



# ANOTHER QUIRKY CHRISTMAS LETTER

from Barry and Vanessa Chant

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December 2013

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## 'A Dream Come True'

*Vanessa:* This year we had a wonderful European river cruise on the River Danube.

*Barry:* And the Rhine.

V: From Vienna—

B: Budapest

V: From Budapest to Amsterdam on the *Amabella*. It was a beautiful boat—

B: Ship. They told us to call it a ship, not a boat.

V: It was a beautiful *ship*. Happy now? There were 150 of us on board. Astounding scenery, yummy food, daily tours and concerts, even cycle tours—including one that covered 38 kilometres.

B: 38

V: That's what I said.

B: You said 28.

V: I did not... I said 38.

B: I distinctly heard you—

V: Ah, whatever you say. Anyway, we both wanted to do it, but I had to leave it to Barry. Believe it or not, he actually did it.

B: What do you mean, 'Believe it or not'?

V: Nothing, dear, you did very well really.

B: Hmph. Thanks a lot. Tell them how we agreed to keep a low profile and just enjoy the holiday.

V: Keep a low profile? So what does Barry do? He sits himself at the piano in the ship's lounge every day where everyone can see him and plays for hours.

B: Half an hour at the most.

V: Hours. I had to wait for you. And then you offered to conduct a Sunday morning service on the boat.

B: Ship.

V: What? Oh all right. *Ship*. That was a great way to lie low. But I must say it did go fairly well. Nine people showed up from several denominations.

B: Even though it was only announced once.

V: Who's telling this story?

B: Sorry.

V: Then in Cologne Barry drew more attention to himself by climbing to the top of the cathedral spire—over six hundred steps.

B: 540 to be precise.

V: (*Sigh*). Over *five* hundred steps. I was envious. I wanted to do it, too. But the next day Barry climbed just six steps, tripped and tore the skin off the bottom of his toe.

B: I was looking for a coffee shop and just stumbled—

V: Look, why don't you tell the story!

B: No... you're doing fine. Keep going. I'll just listen.

V: Make sure you do. We also spent some very special time in Holland and England and Singapore catching up with family and friends.

B: Especially London. Don't forget London.

V: I'm just coming to London.

B: OK. Just checking.

V: London was great. Our granddaughter Gwen took us to the astonishing Hillsong church where we tried to be unobtrusive again.

B: There were thousands of people there so it wasn't hard.

V: Sure—until we sat right in the second row where we finished up meeting Mal Fletcher—

B: From Australia

V: From Australia. And having coffee with the senior pastor Gary Clarke—another Aussie. Anyway, it was a special time.

B: And don't forget how we went to St Martin-in-the-Fields after that. What a contrast!

V: Who's telling this story?

B: You are, you are—keep going.

V: En route to Europe we visited Dubai. I'd love to go there again—what an amazing, mysterious and, yes, very hot city.

B: I don't care if I never go to Dubai again.

V: You told me to tell the story.

B: Yes, I know, but—

V: But nothing. That's it. I'm finished.

B: No, no, you don't need to stop. You haven't told people how on the boat—er, ship—by the second day you were befriending and counselling people—

V: You tell them.

B: And how you were able to pray with your niece and witness to—

V: As I said, you tell them

B: But I want you to do it—

V: You do it. I'm going out to my garden.

B: No don't go! Come back! ...OK, don't come back... Hmph, I wonder why she's so upset?

## Vanessa's retirement

*Vanessa retired from full-time work at Tabor College NSW in July this year. She received many written expressions of love. Here are just a few of them.*

- Your laughter is contagious. Thank you for your insight during my walk.
- Thank you for your wisdom.
- Vanessa, you are an amazing mentor.
- Dearest Vanessa, I will never forget your impact on my life.
- Thank you so much for your years of commitment to Tabor and to the students here.
- Thank you also for inspiring us with your great example of perseverance.



- You are a legend and your legacy will continue forever at Tabor.
- Thank you for being patient with me and helping me to become a better person.
- I hope I can follow in your footsteps and be a blessing as you have been.
- You never cease to amaze me! I want to be like you.
- Dear Vanessa, thank you for all your care and encouragement throughout the years! You are really a blessing!
- Dearest Vanessa, it's an honour and privilege to have you teach us again this year.
- Dear Vanessa, God bless you. It's a privilege to be with you. Love you always.
- You are a wonder! I hope you take this love and adulation and enjoy the next step.
- Thanks for all the knowledge you've shared. You are an inspiring lady and a source of encouragement to me.

## *A book launching that might have been*

*Quirky:* It is my pleasure to announce the release of two new books by Dr Barry Chant during 2013.

*Reporter from ABC\*:* Two new ones? Why do we need *any* new ones?

Q: Well to be honest, only one of them is really new. The other one (*Gifts of the Spirit*) is actually a re-write of an earlier edition.

R: So it's not really new?

Q: Well it is if you haven't read the old one.

R: And if I have?

Q: Do you remember what was in it?

R: I'm the one who asks the questions.

Q: There—you haven't read it, have you!

R: That's my business. So what's the other one?

Q: *This is Revival*. Here, take a copy.

R: Thank you. Mm... *Revival*... Revival of what?

Q: Of Christians, of Christianity, of the Church.

R: Well, I can't argue with that. If anything needs reviving it's the Church.

Q: True. But what about you? You look like you could do with some reviving, too.

R: I need a drink.

Q: Not that sort of reviving.

R: OK—so hasn't anyone written on this subject before?

Q: Of course, but this volume has a heap of original material. Dramatic, rare and often previously unpublished stories about Australia and SE Asia. New insights into the nature of revival. Perceptive scriptural exposition. Identification of biblical and historical factors in revival. Fifty photos.

R: Sounds great—if you're interested in that sort of thing...

Q: It could be worth reading even if you are not.

R: OK, I guess I should at least look at it (*begins browsing*).

Q: Be careful. Once you start reading you might not want to stop.

R: (*Silence.*)

Q: I said, be careful, once you start...

R: I heard you. Can't you see I'm reading? Don't interrupt.

Q: I warned you.

R: There you go interrupting me again. You know, this is interesting stuff...

Q: That's what I said.

R: (*Silence.*)

Q: (*to himself*) Well, how about that? A reporter actually reading a book someone else has written—and a Christian book at that. This is revival!

(\*ABC = Atheistic Bureau of Cynicism)



*Pastor Bill Vasilakis at the actual dedication of This is Revival at the CRC Churches International National Conference. 'This is the best book I have ever read on revival,' he said.*

## *On being 75*

*Quirky:* So, Barry, this year you turned 75. Congratulations. What's it like being so old? Can you still— ?

*Barry:* —Yes, pretty well. Of course, I don't have as much energy these days. After an hour and half I've usually had enough.

Q: An hour and a half! What does Vanessa feel about that?

B: She encourages me. She says it's good for me.

Q: Well, I—er—suppose it is.

B: Yes, I do enjoy it. I haven't lost the passion, although I'm obviously not as agile as I used to be. And I still do as well as the other blokes although they are all a lot younger than I am.

Q: Other blokes? What other blokes?

B: Oh, there's about a dozen of us, all up. We change partners regularly.

Q: You what?

B: Variety is the spice of life. Isn't that what they say?

Q: Yes, but—

B: And having a group of us means we all get to have a go.

Q: Surely you're not serious.

B: Why shouldn't I be? You can't play tennis on your own, can you?

## Telemarketing in reverse

Now Barry is working from home, he receives frequent telemarketing calls. This is a true record (really) of one conversation...

*Telemarketer:* Good morning, Mr Chant. How are you today?

*Barry:* I'm fine, thank you.

*T:* My name is Veronica and I am ringing with a special offer for you.

*B:* About what?

*V:* Mr Chant, do you have a funeral plan that will cover all your expenses so that your family will not be burdened when the time comes?

*B:* Actually I have a friend in the business so I am OK thank you.

*V:* Mr Chant, let me tell you about our company's plan. For just a few dollars a week—

*B:* Veronica, let me offer *you* something. What plans do you have for after you die?

*V:* Oh I am already covered by our company's plan and—

*B:* No, I'm not talking about before you die. What plans do you have for *after* you die?

*V:* Well, Mr Chant, our funeral plan is—

*B:* Veronica, what about *after* the funeral? Where will you go?

*V:* Are you talking about heaven and hell and that sort of thing?

*B:* Yes, exactly. Where will you go?

*V:* Are *you* going to heaven?

*B:* Yes, I am.

*V:* How do you know?

*B:* Because Jesus is my Saviour and Lord and he's already there: I'm just going to meet him.

*V:* Aah, I don't believe in heaven and hell. This life is all there is.

*B:* I'm really sorry to hear that. If you only have hope in this life, I feel so very sad for you. There's got to be more than this. If there isn't—

*V:* There's nothing after I die.

*B:* But what if there is? Wouldn't you like to be part of it? No more pain, no heartache, no crime...

*V:* I've already told you—

*B:* —You know, Veronica, if I am wrong I have lost nothing; if you are wrong you have lost everything.

*V:* *Click.*

## Find the fakes

During the year Barry spoke in most of the following places. Find the four fakes.

- \* East Sydney Community Christian Church—Sunday service and Camp
- \* Australasian Community Church, Adelaide—Sunday service
- \* Elect Assembly, Calvin College, Exclusive Mansions, Sovereign Rd, Callington, ACT
- \* Tabor College, NSW—weekly classes
- \* Pentecostal and Charismatic Bible College conference—paper on Wigglesworth
- \* South Eastern Christian Centre, Victoria (CRC)—Pentecost celebration
- \* Kingston City Church, Victoria (CRC)—Sunday services and Bible School
- \* Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, SA—Seminars on spiritual gifts
- \* The Journey Uniting Church, Golden Grove, SA—Sunday service
- \* Holroyd New Life Centre, NSW—Weekend camp
- \* Papal Liturgical Church, Vatican Estate, Roma, WA—Seminar on Heresy
- \* Life Christian Centre, SA—Sunday service
- \* Full Gospel Assembly, Malaysia—Weekend services
- \* St Always Memorial Church, Ritual Avenue, Oldtown—Vision and Innovation seminar.
- \* Wesley International Congregation, Sydney—Book promotion



- \* Redeemer Baptist Church—Education Conference on Minor Prophets
- \* CRC Churches International Conference—Plenary session on Revival
- \* Harvest Bible College—Lecture
- \* River of Life church, NSW—Sunday service
- \* New Horizons CRC Church, NSW—Seminar, youth rally and Sunday service

- \* Christian Family Centre, SA (CRC)—  
Sunday services
- \* New Wine Holy Fire Pentecostal Church of  
Power—Conference on Patristic Theology.
- \* Portlife CRC Church, SA—Weekend  
services on Revival
- \* LifeGate Church, NSW—Sunday services  
on Revival
- \* Waiuku CRC Church, New Zealand—  
Weekend service

## A Christmas Prayer

*Quirky: Barry had trouble with this piece of doggerel as you can see. Note especially his botched attempts at a final rhyming couplet. See my footnotes for what I think of them.*

I'm dreaming of a bright Christmas  
Just like the one we had last year;  
Where the brown snakes slither,  
The gum trees quiver  
And scorching days are drawing near.  
I'm dreaming of a bright Christmas  
Of barbies, food and swimming gear;  
May your days be filled with delight,  
And may all your Christmases be bright.

I'm dreaming of a bright Christmas  
With late night shoppers as they throng,  
With the children playing  
And parents paying,  
And sounds of happy carol-song.  
I'm dreaming of a bright Christmas  
Where summer evenings linger on.  
May you have enough Vegemite;<sup>1</sup>  
May the dawning scatter your night;<sup>2</sup>  
May your life be sunshine and light;<sup>3</sup>  
May you win each battle you fight;<sup>4</sup>  
May the Lord turn darkness to light;<sup>5</sup>  
May you transform wrong into right;<sup>6</sup>  
May you have celestial sight;<sup>7</sup>  
May you rise to heavenly heights;<sup>8</sup>  
May your dreams enchant you tonight;<sup>9</sup>  
And may all your Christmases be bright.

<sup>1</sup> Is that supposed to be funny?

<sup>2</sup> Sounds too much like a hymn.

<sup>3</sup> Tautology.

<sup>4</sup> Stand aside Colonel Bogey.

<sup>5</sup> Sounds like another hymn-line.

<sup>6</sup> Who does he think I am? The Man of La Mancha?

<sup>7</sup> Now what? The Pilgrim's Progress?

<sup>8</sup> The rhymes are getting worse.

<sup>9</sup> Finally—a line to remember!

## Finally...

One special highlight of our year was the baptism of our fifteen-year-old grandson Wyatt. We also had the pleasure of having his sister Lani with us for a short holiday, when she celebrated her ninth birthday.

We thank God for all our family—three adult children and their marriage partners; twelve grandchildren (two married) and one great-grand-child. Including us, that makes twenty-three in all!

And now our African 'son' Osei and his wife Matilda have just given birth to a little boy—another 'grandson' for us, they tell us. Then there are our tenants Roxie and Jasdeep Singh who are like a daughter and son to us.



We pray that you have a wonderful Christmas and a new year full of hope and promise.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).

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