes, 7 December 1982. Gill – leader; Munro and Hoffman- deputy leaders; A. Curtis - administrator.
46 Gill to A. Curtis, Bunyip Administrator, 2 July 1982, Bunyip Collection.
47 Bunyip Community minutes, 23 June 1983.
48 Ibid., 12 August 1983.
Community, a factor that proved a source of ongoing frustration for some and contributed to the departure of leaders who hoped for a more consultative and shared model of leadership.\textsuperscript{49} This issue was never adequately resolved.

Gender was no bar to leadership. Many women were attracted to the Community because of opportunities denied them in more traditional church contexts. Some had worked with interstate communities. Discrimination against women had been widespread among Victorian Baptists during the 1970s, although there was evidence that attitudes were slowly beginning to change.\textsuperscript{50} Patterns were uneven among the major denominations.\textsuperscript{51} Bunyip women exercised leadership in every aspect of the Community’s life according to their gifts and the needs. Some struggled at times to develop alternative leadership styles in a context where male leadership could be experienced as dominant.\textsuperscript{52} Women were actively encouraged to pursue theological studies and ordination, and many did. About fourteen women graduated in theology; a further twelve undertook units towards a Bachelor of Theology, and five were ordained in different denominations.\textsuperscript{53}

\section*{III}

The Bunyip struggled to develop a pattern of corporate worship. The Community included activists who often resisted the discipline of regular prayer in the belief that

\textsuperscript{49} Tapes 8, 9, 15, 20; Telephone Conversation 10 and 11; Questionnaire 6.


\textsuperscript{51} See Breward, \textit{A History of the Australian Churches}, 131, 206-9 and Piggin, \textit{Evangelical Christianity in Australia}, ch. 9.

\textsuperscript{52} Tapes 15 and 20; Questionnaires 6 and 7.

\textsuperscript{53} Ordained women: Marita Munro (Baptist, 1978), Jeanette Mathews and Rowena Curtis (Baptist, 1999), Leonie Purcival (UCA, 1998) and Marilyn Obersby (Anglican, 1998).
'prayer without action' was futile. Some were also dissatisfied with the institutional church's forms of worship. It was difficult to find agreement about times, in addition to Sunday morning worship, for people to meet. After various unsuccessful experiments, the community finally adopted a pattern of daily early morning prayers in 1978 seven days a week. Worship followed a liturgical structure with lectionary readings, responsive psalm, canticle, contemporary song or traditional hymn, set and extempore prayer and concluding benediction or passing of the peace.

Worship patterns were adapted from Taizé prayers and the Australian Prayer Book, forms representing Continental Reformed and Anglican liturgical traditions. Music was drawn from a range of sources. Members were encouraged to write their own prayers and songs for inclusion in the worship life of the Bunyip and the CHBC. Gill sought to make clear the connection between worship and mission. He also gave explicit teaching on the significance of the seasons of the Christian Year and special banners were prepared for the church to mark the seasons. Liturgical worship was unusual for Baptists and unfamiliar to some members of the Bunyip. Those who had come from non-liturgical evangelical churches initially regarded morning prayers with scepticism, indifference or contempt. The early hours of rising were not to everybody's liking and there was often grumbling about getting out of bed. Still, most managed it, most of the time.

Community worship benefited from the contribution of members from more liturgical backgrounds, such as Liggett who was familiar with Anglican liturgy and

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54 Bunyip Community minutes, 9 September 1977.
55 Appendix R.
56 Music was eclectic and included traditional and contemporary hymns from ecumenical sources. The CHBC hymnbook, "Songs for Older Angels," combined songs from musicals, Jesus Christ Superstar and Godspell with traditional hymns.
completed a sub-major in music and liturgy with the Catholic Theological College.\textsuperscript{58} Gill was also very interested in liturgy and collected worship resources from a range of Christian communities during his travels. Taizé particularly impressed him. After prayers the Community shared breakfast together and on Saturday mornings households took it in turns to provide the entertainment.

Morning prayers were initially held in the main room at 94 Hodgkinson Street, but over time work began on a chapel in the upstairs room of the church hall. Before World War I, the church had used it as a mission centre for men in the Melbourne Tramways\textsuperscript{59} but the place had long since fallen into disrepair. Wong was commissioned to undertake the design and building of the chapel. A trained artist and woodworker, he was completing a post-graduate thesis on communities.\textsuperscript{60} His research had taken him to L’Abri, a Christian community in Switzerland, where he learned the importance of linking faith to art. The Bunyip helped him make his project 'a trilogy of interaction between faith, art and society'. The creation of a chapel involved a 'theology of ecology'.\textsuperscript{61} He collected and recycled old materials for use as window frames. Pews donated from the local Croatian Catholic Church were used, together with pews from other Christian churches, as an ecumenical symbol. Design of the chapel involved exploration of the ways in which the design of an environment assisted people in worship.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} Tape 17.
\textsuperscript{59} CHBC minutes, July, December 1910 and May 1912.
\textsuperscript{60} Wong was a graduate in Design and Animation from the new Bauhaus School, the Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology.
\textsuperscript{61} Tape 24.
\textsuperscript{62} Wong found inspiration in places such as Mary Chapel in St Francis' Catholic Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Tape 25.
An architect was commissioned to draw up the chapel plans and he generously donated his services. Funding was raised for the erection of two fireproof staircases and for the furnishing and materials of the chapel interior. The Union granted funding for the staircases and individuals gave generously to the project.

Community members donated their labour and expertise. Thus the Chapel of Hope was opened in April 1980. Worship was held in the round and members made their intercessions on their knees. A central feature was the lectern and large print Bible. Simple leadlight windows, designed and made by Bunyip members, featured Australian flora and brought a touch of beauty to the simple worship space.

63 The CHBC received $5,500.00 from the Union’s Advancement Fund for the chapel. 1978 Union Assembly minutes, 2 October 1978.
In 1982 the Bunyip introduced a weekly celebration of the Eucharist. Because the Community included both Catholic and Protestant members, the matter was not straightforward. Gill wrote to Melbourne’s Roman Catholic Archbishop, Sir Frank Little, for permission for Catholic members to take part. Little had visited the Bunyip in 1980 as a guest of its youth consultation. The Catholic Church’s official policy, however, meant that he was unable to grant Gill’s request. Eventually the Community decided to go ahead with the Eucharist, respecting individual freedom to

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65 Letter from Gill to Little, 16 June 1981, Bunyip Community minutes, 30 June 1981.

participate or not. Initially it used an edited form of the Eucharistic liturgy incorporating the insights of the 1982 Lima WCC Faith and Order Commission and, over time, developed a range of different liturgies. The weekly Eucharist proved to be one of the most significant worship times for the Community.\textsuperscript{67} The Bunyip emphasized corporate worship at structured times. Life was busy. Even retreats were full, with little time for silence or private prayer. Some perceived corporate worship as a replacement for a private spiritual life.\textsuperscript{68}

There were other important occasions for celebration. Community days were held early each year and members and associates came together for story telling, teaching, worship and celebration. Members from Bunyip centres outside Melbourne experienced the ethos of the central Community. As the story of the Bunyip's beginning was retold, new members were drawn into its history and began to own the tradition for themselves. Leaders outlined future possible directions and members prepared for the day by reading material on Christian communities. Much could be learned from others' experiences.

Dedication services and anniversaries were public events to which friends, relatives and supporters were invited in appreciation for their ongoing support. Guests included local clergy and heads of denominations. Members reflected on the previous year, announced future hopes and made fresh commitments. A well-known Christian leader or minister was usually invited to preach and a special liturgy prepared.\textsuperscript{69} Anniversary occasions were particularly designed to strike a celebratory note and the

\textsuperscript{67} Tapes 2, 7, 8, 9, 18, 20 and 22.
\textsuperscript{68} Tapes 1, 2, 20, 25; Telephone Interviews 4, 14.
\textsuperscript{69} Guest speakers included former Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, The Rt Revd David Penman.
Bunyip's inadequate facilities usually meant that catering for the large number of invited guests proved quite a challenge.

IV

From 1980, the Bunyip extended its missionary operations. Local initiatives included work in Collingwood (1980), a food co-operative (1982) and a school (1983). Neither the school nor the food co-operative received unanimous Bunyip support. They were ambitious undertakings involving cost, renovations and long-term commitment and, in the case of the school, government funding and compliance. Gill invoked the Taizé principle 'when in doubt, go ahead,' on the understanding that it was often difficult to make a decision about an untried venture. The dismantling of a major project, however, was hardly straightforward. The coffee house and emergency accommodation underwent change and the 'Dump' closed (1984). During the 1980s the Burnt Billy Coffee House attracted growing numbers of people suffering from mental illness, a consequence of government policies of de-institutionalization. Broader Bunyip initiatives included a partners-in-mission project with developing countries (1981) and a peace ministries group (1983).

The School of the Prophets program helped staff new ventures with overseas workers a regular feature of Bunyip life. Impetus for new directions came from

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70 Bunyip Community minutes, 18 November 1981; 26 March 1982.
73 Bunyip Community minutes, 19 September 1983.
74 Westmont College graduates learned of the Bunyip through Hirt's visit.
75 Bunyip Community minutes, 25 June 1982.
'Your Kingdom Come', a youth consultation organized collaboratively and hosted by the Bunyip. It ran parallel with the WCC Melbourne Commission on Mission and Evangelism (May 1980) and used its key speakers. They addressed issues of justice and liberation from a non-western context and expounded the Gospel as good news for the poor. The emphasis of a Hong Kong Baptist theologian, Dr Raymond Fung, on mission as invitation to community was particularly well received. The conference was well attended by young adults from all over Australia; some were quite profoundly challenged by exposure to new ideas. Despite some outsiders warmly commending the Bunyip for its ecumenical stance, certain Baptists were critical of its involvement in the ecumenical venture.

The Bunyip established a residence and community centre at 41 Vere Street, Collingwood, near the high-rise estate. A staff worker and School of the Prophets' participants co-operated with local welfare groups, visited local families, ran after school programs and taught religious education in the local primary school. When negotiations to purchase the Harmsworth Street Church of Christ Chapel failed and other accommodation options proved unsuccessful, the Bunyip ceased its Collingwood operation in 1985. The Evening Quail Food Co-operative at Clifton

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76 SCM and JBCE were involved.
78 Bearlin Report, Bunyip Community minutes, 24 July 1980.
80 Tape 23.
81 Britt, In Search of New Wine Skins, 34-5.
83 Ibid., 31 January 1983; Bunyip Members minutes, 3 February 1983.
84 Bunyip Community minutes, 24 March 1983.
85 See Exodus 16.
Hill provided a service and point of contact for the local community. It aimed to promote food justice and a simpler lifestyle. Its fortunes fluctuated and the Bunyip regularly reviewed its operations before recommending its closure. The Community School of St Mark school commenced operations in February 1983 with ten students and one teacher-principal, Rowena Curtis. Eleven adults in addition to the principal were involved in helping in the school. By 1984 twelve children from eight families were enrolled and a new teacher appointed to work with the principal. In 1985 after a struggle to meet official property standards, the school was granted registration and became eligible for Commonwealth funding. School inspectors warmly commended the school for its educational program. Its curriculum was based on that of the Victorian Education Department and included opportunities for students to develop a Christian commitment. It functioned with the support of Bunyip members and parents and drew upon the expertise of other groups to ensure breadth and relevance. The school operated until 1989 when responsibilities proved too onerous for the Bunyip and school council and enrolments dropped below the minimum required for ongoing government funding.

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86 Bunyip Community minutes, 8 May 1981.
88 Ibid., 8 May 1987.
89 Report of the Principal, School Council minutes, 6 April 1983.
90 M. Wilkinson, Registrar, Registered Schools Board to A. Curtis, 29 March; 5 August; 29 September 1983, Bunyip collection.
92 D. M Rattray, Senior Education Officer, Report of Registration Visit to the Community School of St Mark, Clifton Hill, 17 September 1984; Principal’s Report, School Council minutes, 12 April 1984.
93 Bunyip Community minutes, 26 February 1981.
95 Bunyip Community minutes, 10 February 1989. The school closed on 13 February 1989. There were 7.2 enrolments.
The Bunyip embarked on a Partners-in-Mission Program, involving exchanges with workers from Sri Lanka96 and community development in the Dominican Republic97 and El Salvador. In 1984 during the country’s civil war, Hoffman worked with the San Salvador Baptist Church in health, welfare and care of orphans. She recalls:

There were a lot of displaced people because of the bombings ... I stayed at the orphanage ... I got them [the kids] out to play. There were kids of soldiers ... They didn’t get enough attention ... I started a centre with mothers and babies - started a clinic ... The church was supportive. It was a nutrition centre ... There were lots of soldiers around and cockroaches. It was a bit scary.98

In November 1984, when the Revd Miguel Castro, the minister responsible for the San Salvador Baptist Church’s extensive humanitarian program, was imprisoned and tortured by the Salvadorean military for supposed involvement with guerilla forces, Gill and David Batstone99 travelled to El Salvador to plead on his behalf. At the end of a tense interview, the Chief of Police signed a declaration that the Salvadoran Baptist Community could continue its work with the poor without fear of reprisal.100 There had already been much public pressure from the churches and governments of North America and Australia for the release of the imprisoned minister.101 He was allowed to travel to Canada and later visited Australia and the Bunyip. Through reports issued by the El Salvador Network that emerged from Gill’s and Hoffman’s visits, Australian churches and community groups became better informed

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96 Revd Alex and Greeta Fernando lived at the Bunyip (1982-4).
97 Servicio Social de Iglesias Dominicanas was a church-based ecumenical social service organization, Revd Juan Jose Feliz, Executive Director to Gill, 15 March 1983, Bunyip Collection.
98 Tape 15.
of human rights violations in El Salvador and were able to provide practical support for Baptists in that country.102

The Bunyip established a peace ministries group out of concern for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Led by Gavin Mountjoy and Elizabeth Radcliffe, it organized non-violent peace witnesses and liturgies with other groups, ran courses in peacemaking and published a peace calendar for the International Year of Peace (1986). One initiative was a weeklong peaceful vigil in August 1986, outside the Maribyrnong Research Laboratories, a site chosen because of its involvement with weapons’ development.103 The Hawke Government’s victory in 1983 coincided with the growth of the disarmament movement. Stuart Macintyre noted the flourishing of a cult of selfishness and individualism during the 1980s in Australia, and the coincidence of conservative trends in economic and social policy with a revival of the international Cold War. America resumed the Arms Race, uncritically supported by Australia. The American communication bases in Australia, important for America’s new strategic weapons, were sacred.104 Macintyre’s perspective encapsulated the views of most Bunyips at the time.

Both the Bunyip’s local initiatives and broader involvement reflected wider community concerns with socio-political issues and represented a response shaped by

99 Batstone was an American graduate who worked in the Bunyip (1980-1). He later established a community in Oakland, Ca., and was involved in support for communities in Central America. He has authored several books, including From Conquest to Struggle: Jesus of Nazareth in Latin America (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).
100 David Batstone, "Then Jesus said, 'It is finished': Radical Discipleship Loses a Life On the Road," Horizons (News and Resources for Whitley Students) 6, April 1995, p. 5.
101 Gill’s Report to the Union, 2 December 1984.
103 Bunyip Community minutes, 5 September 1986.
104 Macintyre, A Concise History of Australia, 247-50. Joseph Camillieri concurred and observed the diverse nature of community anti-nuclear protest, "Foreign Policy: Strategic and Economic Dimensions", in Head and Patience, From Fraser to Hawke, 37, 50, 52, 62.
its understanding of radical discipleship. The Collingwood venture began because Clifton Hill had become more affluent by the late 1970s, and the Bunyip’s socio-political group urged the Community to develop an active presence in a more disadvantaged area. The Community school began partly for the same reason. Local government schools were neglected and children were struggling to cope in the state system. The Fraser Government supported independent schools and reduced its support for government schools. Between 1975 and 1983, Commonwealth funding of government schools dropped by 24 per cent while private schools enjoyed an increase of 87 per cent. By the end of the Fraser era, the 24 per cent of students in private schools were receiving 56 per cent of the Schools Commission’s recurrent grant budget.

From 1975 there was a proliferation of alternative schools, including many with a Christian emphasis, largely because of government funding policies. The Community school differed quite markedly from the fundamentalist Christian schools but resembled some Christian community colleges. These were ecumenical, child-centred and based on a Christian philosophy but without a guiding religious philosophy permeating the entire curriculum. The Bunyip school provided a context for the implementation of an alternative model of education within a framework of

105 Hibbins, A Short History of Collingwood, 58, 63.
106 Bunyip Executive minutes, 5 September 1980; Bunyip Community minutes, 11 February 1977.
107 Bunyip Community minutes, 26 February 1981.
108 Don Smart, "Education" in Head and Patience, From Fraser to Hawke, 307.
110 Ibid., 93. Jones studied the three main umbrella groups and identified their distinctive features. He calculated that by 1983, more than 100 new Christian schools were associated with the three movements.
111 Ibid., 69-74.
radical discipleship.\textsuperscript{112} According to one of the teachers in 1988, Keith Dyer, its small size and community ethos meant flexibility and the possibility of responding promptly to social issues. He recalls: 'They [the kids] had decided [independently of the teachers] to join the land rights march. They had been painting aboriginal banners, so they jumped on the tram and we went off to the march. The kids were the prime movers.'\textsuperscript{113} With the election of the Cain-Kirner Labor Government (1982-92), one of the raison d’êtres of the school disappeared. Inner suburban government schools were targeted as disadvantaged, and received special assistance.

V

From the late 1980s, the Bunyip moved steadily into decline. Between 1987 and 1991 its membership dropped from twenty-five \textsuperscript{114} to ten adults (and 5 children). Some long-term members left the Bunyip or took leave-of-absence. Consideration was given to a mechanism for disbursement of the Community Trust properties in the event of the Community’s closure.\textsuperscript{115} Some did not find the existing areas of the Bunyip’s mission compatible with their own interests and abilities or its leadership structures viable.\textsuperscript{116} Others found the combination of employment and Community commitments too demanding.\textsuperscript{117} The idealism of an earlier stage had largely disappeared. Despite some new undertakings in this period, the Bunyip struggled to maintain itself as a viable operation. Reviews of worship, housing rentals and mission

\textsuperscript{112} Tape 9.
\textsuperscript{113} Tape 26.
\textsuperscript{114} Bunyip Community minutes, 30 January 1987 (21 present and 4 apologies); 12 February 1988 (10 present and 7 apologies); 10 February 1989 (12 present and 2 apologies).
\textsuperscript{115} Bunyip Members minutes, 28 June 1991.
\textsuperscript{116} Tapes 2, 18, 22.
\textsuperscript{117} Tapes 2, 15, 20, 22.
were conducted. Various worship arrangements were made included evening and morning times for silence, prayer and celebration of the Eucharist. It was difficult for members to agree on a common time, and for individuals to maintain a daily commitment to early morning or evening prayer. The Chapel of Hope was badly damaged in a fire in January 1987 and took several months to be restored. The condition of staffing changed with fewer staff, mostly part-time and employed for a limited period.

The Bunyip simplified its structures and actively sought cooperation with other organizations. It appointed a small management committee in 1988 to oversee administration of the Community. Meetings were held monthly and the chairing of meetings operated on a rotating basis. Retreats were held twice a year and the Bunyip invited leaders of other communities to visit on an annual basis to help the Bunyip review its life and future direction. When the Uniting Church closed the Cameron House Day Care Centre, the Bunyip purchased property at 172 Noone Street, Clifton Hill - a former mission hall, the Noone Street Mission in May 1988 and renovated it. The Trust property at 184 Easey Street, never ideal as a community household, was rented out. Modified team training courses ran from time to time and included 'City Faith' jointly sponsored by the Urban Baptist Coalition. When Petrina Barson was employed as part-time staff worker in 1990, she redesigned the course to be more secular and ecumenical in content and produced a pamphlet on the Bunyip, 'The

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118 The UBC began in 1985 and replaced the defunct ICBA.
119 Bunyip Community minutes, 9 March 1990.
Inside Story', for wider circulation.\textsuperscript{120} Office space at 94 Hodgkinson Street was shared with staff from the neighbouring St Martin's Community Church.\textsuperscript{121}

In March 1992, Gill suffered a heart attack and died. Prior to this Bunyip numbers had declined, as had the Community's ability to exercise pastoral oversight of the CHBC.\textsuperscript{122} The historic relationship between the two bodies had been reviewed several times and eventually the church had chosen to appoint its own pastoral workers.\textsuperscript{123} Gill's death left the Bunyip (and Whitley College) in shock but determined to continue. Community numbers had been strengthened by the recent arrival of several new people but the Bunyip's long-term prospect was not promising, and it eventually closed in 1996. A Bunyip Incorporated was established by a small group of concerned former members, trustees and friends including the Revd Harold Pidwell, formerly dean of the MCD, and Revd A. Marr, a former area superintendent of the Union. They became responsible for the sale and distribution of the assets of the Community Trust, and for the provision of housing for its three remaining members.

VI

Although most mission areas had ceased or scaled down their operations in the late 1980s, there was a notable exception. Fintry Bank reopened during 1986 as supported accommodation for sufferers of schizophrenia. Neil Horbury and Ojitha Goonetilleke

\textsuperscript{120}Ibid., 12 October 1990. Draft approved, Bunyip Community minutes, 9 November 1990.
\textsuperscript{121} St Martin's is a non-denominational church incorporating the work of God Squad and Care and Communication Concern. Ron Weiher, Pastoral Administrator to Munro and A. Gill, 15 July 1988. Bunyip Community minutes, 12 August 1988; Judith Gill to Weiher, 9 December 1988, Bunyip Management minutes.
\textsuperscript{122} CCSM (CHBC) minutes, 5 August 1990.
\textsuperscript{123} Questionnaire 4.
were appointed part-time staff workers. The co-ordinator, Goonetilleke, was a Sri Lankan Baptist minister who had encountered schizophrenia in his home country. Years later, he wrote:

Fear of the mentally ill has been replaced by a willingness to be where they are. If now there is fear, it is for them, not of them. For the past eight years I have had daily contact with nearly fifty persons suffering from schizophrenia.

With the introduction of the government policy of de-institutionalization for the mentally ill, demands for secure accommodation for sufferers of schizophrenia increased dramatically. The widespread but frequently unacknowledged extent of mental illness in the community, lack of resources and revelations of serious abuses in psychiatric facilities were cause for serious concern. In 1990 the federal government commissioned Brian Burdekin to head a national enquiry into the human rights of the mentally ill. According to his report:

One of the biggest obstacles in the lives of people with a mental illness is the absence of adequate, affordable and secure accommodation. Living with a mental illness - or recovering from it - is difficult even in the best circumstances. Without a decent place to live it is virtually impossible.

One of the most common complaints made to the Inquiry was lack of suitable, affordable, supportive accommodation for the mentally ill. Bunyip residences at upstairs 94 and 106 Hodgkinson Street accommodated up to seven people suffering

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124 Affectionately known as 'Joe' by the Fintry residents.
126 Macintyre, 270.
128 Human Right and Mental Illness, 337.
from schizophrenia. The Fintry Bank Supported Accommodation Project was one of over 800 groups that made a written submission to the Burdekin Commission. Barson who was a Bunyip staffworker (1990) with special Fintry responsibilities, assisted in the compilation of Fintry’s submission. In her report to the Bunyip, she noted:

One of the major points which the residents were keen to include [in the Submission] was the problem of finding accommodation. They have described the Fintry Bank project in the submission as a viable model of accommodation for people with mental illness.

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129 Ibid., 963, no. 50.
130 Bunyip Community minutes, 12 October 1990.
CONCLUSION

The Bunyip commenced when the Christian community movement was flourishing, the institutional church was in decline and Australian society was undergoing rapid transformation. The Union faced challenges about its effectiveness, particularly in Melbourne's inner urban areas. The climate was ripe for innovation. Theological students at Whitley College and other MCD colleges were questioning cherished views of theology, church, ministry and society. Some found, in Gill and the Bunyip, a context in which to explore the radical implications of the Christian faith in a non-traditional setting. In the development of its mission projects, the Bunyip responded to obvious need and sought to hold, in tension, evangelism and social justice. As its Clifton Hill setting became more affluent and the economic climate more unforgiving, the Bunyip struggled to renew itself in a rapidly changing environment and closed after twenty-one years.

Where can one locate the Bunyip in the tradition of Christian communities? Most religious orders arose out of a perception of deficiencies in the official church and a desire to address them. These deficiencies included neglect of certain groups within society, especially the poor and the sick; abuse of power and wealth within church structures and clerical appointments; the church's involvement in political machinations and war; its inadequate training of leaders in the sacraments, worship, preaching, pastoral care, theological reflection; and its narrow perception of mission. Religious orders emphasized the formation of a community life that was based on a
particular rule and reflected a daily rhythm of prayer and work. Some were cloistered; others became mendicant orders, living off the generosity of society.

Other Christian communities arose for similar reasons but expressed their disillusionment with the traditional church in ways different from the religious orders. They did not usually adopt a monastic style of life. They included lay people and clergy, women and men, married and single, wealthy and poor, educated and uneducated. Some groups arose spontaneously, became itinerant and often experienced persecution or oppression by the established church institution, including some of the religious orders themselves. These groups were often regarded as 'heretical' or, at least, 'heterodox' by members of the official church because they were seen as circumventing the officially sanctioned vehicles of divine grace, namely the sacerdotal system, or rejecting the close alignment of church and state. Some religious communities of dissent were apocalyptic and prophetic in their outlook. They anticipated the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, and with it, the end of the present world’s sufferings.

The Bunyip reflected certain characteristics of both kinds of Christian communities. It attracted people who perceived deficiencies in the traditional church and were concerned about the misuse of power and wealth by political as well as religious institutions. This stance partly reflected the traditional Baptist belief in the separation of church and state. Yet Baptists had tended to neglect the communal expression of the Christian faith, despite its having been a distinctive of their spiritual ancestors, the Anabaptists. Baptists were also strongly influenced by the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, the democratic ideas spawned in the Commonwealth
period of the seventeenth century Puritans, and the eighteenth century evangelical movement that emphasized individual religious experience. The Bunyip sought to reclaim the communal aspect of faith by adapting the monastic rule of life to a twentieth century western setting. It emphasized daily corporate worship and meals, and developed mechanisms to foster aspects of community life that encompassed economics and housing, membership and governance, pastoral care and education. Like the early religious orders, it sought to care for the needy of society - those neglected by the institutional church or regarded as simply 'too hard' - and tried to alert denominational leaders to their responsibilities for languishing areas of the city. It was concerned with training and preparation of Christian leaders, both ordained and lay, and worked to address deficiencies in the church's religious education programs. Its motivating impulses included religious, politico-economic and psychosocial. Although it rejected the idea of human perfectibility, it believed that it was contributing in a small way to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Bunyip's activities and beliefs earned it both suspicion and acclaim at times from church and political authorities:

I know the Bunyip - secret police file number 0.339 . . .
They were a conspiracy for good, committed to demonstrating by example that there is another way to live your life in a human community.²

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¹ ch. 1, 14.
² Terry Lane, "Keeping Victoria Safe from Losers," Sunday Age – Inside Story, 12 October 1997.
Peter Cock, founder of the Moora Moora community near Healesville, Victoria, explored factors that helped sustain community life, a task he identified as representing a greater challenge than that of establishing a community. Objectives, structures and mechanisms were essential but also needed to nourish individual commitment and personal uniqueness. Cock highlighted the importance of individuals seeing community interests as part of their own, when society’s natural tendency was to move from the collective to the private, from community participation to individual autonomy. He wrote: 'Australian society is so polarized between our experience of the private and the public that we live essentially private lives within impersonal worlds'.

To overcome this, Cock argued, communities needed rituals and symbols that expressed shared meanings. To strike a dynamic balance between, on the one hand, personal desires and autonomy, and, on the other, community interests and commitment, was fundamental for a community’s survival in an individualistic cultural context. According to Cock, bonds, obligations and interdependence were essential, and there was much to be learnt from the transcendent commitments of religious communities. His insights are very helpful in assessing the different phases of the Bunyip’s history: establishment, consolidation, decline and conclusion.

The establishment phase (1975-9) was a period of excitement and idealism, of expenditure in energy, time and money. The future was precarious. There was a sense

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3Metcalf, 165.
4Ibid., 166. Cf Kanter, Commitment and Community, 127-33, 139-61 in which the author identified and explored mechanisms essential for community sustainability and causes of dissolution.
that the sky was the limit and that 'we can change the world (with God's help)'.
Money was scarce and it was a struggle to survive. Many people came for a look.
Some stayed for the longer haul. Only one or two remained to the end. There were
many new developments and the vision of the Bunyip was shared.

In its consolidation phase (1980-4), the Bunyip had become quite well known
and drew many visitors. It reached its peak in terms of membership, households and
staffing and there were new mission developments. There was also a reputation to
maintain. By the end of this phase, some were moving on to other things, desiring to
stretch their wings. Disillusionment and conflict were also evident. The challenge of
living and working together in close quarters created tensions. Although new
dimensions in community were being explored and new housing purchased, there
were indications that the Bunyip was plateauing.

The third phase (1985-9) was difficult. The Bunyip was in serious decline
numerically. Staffing numbers dropped. The loss of long-term members and leaders
was felt. Some stayed but lacked their original impetus. Others returned from
overseas travel in an altered role. Only a few new members joined during this time.
Some mission areas closed and several reviews were held. There was the sense that
'we can't do what we used to do'. Impossibly high interest rates created financial
pressures and the Bunyip reviewed its economic life. Outside friends and mentors
were drawn on for help, and there was a greater focusing of energies. The phase
concluded with the sudden death of a significant and well-loved former member
causing some to assess their values and priorities.

The final phase (1990-6) saw the influx of several new people. There was less
emphasis on activity and programs and more on the experience of community life.
Properties were in serious need of attention and money was short. The Union indicated its intention to sell its houses. Gill's death was a blow, yet there was good will and keen interest to continue among the Bunyip's remaining members. But the pressure of illness, frailty, personal and family crises took their toll, and more recent arrivals had prior commitments to ministry or academic posts elsewhere. Not enough were able to make the long-term commitment necessary for the Bunyip's survival.

III

Sustaining the Bunyip was a challenge. At times its objectives, structures and rituals proved too demanding or inflexible, causing some to lose heart and eventually leave. Certain mechanisms were inadequate, namely those for resolving conflict and tension, for keeping leadership accountable, and for nurturing individual spirituality and personal growth. Not all structures and objectives nourished individual commitments and personal uniqueness.

The Community embraced an extraordinary range of projects and found it difficult to say 'no' to new ideas. The opening of centres outside Melbourne and the extension of local work placed a strain on its resources. Few areas were staffed adequately over a continuous period or effectively consolidated. At times the energy and commitment needed to follow a project through to completion were lacking. Leadership often encouraged or initiated new developments, sometimes, to the detriment of the overall operation. One of the effects of rapid development was the fragmenting of the community into small mission groups and a certain loss of unity,
morale and overall effectiveness. The task of supporting new projects was costly and led, on occasion, to resignations.⁵

Ironically the Bunyip fell into the 'bigger is better' trap. Instead of being satisfied to do a few things well, it kept on expanding and rapidly became over-committed. This had consequences for the quality of personal relationships and family life. There was inadequate recognition of the needs of different life stages, the importance of developing a mature personal spirituality and of maintaining outside interests and relationships. Pressing immediate needs obscured the importance of careful long range planning and attention to internal issues and practical matters such as good housing. The Bunyip’s view of mission did not always acknowledge the contribution of members in full time employment outside the Community. Their work was often demanding but allowance was not always made in Bunyip membership agreements.

Clearly there were those who were damaged by aspects of Bunyip life. They believed that that the Community could have been more gracious and open to other directions, that it would have benefited from greater willingness to scrutiny from outside mentors, and that ‘visitors’ could have been accorded greater authority. There were some fundamental difficulties with the Bunyip’s leadership structure and style. Although Gill, as founding leader, trained and encouraged young leaders, he was a dominant personality, and seemed unable to relinquish control.

⁵ Janette Shepherd (Administrator) to Bunyip, Community Minutes, 22 June 1978.
IV

Notwithstanding its weaknesses and the fact of its decline and closure, the Bunyip made a significant contribution to Australian church life. Gill’s charisma was a crucial factor. Many people learned of the Bunyip’s existence through his teaching and writing. The rare combination of his scholarship and passion for holistic mission and community was welcomed in many Victorian Baptist and evangelical circles. Gill’s influence also extended further through his ecumenical involvement, both locally and internationally. He had the ability to inspire people with a vision of a Christian community engaged meaningfully with the poor, and he was prepared to work hard to put that vision into practice. Because of this, many young adults were drawn to the Bunyip and made considerable sacrifices to establish and develop the Community. Gill’s message of radical discipleship laid the Bunyip’s foundation, and its existence made his message credible and challenging. The Community provided a non-traditional context for the expression of the Christian faith and offered women and men training and opportunities for leadership and creative service. It offered a challenge to many Christians to take seriously the radical implications of the Gospel, especially justice and community. Some groups used the Bunyip as a model when exploring dimensions of Christian community. Countless people received assistance through the various Bunyip mission programs.

Bunyip members and others influenced by Gill and the Bunyip moved into leadership in church and society, including ordained ministry, denominational leadership, community development and welfare, theological education, urban

6 Tapes 26, 29, 31.
ministry and peace making. Many studied theology and some completed doctorates. Several Bunyip staff workers who pioneered mission projects continued to make a valuable contribution in related areas.

In November 1997 the Union sold 94 Hodgkinson Street to a developer for $720,000.00. When plans for its demolition and construction of apartments were revealed, a local residents group, '3068', conducted an active 'Save our Bunyip' public campaign, including a twenty-four hour vigil, to force a stay against development. Unions imposed work bans and the Minister for Planning and Local Government approved the stay on development. In 2001, the Victoria Government committed 1.8 million dollars towards the purchase of the property for creation of accommodation for sufferers of schizophrenia. Other funding was raised and the project, with support from the local Clifton Hill church, the Fintry Bank community and a non-profit organization, Work Ventures, is being steered by the Ecumenical Community Housing Unit. Approval has been granted for the construction of thirteen units.

On Sunday, 8 November 1998 former Bunyip members held a formal service of closure and a celebratory meal at the Community Church of St Mark. The guest preacher, Revd Rowena Curtis, declared in her sermon entitled "Completing the Story – Claiming the Heritage":

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7 Property Files, Union.
8 The Clifton Hill postcode.
9 Age, 3 June 1998, pp. 7-8.
10 Appendix S.
We cannot stay in a seventies time warp, or an eighties or even nineties warp for that matter, because God calls everyone of us today, to follow Jesus, to live the kingdom values, to build faith communities and to carry on the mission for this time, and in the multitude of places God lands us in.\footnote{Rowena Curtis, Unpublished sermon, CHBC, 8 November 1998. Manuscript in author's possession. Curtis' text was Acts 8:1b-8.}
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

Unpublished

A Minutes
B Manuscripts
C Letters
D Miscellaneous
E Interviews, Telephone Conversations, Questionnaires (see Appendices A-H)

Published

F Official Publications
G Newspapers, Periodicals
H Books, Booklets, Pamphlets

II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A Books
B Theses
C Articles
I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A Minutes

Baptist Union of Victoria Archives, Melbourne


Baptist Union of Victoria General Council, 1974.


House of the Gentle Bunyip Collection, Whitley College, Parkville, Vic.


B Manuscripts


Report to the 1973 Annual Assembly by the Commission on the Ministry.  

C  Letters

Athol Gill Collection, Whitley College, Parkville, Vic.


White, J., to A. Gill, 30 April and 25 August 1969.

Leo Hicks Collection, Whitley College, Parkville, Vic.

Smith, K., to T. Farmilo, 18 October 1974.

House of the Gentle Bunyip Collection, Parkville, Vic.

Cameron Board to J. Shepherd, 27 June 1977.

Gill, A., to A. Curtis, 2 July 1982.


D  Miscellaneous

Bunyip Collection

Black, Chris, Cameron House Agreement in Report on Cameron Community  
Requested by the Uniting Church Social Services Task Group,  
Appendix 3, October 1979.

Board of Management, Cameron House and Dickins Lodge, Report, March  
1978.


Bunyip Membership Records, October 1981.

Cameron Community Council, Submission to the Health Commission of Victoria, 1982.

Community School of St Mark School Council, Report to the Bunyip, 15 July 1988.


Hicks Collection

Hicks, Leo, Progress Report, October 1976. Handwritten notes.

Baptist Union of Victoria Archives


E Interviews, Telephone Conversations, Questionnaires

Appendices A - H.

F Official Publications


Baptist Union of Victoria, This Month's Home Missionaries, 1973.


**G**  Newspapers, Periodicals


*Horizons* (News and Resources for Whitley students) 6 April 1992.


**H**  Books, Booklets, Pamphlets


II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A Books


McKnight, Jim *Australian Christian Communities.* Cobbitty, NSW.: Trojan Head, 1990.


**B Theses**


C Articles


LETTER TO POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEES AND QUESTIONNAIRE RECEPIENTS

1st August 2000.

Dear

I am currently working on a history of the House of the Gentle Bunyip community for an M.A. thesis with Melbourne University Department of History and am interested in interviewing or getting written responses from as many of the Bunyip’s participants as possible. I have prepared a draft set of questions for the purposes of the research and would be very grateful if you could spare some time to fill out the questions and or make some time available to me for an interview. I will contact you in a few days’ time by phone to see if you are interested in taking part in the project.

Thanking you

Marita Munro
(bh) (03) 9342 3566
(ah) (03) 9480 3937
email: mmunro@whitley.unimelb.edu.au
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

Name of Participant: ________________________________

Project Title:
A Contribution to Australian Church Life:

Name of Principal Investigator:
Dr Paul Nicholls, Department of History, The University of Melbourne
Ph: 8344 7496
Fax: 8344 7894

Name of Other Investigator:
Rev Marita Munro, Whitley College, University of Melbourne
Ph: 9348 8024
Fax: 9349 4241

1. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which have been explained to me and provided in writing.

2. I give consent to the investigator using an audio-tape for the interview.

3. I give consent to the investigator taking notes from the interview.

4. I wish to be named in the project ( ) under a pseudonym
   ( ) by my actual name
5. I acknowledge that:

(a) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

(b) The project is for the purpose of historical research.

(c) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.

Signature ___________________________ Date ________________
Participant

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of ___________________________

in the above project.

Signature ___________________________ Date ________________
Signature of parent or guardian

Signature ___________________________ Date ________________
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE I


1. Name:

2. Date of Birth:

3. Gender:

4. Approximately when and how did you first hear about the House of the Gentle Bunyip (Bunyip)?
   Year(s)?
   Through a particular person(s)? [ ]
   Conference/Seminar? [ ]
   Literature? [ ]
   Church Service? [ ]
   University meeting? [ ]
   Other? Please specify [ ]

5. How much time elapsed between hearing about the Bunyip and your involvement?

6. How old were you when you became involved in the Bunyip?

7. What was your occupation at the time?

8. Did this change during your time in the Bunyip? If so, how?

9. If you were a student when you joined the Bunyip, what course were you undertaking and where?

10. Have you ever studied theology?
    a. If so, at which institution(s)?
11. a. What was your religious background/church/denominational affiliation at the time you came into contact with the Bunyip?

- Anglican
- Assemblies of God
- Baptist
- Brethren
- Churches of Christ
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Presbyterian
- Roman Catholic
- Salvation Army
- Uniting Church
- Non/Interdenominational
- Para-Church Organization
- No church
- Other Religion
- Other (please specify)

11. b. Did this change during your involvement with the Bunyip?

12. Had you had a prior involvement with a community? If so, please specify?

13. a. Were you a member of a political/religious/community organization before you became involved with the Bunyip. If so, please specify? (eg member of a political party, action group, union)

13. b. Did this change during your time with the Bunyip?

14. Were you single, married or living in a committed partnership when you became involved with the Bunyip?

15. Did you have children living at home with you? If so, what were their ages when you first became involved with the Bunyip?

16. Did your situation in 14 and 15 change during your time with the Bunyip? If so, please specify.
17. Where were you living when you first heard about the Bunyip?

18. Did your involvement with the Bunyip involve a geographical move to Melbourne?

19. Why did you become involved with the Bunyip?

20. What was the nature of your involvement with the Bunyip?
    Please specify.
    a. Mission area
    b. Household
    c. Community Church of St Mark
    d. Team Training
    e. Worship Life
    f. Monk for a Month
    g. School of the Prophets
    h. Financial Share Partner
    i. Leadership
    j. Member of Platypus Cassette Library
    k. Staff
    l. Other? (Please specify)

21. Did you become a full member or associate member of the Bunyip? If so when?

22. How long did you remain involved in the Bunyip?

23. Did your involvement change over time? If so, in what ways?
    Mission areas
    Household
    Leadership responsibilities (eg member of the Board, leader of an area of mission)
    Membership Training
    Staff
    Other (Please specify)

24. What were your impressions of the following in the Bunyip?
    a. Financial Commitment
    b. Mission
c. Education
d. Worship Life
e. Community Meetings and Special Events
f. Household Life
g. Social Life
h. Leadership Structure
i. Other

25. Describe two of the most significant event(s)/memory(ies) during your time in the Bunyip.

26. Who do you think was influential in the Bunyip? Why?

27. How old were you when you left the Bunyip?

28. Why did you leave the Bunyip?

29. Did you retain links with the Bunyip or people from the Bunyip after you left? Why? For how long?

30. What do you perceive the Bunyip's legacy to be?

31. What are you doing now?
   a. Work?
   b. Study?
   c. Involvement in church/religious/community group (s)
   d. Family Responsibilities?
   e. Retirement?
   f. Travel?
   g. Other?

32. Is there anything else you would like to comment upon regarding your experience of the Bunyip?
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRES RECEIVED FROM FORMER MEMBERS OF THE BUNYIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>RECIPIENT</th>
<th>DATE RECEIVED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Garry Deverell</td>
<td>25 February 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Glenn Farquhar-Nicol</td>
<td>3 October 2000</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Phil Fisher</td>
<td>22 February 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>David Hunter</td>
<td>28 February 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alana Kidd</td>
<td>25 October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sue Kirkegard</td>
<td>6 May 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Joan Maddox</td>
<td>23 May 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jeanette Mathews</td>
<td>28 February 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Marilyn Obersby</td>
<td>10 October 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pamela Oliver</td>
<td>16 October 2000</td>
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QUESTIONNAIRE RECEIVED FROM ASSOCIATE OF GILL AND THE BUNYIP

<table>
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<th>NO.</th>
<th>RECIPIENT</th>
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QUESTIONNAIRES IN AUTHOR'S POSSESSION
### APPENDIX E

**INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY AUTHOR WITH FORMER BUNYIP MEMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAPE NO.</th>
<th>INTERVIEWEE(S)</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mark Anderson &amp; Beth Crisp</td>
<td>Clifton Hill, Vic.</td>
<td>27 December 1999.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mark Anderson &amp; Beth Crisp</td>
<td>Clifton Hill, Vic.</td>
<td>11 August 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hazel Ball</td>
<td>Clifton Hill, Vic.</td>
<td>15 May 1999.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hazel Ball</td>
<td>Clifton Hill, Vic.</td>
<td>26 June 1999.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jim Barr</td>
<td>North Balwyn, Vic.</td>
<td>7 August 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Andrew Curtis</td>
<td>Parkville, Vic</td>
<td>29 August 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Judith Gill</td>
<td>Thornbury, Vic.</td>
<td>5 November 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Steve and Naomi Hammon</td>
<td>West Heidelberg, Vic</td>
<td>8 December 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Helen Hoffman</td>
<td>Yarraville, Vic.</td>
<td>7 May 2000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Doug Morffew</td>
<td>Thornbury, Vic.</td>
<td>28 August 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Andrew Mountford</td>
<td>Northcote, Vic.</td>
<td>28 August 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Debbie Mountjoy</td>
<td>Newport, Vic.</td>
<td>7 September 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Gavin Mountjoy</td>
<td>Newport, Vic.</td>
<td>23 August 2000.</td>
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</table>

**TAPE RECORDINGS AND HAND WRITTEN NOTES OF ALL INTERVIEWS IN AUTHOR’S POSSESSION**
## APPENDIX F

### TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY AUTHOR WITH FORMER BUNYIP MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>INTERVIEWEE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John Bacash</td>
<td>22 July 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elizabeth Barnes</td>
<td>20 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Marc Billing</td>
<td>20 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ian Brew</td>
<td>22 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Peter Carlon</td>
<td>16 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Carol Easton (Woodhouse)</td>
<td>19 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mike Purbrick</td>
<td>17 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Eddie Dorn</td>
<td>15 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kerri Dorn (McArthur)</td>
<td>15 July 2002.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Susie Ezzy</td>
<td>18 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Annette Korotkov</td>
<td>20 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Joanne McLeay (Vermeltfoort)</td>
<td>9 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rebecca Schulz (Hart)</td>
<td>20 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Margaret Welsford</td>
<td>12 July 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Helen Wong (Anderson)</td>
<td>22 July 2002.</td>
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</table>

**HANDWRITTEN NOTES OF ALL TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS IN AUTHOR’S POSSESSION**
APPENDIX G

QUESTIONNAIRE II

QUESTIONS TO ASSOCIATES OF GILL AND THE BUNYIP

1. What was the nature of your association with the House of the Gentle Bunyip?

2. What was your perception of the House of the Gentle Bunyip?

3. Do you think that there was a Bunyip "type"? If so, what would have been some of the characteristics of that type?

4. What was the nature of your association with Athol Gill (Founding leading of the House of the Gentle Bunyip)?

5. What do you regard as Athol Gill's contribution to Baptist Church life and/or Theological Education in Victoria and/or the Melbourne College of Divinity and/or the Evangelical wing of the Christian Church and/or the Christian Community movement?

6. What do you consider the legacy of the House of the Gentle Bunyip to be?

7. What do you consider the legacy of Athol Gill to be?

8. Are there any particular memories/stories you would like to tell about the House of the Gentle Bunyip?

9. Are there any particular memories/stories you would like to tell about Athol Gill? Is there anything else you would like to say about the House of the Gentle Bunyip and/or Athol Gill?

(November 2000)
### APPENDIX H

**INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY AUTHOR WITH ASSOCIATES OF GILL AND THE BUNYIP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAPE NO.</th>
<th>INTERVIEWEE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Dr Ross Langmead, Professor, Missiology, Whitley College</td>
<td>Parkville, Vic.</td>
<td>19 December 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Revd Dr Bruce Rumbold, Professor, Pastoral Theology, Whitley College (1987 – 2001) Snr Lecturer Palliative Care, La Trobe University (2001- )</td>
<td>Parkville, Vic.</td>
<td>27 November 2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY PERSON OTHER THAN THE AUTHOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>35</th>
<th>Leo Hicks, Secretary CHBC (1939-79) (Interview conducted by Karen Twigg. Used with permission of interviewer.)</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>6 April 1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**TAPE RECORDINGS AND HAND WRITTEN NOTES OF ALL INTERVIEWS IN AUTHOR'S POSSESSION**
APPENDIX I

BUNYIP DRAFT MANIFESTO (c. 1977)

THE HOUSE OF THE GENTLE BUNYIP

DRAFT MANIFESTO

The House of the Gentle Bunyip is a place of positive christian teaching and contemporary evangelism, of social involvement and community action. A place working for the reconciliation of secular twentieth century philosophy, psychology, literature, art, politics and commerce with a biblical christianity.

EMPHASIS

The distinctive emphasis of the House is the liberating lordship of Jesus Christ over the totality of life and the need for a dynamic and creative commitment on the part of the believer.

FUNCTION

The House will seek to minister in the following areas:

(a) Evangelism and Social Action

(i) providing a christian meeting place for the young people of Melbourne, 
(ii) reaching out to them in contemporary evangelism and social concern, 
(iii) listening to their hang-ups and offering specialist help in times of crisis, 
(iv) promoting responsible attitudes to society and to the Church and seeking to present a christian perspective to the dilemmas of the present age.

(b) Community and Therapy

(i) developing an intentional christian community and rediscovering a simple life consistent with the example and teaching of Christ, 
(ii) reconciling unjust divisions between women and men, poor and rich, oppressed and oppressor, working for human rights and social justice in obedience to Christ and in solidarity with the needy, 
(iii) providing an open therapeutic community for caring, healing, and growth through friendship, handicrafts and therapy, 
(iv) rediscovering and encouraging the practice of private and corporate prayer, meditation and spirituality.

(c) Research and Training

(i) providing training for mature christians to enable them to relate their faith to contemporary culture and to discover patterns of practical christian discipleship, 
(ii) providing training for selected applicants in order that they might develop adequate skills, attitudes and knowledge for their positions of leadership in the Church and the community, 
(iii) developing an advanced training course for selected applicants who have completed their initial training course and who wish to pursue their studies on a full or part-time basis, 
(iv) developing a research centre and "think tank" to create and evaluate new ideas and concepts, particularly in regard to the Church, evangelism, society and modern life-styles.
APPENDIX I (continued)

(d) Art and Craft, Music and Drama

(i) encouraging community renewal through the recognition and development of the creative potential of individuals and groups,

(ii) providing opportunities for learning and sharing ideas and skills associated with our creativity,

(iii) assisting development of new approaches to Christian communication through street theatre, puppetry and concerts,

(iv) encouraging professional standards in all areas of creativity and development.

PRESENT MINISTRY OF THE HOUSE

-- Team Training
-- Discipleship Week-ends (City & Country)
-- Continuing Study Program & Research Groups
-- School of the Prophets Training Course
-- Camps & Teach-ins
-- Cassette Library
-- Coffee Houses (Melbourne & Shepparton)
-- Billabong Arts & Crafts Workshops
-- Music Appreciation Workshops
-- Rock & Folk Concerts
-- Humpty's Dump Youth Club
-- Worship Services
-- Drop-In Counselling Centre
-- Community Households

WHAT WE HOPE THE HOUSE WILL BECOME

-- A Christian Community
-- A Coffee House and Drop-In Centre
-- Drug Preventative Agency
-- Christian Training Centre
-- A place of open Christian discussion
-- A centre for the reconciliation of modern secular life and Biblical Christianity
-- An experimentation centre for Christian art, music and literature
-- A learning exchange and workshop
-- A catalyst for a Christian alternative lifestyle
-- A centre for Church and community renewal
-- Whatever the need determines.

FINANCE

The expenses of the House are met by a group of committed Sharepartners who contribute to the work of the House on a monthly basis. Donations are always welcome.

STAFF

Full-time: Helen Hoffman
Jenny Paterson
Neville Roughan
Janette Shepherd
Jane Spark
Dave Wong

Part-time: Marita Munro
Kathy Osmond
Greg Pearce

The Board of Management consists of: Athol Gill, Helen Hoffman, Leo Hicks, Marita Munro, Janette Shepherd, John Williams, Bob Woodward.
APPENDIX I (continued)

OUTCOME:
-- People finding faith
-- Christians understanding what they believe
-- Christians working in evangelism, community and social action
-- Christians becoming responsible activists in society and in the Church
-- The proclamation of Jesus as Lord.

House of the Gentle Bunyip, 94-100 Hodgkinson St., Clifton Hill, 3068 (4894274)

JOIN WITH THE GENTLE BUNYIP
AND WORK FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

I would like to receive more information about the House

I am interested in receiving general Christian training through the House

I am interested in taking part in forums, discussions and seminars on issues relating to the Church and society

I am interested in being informed of the qualifications needed to train on a House team

I would like to become a Sharepartner of the House and agree to contribute each week the amount circled below (payable monthly)

Please circle amount pledged:
$0.50 $1.00 $1.50 $2.00 $2.50 $3.00 $3.50
$4.00 $4.50 $5.00 $10.00 $15.00 $20.00 $25.00

NAME: ..............................................................
ADDRESS: ........................................................
PHONE: ......................................................

Please return to the House of the Gentle Bunyip, P.O. Box 62, Clifton Hill, 3068.
APPENDIX J

BUNYIP DISCIPLESHIP WEEKEND 1976

THE HOUSE OF THE GENTLE BUNYIP

1976 DISCIPLESHIP WEEKEND
MARCH 12 - 14

FRIDAY
7.30 p.m. Let's Celebrate!
8.00 p.m. "They Left Their Nets" The Call to Discipleship ... Athol Gill
9.00 p.m. "The Crucified God" The Cost of Discipleship ... Athol Gill
10.00 p.m. Supper

SATURDAY
9.00 a.m. Let's Celebrate!
9.30 a.m. "Rich Christians and Poor Lazarus"
Discipleship and Possessions ... John Smith
10.45 a.m. Morning Tea
11.15 a.m. "Rich Christians and Poor Lazarus" (cont.)
Electives: (a) Voluntary Poverty ... Janette Shepherd
(b) "Enough is Enough" ... Neil Parker
(c) Towards a Christian Lifestyle ... Paul Dalsell
12.30 p.m. Lunch
2.00 p.m. "Prostitutes and Tax collectors"
Discipleship and Mission ... John Smith
3.15 p.m. Afternoon Tea
3.45 p.m. Discipleship and Mission (cont.) ... John Smith
5.30 p.m. Barbecue Tea
8.00 p.m. "Rod Boucher in Concert"
Berkeley's Creek Music Hall ... $1.50

SUNDAY
2.00 p.m. "Living Together in a World Falling Apart"
Discipleship and Community ... Athol Gill
5.15 p.m. Afternoon Tea
5.45 p.m. "Living Together in a World Falling Apart" (cont.)
Electives: (a) Therapeutic Community ... Jane Spark
(b) Devotional Life ... Greg Pearce
(c) Developing your Gifts ... Helen Hoffman
5.00 p.m. Close
APPENDIX K

TEAM TRAINING LEAFLET (c. 1980)

training for
discipleship
and mission

house of the
gentle bunyip
APPENDIX K (continued)

An excitingly fresh approach to christian studies, combining theory and practice within the context of a developing community of God's people.

Aims

(1) To provide an opportunity for you to learn and to become more aware of God and of your relationship to him, to discover more about yourself and how you relate to other people. To enable you to develop a greater understanding of what it means to be a Christian and how best you may develop your gifts.

(2) To help you develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for the fulfilling of responsible positions in the Church and in the community.

(3) To encourage you to think, and adequately assess, current methods of evangelism and mission, worship and communication, social and political involvement so that you may discover new and relevant forms of christian living.

(4) To give you the opportunity to test and apply, in practical situations, the knowledge that you will acquire.

Prerequisites

(1) You need to be a Christian seeking to acknowledge the liberating Lordship of Jesus in all areas of life.

(2) You need to be willing to submit yourself to the discipline of the learning process and to commit yourself to the group with whom you will be working.

(3) You need to be at least 18 years of age.

(4) Become a prayer/share partner of the House.
APPENDIX K (continued)

Includes

INTRODUCTION
The House's ministry
Principles of Community Ministry

BIBLICAL STUDIES
Inspiration and authority of the Bible
Interpreting the Bible

DISCIPLESHIP TODAY
Call and Cost of Discipleship
Discipleship and Community, Mission, Worship,
Possessions, Personal Relationships, Power

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
Thinking theologically
Questions relating to Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit,
Kingdom of God, People of God
Liberation Theology

ETHICAL STUDIES
Theological basis
Issues such as sexuality, racism, war, etc.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
Self Understanding
Group Work
Spiritual Life

CONTEMPORARY EVANGELISM
What is Evangelism?
Conversational Evangelism
Street Work
Drugs
Counselling
Working with the elderly
Working with disturbed young people
Dynamics of work within the coffee house,
drop-in centre, craft, music and drama workshops

( ) Please send me further information on training for discipleship and mission
( ) Please send me a training interview dossier

The next training course begins on Monday March 6th. Training groups are limited to 20-25
possibles, so if you are interested, please complete the attached and return it as soon as
possible to P.O. Box 62, Clifton Hill 2066.
THEOLOGY IN THE CONCRETE
15th-16th August

With Dr Colin Marchant
At the House of the Gentle Bunyip
91 Hodgkinson St, Clifton Hill.
Phone: 429 4274

A weekend devoted to discussing a Christian response to the question of urban mission and ministry.
An outline of the sessions will be:

Friday Night : 7.30 pm - Session 1:
- "Tackling Uncomfortable Questions"
- on the church (why the flight from cities)
- on the ministry (what is the urban lens?)
- on denominations (are they irrelevant?)
- on "psychological categories (training who for what?)
- on the grails (captured by the sections?)
- on racism (does racism ring any bells?)

Saturday Morning: 9.00 - 10.30 am - Session 2:
- "Social Response"
- historical interaction - spatial separation
- religious practice - evangelistic failure - social action
- political ambivalence - secularisation
- cultural and class conflict

Saturday Morning: 11.00 - 12.30 - Session 3:
- "Apostles of Assimilation"
- the gathered community - the parish - the local
- the basic community - issue-centered action groups
- dream, and group ministries - signs of hope
- green shoots and the enduring process

Saturday Night: 2.00 - 3.00 pm - Session 4:
- "Towards an Urban Theology"
- beginning with the inculturation - looking at kinesthetic
- seeing the gospel for the poor - running the risks

Registration Form:
Please complete and return by Tuesday 2nd August, together with $5.00 deposit or $10.00 full registration
to House of the Gentle Bunyip
10 Box 82, Carlton Hill, Vic. 3068
Telephone: 489-6276

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
Telephone: _________________________________________

Required Meals:
Lunch Saturday [ ]
Lunch Sunday [ ]
Tea Saturday  [ ]
APPENDIX M

LET'S STUDY ... LETTER

"Let's Study..." Cassettes

A project of the Platypus Resource Centre

House of the Gentle Bunyip
Box 82, Clifton Hill, 3068

One of the most important areas of need in the Australian Church scene is lay education. The insights of contemporary scholarship so often seem looked away in universities and colleges that they rarely reach the average Church member.

The "Let's Study..." project is an attempt to bridge the gap between the professor and the pew. It is an attempt to assist lay people in their quest to come to a deeper understanding of their faith and of the world in which they live.

An extensive series of studies is planned. All the way from "Let's Study the Old Testament" and "Let's Study Genesis 1-11" to "Let's Study New Religions in Australia", "Let's Study Christianity and the Arts" and so on. Exotic subjects such as "Drugs and Drug Dependence" and "The Occult" will be included, but so will "Greek", "Hebrew" and "Philosophy".

The studies are designed to help the church member who is prepared to work on his understanding of the faith but who has little detailed knowledge of the subject under discussion. There will be no editorial censorship. It is expected that critical problems and difficulties will be faced, but that the language and method of presentation will be as simple as possible.

Contributors are being chosen from people well qualified in the particular field of study. For the most part they are Australian, but a number of overseas scholars have been invited to assist.

Each series will comprise ten 30-minute studies, marketed as five C60 cassettes. Through the voluntary services of the House of the Gentle Bunyip, costs will be kept to a minimum and it is hoped that the cassettes will be available to the public at the extremely reasonable price of $10.00 per series.

Contributors will receive a basic honorarium of $50.00 (and will be reimbursed for the cost of the master cassettes), but if sales are encouraging it is hoped that this may be increased to at least $100.00 per series.

Rev. Dr. Athol Gill
Project Director.
**Free Music Workshops for 1978**

**June 5 to August 15**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>3-5 yrs</td>
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The music workshops presented by Berkeley's Creek Music Hall provide a wonderful opportunity for children to learn about music and to understand how they can participate and even create their own music.

Any child is able to attend the workshops and take part in singing and action songs, rhythm exercises, playing percussion, moving to music to develop coordination, creating drama with music, experimenting with new and different sounds, and generally gathering in a group to experience the joy and refreshing freedom which music can give.

Each group will be restricted to 12 children, so ensure your child is registered early. The 2nd term begins June 5 and lasts until August 15.

And remember! The workshops are free!
APPENDIX O

MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENTS

THE HOUSE OF THE GENTLE BUNYIP

94 Hodgkinson Street, (P.O. Box 82), Clifton Hill 3068 Phone - (03) 489 4274
99 Rea Street, (P.O. Box 285), Shepparton 3630 Phone - (058) 21 6693

MEMBERSHIP

as at 1st February, 1978.

Membership of the House of the Gentle Bunyip now consists of four forms --

(a) Membership

Open to any person who agrees with the basic emphasis of the House, i.e. the liberating lordship of Jesus Christ over the totality of life and the need for a dynamic and creative commitment on the part of the believer, and who:

1. Has completed training, i.e. Stage 1 (Training for Discipleship & Mission) and Stage 2 (Preparation for Membership).

   Current members who trained in the first five teams are encouraged to participate in Stage 2.

   People coming to us from another centre must do Stage 2 to be eligible for membership.

2. Is willing to support the House financially beginning with 10% of gross income.

3. Is actively involved in at least one area of mission on a weekly basis (Humpty's Dump Youth Club, Billabong Arts & Crafts Centre, Cameron House Day Care Centre for the Elderly, Berwley's Creek Music Hall, and Coffee House).

4. Is prepared to be committed to the House's ministry for a further five years, being actively involved in at least one area of mission on a weekly basis.

5. Is committed to the devotional life of the Community, and is involved in a local church on a weekly basis.

6. Is seeking to develop a simple lifestyle...

As a member a person is eligible to attend all meetings of the Community, where he/she may participate in discussion and vote on any decision.

(b) Members in Training

Open to any person who agrees with the basic emphasis of the House, and who:

1. Has completed Stage 1 of training and will be continuing in Stage 2 with the view to entering into membership within 12 months.

2. Is willing to support the House financially beginning with 10% of gross income.
APPENDIX O (continued)

Membership Cont.

5. Is actively involved in at least one area of mission on a weekly basis.

4. Is committed to the devotional life of the Community, and is involved in a local church on a weekly basis.

5. Is seeking to develop a simple lifestyle.

As a member in training a person is eligible to attend all meetings of the Community, where he/she may participate in discussions but not vote.

(c) Associate Membership

Open to any person who agrees with the basic emphasis of the House, and who:

1. Has completed Stage 1 of training.

2. Is willing to support the House financially beginning with 5% of gross income.

3. Is actively involved in at least one area of mission on a weekly basis.

4. Is prepared to be committed to the House’s ministry for a further 12 months, being actively involved in at least one area of mission on a weekly basis.

5. Is committed to the devotional life of the Community, and is involved in a local church on a weekly basis.

6. Is seeking to develop a simple lifestyle.

As an associate member a person is eligible to attend all meetings of the area of mission and participate in decision-making in this capacity. An associate member can also request to be recognized as an observer at a Community Meeting.

(d) Supporters Club

Open to any person who agrees with the basic emphasis of the House and is willing to support it through prayer and giving of 1% of gross income. Supporters will be supplied with monthly reports for prayer.

As per the Constitution, a person can only enter into membership if he/she is nominated by the Leader of the area of mission in which he/she is participating together with the Leader of the household (if in residence) or the Administrator.

The vow of commitment will be renewable annually at the beginning of the year.

Members, Members in Training, and Associate Members are eligible for entry into the Household Community.
APPENDIX P

425 Wellington Street, Clifton Hill, purchased 22 October 1977 for $45,500.00.

104 Hodgkinson Street, Clifton Hill purchased 8 January 1981 for $63,000.00.

104 flat at rear of 104 Hodgkinson Street completed July 1982 at a cost of $10,000.

184 Easey Street, Collingwood purchased 18 January 1982 for $54,000.00.

SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS/MONK FOR A MONTH BROCHURE

A ONE-YEAR TRAINING COURSE IN RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP, COMMUNITY, MISSION AND CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUALITY

For details write:
Rev. Dr. Athol Gill,
House of the Gentle Bunyip,
P.O. Box 82, Clifton Hill 3068
The School of the Prophets is a one-year, full-time, residential programme of education in discipleship, community and mission, using insights from first and third world situations.

It involves a basic structure which is adapted to the needs, gifts and intentions of each student. It combines theory and practice and uses both the action-reflection and reflection-action models of theological education.

It is ecumenical and encourages students to understand and appreciate their own Christian tradition, while being open to the insights of others and working towards the development of a grass-roots ecumenical community and church.

It is international and encourages students to understand and appreciate their own culture and heritage, while developing an openness towards others and working towards a new international perspective for justice and peace.

It is centred on the House of the Gentle Bunyip in Melbourne and uses other educational facilities available in the city, drawing together the various aspects of learning through structured times of personal and corporate reflection. It takes place within the life and discipline of a Christian community with its own distinctive theology, lifestyle and spirituality.
Christian communities come in a variety of forms and sizes, but they share a number of distinguishing characteristics.

(a) The centre of the Christian community is Jesus Christ. Christian community is not simply a matter of geographical proximity, nor simply a group of people getting together; nor even a group united by adherence to a common ideology. Christian community is the result of the activity of Jesus.

(b) The Christian community is a community of grace, made possible by the grace of God, existing through His grace and living to extend His grace to the world.

(c) The Christian community does not exist for itself but for the sake of the world. It is a community of love, which embraces all men, in an effort to capture their hearts—not a general love of humanity based on the idea of hierarchy and a stereotype of human community, but as the love of Christ's relationship; that is, simply as an openness for whoever conforms one or another time.

(d) The Christian community, in the center of its own life and in the mission of the world, will seek to give concrete expression for the fact that it is a community of personal love, becoming a place where children are encouraged to discover their God-given gifts and to develop and use them for the service of others.

(e) The Christian community will always attempt to be open to the God who leads into the future and that will not be an architecture, or even a configuration of faith, which may find it the present and thus immediately visible in the past.

Dr. Alasdair Gill
House of the Gentle Bumpyp

At the House of the Gentle Bumpyp we are seeking to develop an intentional community based upon biblical principles. To facilitate this we have established a series of household communities, surrounding our centre of missionary activity.

There is now a widespread interest in community living. Many are looking for viable alternatives to the exclusive nuclear family. In Melbourne, however, the viable options are rather limited.

"Mank for a Month," an opportunity for you to live with us for a month so as to gain a short experience or orientation in community living.

Following a strict liturgical pattern, the daily program will ensure a balance between worship and mission, manual work (restoration, work on church and chapel), and recreation— all as part of a Christian Community.

A typical day begins with corporate worship, the centre of our life together, followed by a meal in common. Throughout the day in the various activities and involvement in the areas of mission, you will meet and work with members of the community and the people living in the local area. It is in this daily struggle of action and reflection that discipleship becomes an act of faith made possible by the grace of God.

Costs will be limited to rent ($20/week, $5 students per week) and board ($50 per week).

If you are interested, please complete the attached form and return it to the House of the Gentle Bumpyp, 50 Bumpyp, station hill 3082. Otherwise ring Helen Hoffman on 469-9274.

Please send me an application form for "Mank for a Month.

( ) please send me more information on "Mank for a Month.

name
address
phone number
church

APPENDIX Q (continued)
APPENDIX R

LITURGIES FOR MORNING PRAYER

TUESDAY, WEEK 1 : THURSDAY, WEEK 2

TUESDAY 1

The Incarnate Life of Christ : Revelation and Human Knowledge

1. God our Father,
   You gave your Son, Jesus Christ,
   to share our life on earth,
   to grow in wisdom, to toil with his hands,
   and to make known the ways of your kingdom:

2. Thanksgiving
   We give thanks
   for his revelation of yourself
   his love and care for people
   his joy in obedience ...
   for the call to follow in his way
   the value of human work and leisure
   the strength he promised us in serving others ...
   for all truths learned and discoveries made
   every effort to use knowledge for the benefit of mankind

3. Intercession
   We pray for SOCIETY
   those in the workforce ...
   the unemployed ...
   those in research ...
   teachers, lecturers and students ...
   those in communication and the media ...
   those who maintain the life of the community ...
   We pray for OUR COMMUNITY
   Humpty's Dump Youth Club
   Household Community at 223 McKean Street
   Platypus Cassettes
   Springlands Community in Launceston

4. Give us growing reverence for the truth,
   and such wisdom in the use of knowledge,
   that your kingdom may be advanced,
   and your name glorified;
   Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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THURSDAY II

1. Responses
In my mouth he has put a new song:
-- Praise to our God!
I hoped in the Lord with a great hope, he stooped down, and he heard me cry:
-- Praise to our God!
Many shall see and shall fear him, they shall believe in the Lord:
-- Praise to our God!
My God, I have loved your law from the depths of my heart:
-- Praise to our God!
I have proclaimed the justice of the Lord in the great assembly:
-- Praise to our God!
Glory to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2. Intercession
Filled with your kindness and your peace, with all our hearts and all our minds we pray to you;
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.
For the unity of the Church, for those who cannot believe, and for peace among the nations, we pray to you:
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.
For us who are weak in faith, help our unbelief, and for all who look for your presence, we pray to you:
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.
For this country and the life of all living here, we pray to you:
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.
That all may be sure of finding proper work, and of being able to live by it, we pray to you:
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.

For all who are in prison, condemned or exiled, we pray to you:
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.
For all the sick, in body or mind, we pray to you:
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.
That in your Church we may become signs of brotherly love and of new hope, we pray to you:
-- O Lord, hear and have mercy.

3. Free Prayer

4. General Collect
O Lord, you promise that all whose hearts are clear shall see God; dispel the darkness and confusion of our hearts, and in your light we shall see eternal light, now and ever, -- Amen.

5. The Lord's Prayer
Our Father in heaven, Holy be your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us to the test, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.
ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR BUNYIP CLOSURE

CLOSING WORSHIP SERVICE

OF

THE HOUSE OF

THE GENTLE BUNYIP

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH, 1998
'Endings'

Ending, as beginning, grows tentatively. Even the most abrupt has threads which traced back, weave to where it begins. Conception, ideas split, grow, zygote to embryo. Foetal heart-beat greets the world, waiting to be born in real time. The ending’s there at venture’s birth, unraveling the vibrant threads of creation’s tangled dance, coming undone while stitching up birth’s completion.

We stand then, awed by our creativity. Colours warp and weft in pattern’s intricate life. Our compassion’s dance and striving intellect encompassed by Divinity’s sound tapestry:

it’s rhythmic complexity interweaving humanity’s heart-beat into eternity.

© jillian Kellie

Prelude (Jenny Liggett)

Lighting of the Candles:

Welcome and Greetings: “Why are we here?” (Helen Hoffman)

Call to Worship:

Hymn: ‘O For a Thousand Tongues’

O for a thousand tongues to sing My great redeemer’s praise, The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of his grace!

Jesus! The name that charms our fears, That bids our sorrows cease; ‘Tis music in the sinners ears, ‘Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free; His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to his voice, New life the dead receive, The mourning, broken hearts rejoice, The humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb, Your loosened tongues employ; Ye blind behold your Saviour come, And leap, ye lame, for joy.

My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim, To spread through all the earth abroad, The honours of thy name.
Storytime: "The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek"
(Debbie Mountjoy and support cast)

Hymn: "With Thanksgiving to God"

With thanksgiving to God,
our prayer is always filled with profound joy for you.
When we think of the strength you are for others,
and letting God live in you with such beauty and truth.

May your faith become strong in God's word,
certain that having been planted in you,
thirst for wisdom and sensing spirit's presence,
the life within, deepened still, will inspire other's joy.

May God's spirit of peace be with you,
living sign of the love that you share;
may your home be filled with goodness and caring,
a place where there's no difference between stranger and friend.

May God's presence be what you offer,
as you welcome each other this day.
Simple kindness: the bread of our lives,
a word of peace, a gentle look: this God's gift to be shared.

With thanksgiving to God,
our prayer is always filled with profound joy for you.
When we think of the strength you are for others,
and letting God live in you with such beauty and truth.

Words and Music: Gregory Norbet, Weston Priory

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING:
(Gavin Mountjoy)

BIBLE READING:
Acts 8:1b-8
(Judith Gill)

REFLECTION:
'Completing the story: claiming the heritage'
(Rowena Curtis)

HYMN: 'Spirit Be Our Spirit'

Spirit, be our spirit
in this time of searching for new life.
Open inner spaces
with the fullness of your love.

Chorus:
Spirit, let us now be and forever transformed for all humanity.

Movement of your presence
heals and deepens our hope to freely live.
Gift of heart where truth springs
from the goodness that you've sown.

Into desert silence,
there to listen and be with open heart,
you shall lead us, thirsting:
and we turn from our fears:
forgiving love.

Spirit, be our spirit
in this time of searching for new life.
Open inner spaces
with the fullness of your love.

Words and Music: Gregory Norbet

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:
(David Wong)

REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED:
Libby Radcliffe, Athol Gill, Marek, Andrew Huckson,
Pamela Guice, Alex Perrin, Freda Hicks, Les Doig,
Michelle Stewart, Ken Gibbs, Dave Fox, ...

EUCHARIST:
(Marita Munro)

[Worshippers to move forward to receive the bread and wine. A voluntary offering for the Church and/or the Athol Gill Centre may be made at this time]
HYMN: 'Feed Us Now'

Feed us now, Bread of life,
In this holy meal;
Let us know your love anew:
We hunger for you.
Feed us now, Bread of life,
Come and live within;
Let your peace be ours today,
Lord Jesus, we pray.

Piece of bread, glass of wine:
Lord, this food is good;
Love and mercy come to us -
Your promise we trust.
Piece of bread, glass of wine;
Who can understand
How his mercy works in these.
Yet, Lord, we believe.

God is here, oh so near -
Nearer than our thoughts.
Stay with us where'er we go;
Lord, help us to grow.
God is here, oh so near,
In this heaven's meal.
May we always feed on you -
On the bread that is true.

Words and Music: Robin Mann

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD:
(Andrew Tiver)

HYMN: 'Lord of our Days'

Refrain:
Lord of our days.
Lord of yesterday.
Lord, our Lord, forever.
your people we are.
Lord of our days.
Lord of yesterday
Lord, our Lord, forever,
your people we are.

From many pasts you fashion one history -
a people of God created to hold
for all the world the myst'ry of faith
Lord of our days, your people we are.

From many wills you fashion community -
a people of God created to love;
being for all the promise of hope.
Lord of our days, your people we are.

Refrain

From many calls you fashion one destiny -
a people of God created to be
for all the world the body of Christ.
Lord of our days, your people we are.

From many dreams you fashion a unity -
a people of God created to serve;
bringing to all the witness of love.
Lord of our days, your people we are.

Refrain

POEM: 'Endings'

SOUND TAPESTRY: (Helen Wong)

BENEDICTION:

POSTLUDE: (Jenny Liggett)
• Welcome to this concluding service for the House of Gentle Bunyip. We hope you are able to stay for some or all of the day. After the Service, we will move next door to the hall for refreshments, story telling, etc. A special thanks to the Community Church of St Mark members for allowing us to 'take over' their normal Sunday worship. At the present time the church is undergoing renovations.

• We have received greetings and apologies from a number of friends including:
  Carol Easton (nee Woodhouse), Tasmania
  Margie Moore, Sydney
  Robyn Sirr and Bernie Lovegrove, Canberra
  Mark Glover and Jenika Graze, Nepal
  Rev John Simpson, (General Superintendent, Baptist Union of Victoria)
  Keith and Lynne Dyer and family

• If you are planning stay for the day today, please make your contribution to Steve Hammond ($10.00 per adult) to defray some of the costs of the occasion. Thanks.

• *The Athol Gill Centre is a partnership between Fintry Bank Incorporated and the Community Church of St Mark. It is to be built at the back of the church and will provide a drop-in centre and office for the residents of Fintry Bank and for the wider work of the Fintry Bank programme: supported accommodation and outreach for people living with schizophrenia (more information available from Dave Wong, Judy Gill and Kath Ryan).
MISSIONARIES OVERSEAS

The nineteenth century was a time of great missionary endeavour. The Gospel was carried to the four corners of the earth and Christianity became a world religion.

Great heroes of the Church emerged: William Carey (India), Adoniram Judson (Burma), Hudson Taylor (China), George Mitchell (Africa), Father Damien (Haiti).

Carey, the pioneering botanist, travelled to India, translated the Bible into Bengali and the Gospels into 24 languages and dialects, published grammars and dictionaries in four languages, founded a university, became India's leading botanist, helped establish the project 'assisting orphans of suffering of the widow at her husband's funeral'.

The amazing story continued into the twentieth century: Albert Schweitzer (Africa), Gregorio Aglipay (Philippines), Philip Strong (New Guinea), Mother Teresa (India).

Mother Teresa, one of the most influential theologians of his time, world famous religious leader, interpreter of Mahatma Gandhi, was University Lecturer and Theological College Principal to work at his primitive hospital in Calcutta.

Mother Teresa, Yugoslavian Sister with a dedication for the poorest of the poor whose name for Dying Institute in Calcutta cared for 30,000 people in its first 20 years.

The story goes on.

Today thousands of Australians serve on the mission fields of the world.

THE NEW MISSION FIELD

Recent years have seen the emergence of a new mission field: the depressed inner suburbs of our capital cities.

Melbourne is now the third largest Greek city in the world and there are large numbers of Italians, Yugoslavs, Turks, Vietnamese and Aborigines.

Much of the housing is sub-standard and overcrowded. Broken homes, loneliness, boredom, unemployment, alcoholism and drug dependence are constant problems. Schools are poor and community services inadequate.

Protestant Church membership has declined drastically. Churches have closed their doors and sold their properties. The Good News is retreating to the comfortable suburbs.

MISSIONARIES WANTED

The only hope for the Church is for a missionary army equal to that of the nineteenth century.

Christ is calling His people: teachers, doctors, nurses, musicians, carpenters, plumbers, lawyers, builders, senior citizens, the unemployed...

The House of the Great Sunlight will help you discover your gifts, develop your talents, speak the language, understand the culture, and find a place to serve.

The cost is high, but the possibilities are limited only by our faith.
The residential aspect of the community comprises ten households each with at least five people per household, (married, single, workers, children, students, unemployed people, pensioners).

The community is involved in elderly people's day care, worship, emergency accommodation, youth clubs, day centre in Collingwood, printing, counselling, study, coffee shops, music, concerts, probation work, craft, prayer, farming and generally seeking an alternative way of life based on the values we see portrayed in the life of Jesus. That is, a growing harmony with God through commitment and service to our fellow brothers and sisters and our world.

ALL ENQUIRIES AND VISITS WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED

THE HOUSE OF THE GENTLE BUNYIP
94 HODGKINSON STREET
CLIFTON HILL, 3068
Tel: 489 4274

The Bunyip is an Australian creature in search of his own identity. It is a story of pain transformed into joy as he searches and finds at last, another Bunyip. His story is not one of abject failure but one of courageous hope.
APPENDIX V

AN AUSTRALIAN NETWORK OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES (c. 1982)

an
australian
network
of
christian
communities
ANOCC

is an Australian Network of Christian Communities which grew out of the concern of several communities to form a supportive network for stimulus & encouragement.

Six communities first met in Sydney in 1981. Currently the network has eight members from eastern Australia.

ANOCC meets annually as a national network & more frequently in regions. It embraces a diversity of communities who share a common journey.

Its present aims

- To provide support and encouragement to member communities.
- To share resources and gifts.
- To work together on common projects.
- To provide opportunity for challenge and mutual accountability.
- To present a corporate challenge to the church and society.

The following groups are at present members:

SYDNEY

PHILIP BAY COMMUNITY, 15 Yana Rd, Phillip Bay 2036
Contact Steve Lawrence 02 661-4805

MELBOURNE

HOUSE OF THE GEMEINDE, 94 Hodgkinson St, Clifton Hill 3068, P.O. Box 82, Clifton Hill.
Phone 03 409-4214, Contact Marita Munro

CANBERRA

CHRIST CHURCH CELEBRATION COMMUNITY
54 Rutledge St, Queanbeyan, N.S.W. 2620
P.O.Box 103 Phone 062 911072
Contact Rev. Mike Cockeye.

PROGRESS COMMUNITY, Cobb Cres, Ainslie,
A.C.T. 2602. Phone 062 474-727, 472 5891.
Contact Richard Parker.

L'ARCHE GENERALE 29 Gledden St,
Chifley A.C.T. 2606. Contact: Eileen Glass.

GOULBURN

ST. JOSEPH'S HOUSE OF PRAYER,
Tumut Rd, Goulburn 2580. Phone 042-213092.
Contact Lyn Kety.

QUEENSLAND

HOUSE OF FREEDOM CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
641 Horns St., BEENLEA (P.O. Box 51,
Ph: 441-2286, 441-9580, 447-5184.
Contact: John Southgate, Jeanette Liddle, Dr. Craig

ANOCC welcomes new Christian communities to become members. If your community is interested in joining ANOCC and/or would like further information, please contact the member group nearest to you.
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