



THE 2020 QUIRKY CHRISTMAS LETTER

Exclusively available to selected readers this year from Vanessa and Barry Chant.

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY (not your ears)

This letter is fully authorised and endorsed by the authors as being their own work (mostly) and guaranteed to offer you chuckles and good humour. Whether you accept the offer is up to you. Your right of refusal is nothing to do with us. But keep reading. If you don't have a quirky sense of humour and you continue faithful to the end you may find enough serious comment to satisfy your humourless disposition. You might even be a little inspired. 😊

This year we celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary. As celebrations go it was a bit tame, but it's the thought that counts. (Yeah, right.) As you can see from the picture, we have hardly changed at all over the last six decades. But times were different then. Life was so simple. We don't even have an audio recording of our original wedding ceremony, let alone a video. Mobile phones were only seen in sci-fi movies. There were no personal computers, hardly any domestic air-con, no heaters in most cars, no food processors and so on. Ah! Those were the days! Would we like to go back to them? Are you crazy? We thank God every day that they're long since gone. But one good thing. We did have an overseas honeymoon (on Kangaroo Island).



In 1960...

A hard drive was going in a Morris Minor from Adelaide to Melbourne.

Windows were what you shut when it was cold.

A microchip was what was left at the bottom of the Smiths bag.

A mouse was what a man was not.

A handheld was your sweetheart's.

A modem was what you did to the lawns.

Software was plastic cutlery.

A mainframe held your shed up.

Log on meant building up the fire.

A PowerPoint was where you plugged in your toaster.

A file was used to shape your fingernails.

An emoji was... well, actually it wasn't.

'Cookie' was the American name for a biscuit.

An operating system was devised by surgeons.

A program told you what concert item to expect next.

A desktop was made of mahogany.

A PC was an English policeman.

A microwave was the surf in Adelaide.

A windows explorer was a burglar.
A web was made by a spider.
A world wide web was made by lots of spiders.
An MP3 was a back bench member of parliament.
McDonalds had a farm.
Satellite meant starting a fire.
A blackberry was a blackberry.
A Macintosh was a raincoat.
An Apple Macintosh was a shiny, green raincoat.
Surfing the net meant combining swimming with fishing.
A RAM was a big woolly animal with horns.
A megabyte was a very large mouthful.
Your laptop was where you held your baby nephew.
A notebook actually had pages.
A monitor was the senior student in your class at school.
Google was the sound you made when drowning.
A blog was the state of your nostril when you had a head cold.
A plasma screen was a blood test.
A compact disk was a crushed vertebra.
Fingering a keyboard meant playing a tune.
And a text message was what you might hear on Sunday morning.
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Family stuff

When we were married, there were only two of us. (What's that? Oh, yes, that probably was rather obvious.) Now there are twenty—the two of us, our three children, twelve grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. There are engagements in the air and that probably means more great-GKs still to come. The glory of marriage and the miracle of human life. Marvellous really.

Sporting achievements

For health reasons, Vanessa had to give up golf this year, which was a bit sad for her. She really loved chasing that stupid little white ball half-way around the world just to lose it in a creek, a patch of scrub and sometimes even in a hole in the green. Since Barry was a teenager he had a crazy ambition to be still playing tennis in his eighties. This year, after a couple of tumbles, in the last of which he cracked a rib, bumped his skull and sustained a black eye, he finally decided to call it a day (see Proverbs 22:3). But he *had* reached his goal. He was 81 years old. It seems he tripped over because of recently purchased tennis shoes. The brand name? *New Balance* of course.



One eyed tennis player

After that, we decided to give cricket a go. At first, we had trouble with the local rules. The playing area is called a court but there is no net. The wickets are pretty low but there are several of them which you attack one after the other. The bats are most unusual. They have very long handles and heavy club-like hitting blades. There are no bowlers. You just hit the ball from where it lies on the ground, a bit like golf. (In fact, one player hit a magpie and said he had scored a birdie.) Vanessa got into it straight away and played like a pro. I had a go and the ball smashed into the wicket right on middle stump—or where the middle stump should have been. Naturally I thought I was 'out' but they all told me I had played a great shot. Finally, we both got the hang of it and we are enjoying playing together every week. The game must be French or

something. Either that or they can't spell 'cricket'. The sign at the entrance reads: *Mt Barker Croquet Club*.

Travel

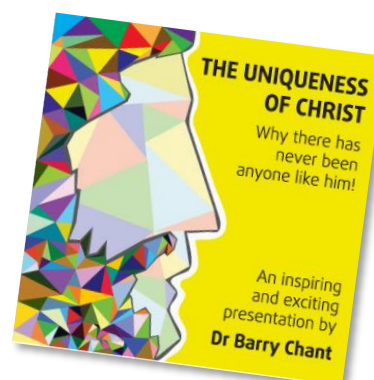
No overseas travel this year. But we did visit South Australia's West Coast in February where we preached in CRC churches in Port Lincoln and Whyalla. There, probably for the first time ever, our book table was completely emptied. We sold everything. Discerning readers, those people.

In October, we took a week's vacation in the beautiful Flinders Ranges. After negotiating the wild and rugged Brachina Gorge without incident, we managed to drive into a deep washaway on a simple flat track and had to be towed out. Takes skill to do that sort of thing. We also visited Wilpena Pound but decided to forgo climbing St Mary Peak this time.



Bible Plans

This year I started preparing Bible Plans for the YouVersion Bible program. The YouVersion App has been downloaded to over 450 million devices. There are currently some 10 000 Bible Plans. These are daily devotionals comprising both written notes and short videos. Producing the Plans has been hard work but satisfying. You can find them on the YouVersion website (you need to subscribe and then look for topics such as *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* or *Amazing Grace* or *See the Invisible, Do the Impossible*) or go to www.barrychant.com. *The Uniqueness of Christ* will be available in the new year.



Mount Barker

We are now well settled into beautiful Mount Barker in South Australia. We miss our many wonderful Sydney friends, but after 27 years away, we have been steadily catching up with old friends here. Surprisingly, it has been almost like we never left. Most heart-warming.



The flowers this year have been beautiful. We even have some nice ones in our own backyard. Not to mention the marvellous gum trees just beyond our back fence and the Strawberry Farm just five minutes away.

We also enjoy following the many walking tracks around Mount Barker. It's great



exercise and should be good for both of us. But it doesn't seem to work so well for Vanessa. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that while Barry walks she rides her streamlined super-duper racing model motorised scooter.

The Pandemic Lock-down

This year's pandemic will be talked about for many years. But eventually it will be forgotten and next time there is such a terrible event, people will call it unprecedented. This time, our personal reactions to the virus were very different.

Vanessa says: It was so frustrating. We couldn't visit our Victorian family members. We didn't see some grandchildren for months. Hardly anybody dropped in. We had to do on-line church. I had virtually no counselling clients. The loneliness and isolation were terrible. It was a foretaste of hell.

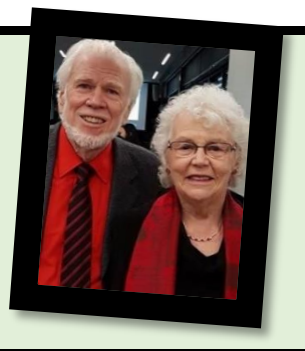
Barry says: I was compelled to sit at my desk for hours on end reading, praying, reflecting, studying, writing, composing, recording videos. No visitors. Few interruptions. It was a foretaste of heaven.

A year to remember

It goes without saying that this has been a year to remember. Bushfires, corona virus, economic disruption, job-losses and so on. Some people have been asking, 'Why didn't God do something about it?' This is not the place to address this question in detail. Enough to say that we can either turn to him or from him at such times. At Christmas, we remember how God demonstrated his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That God loved us so much that he sent his only Son so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. And that the day is coming when all wrongs will be righted and all injustices corrected. When you know and love someone, you trust them whatever they do. Jesus once said to his disciples, 'You don't understand what I am doing now, but you will later.' And that's all right.

For contact details see next page. Meanwhile, the following poem can be found in Barry's latest volume *Moments and Memories*. The book is available from Christian bookshops or on line from www.barrychant.com. It's an ideal Christmas gift. And it's our prayer for you this year.

May this Christmas be a special time
of gentle and good cheer;
may every blessing fill your life
throughout the coming year.
Walk calmly in the light and love
the Saviour came to bring,
as Jesus' peace upon you
turns each winter into spring.



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P.S. Have you checked our website lately? All manner of things can be found there, including many free stories, poems. Bible studies, videos and so on. Why not drop in one day? Just watch out for the spider.