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The CATACOMB CHURCH



Underground
AT
COOBER PEDY
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
**WELCOMES
YOU!**

SUNDAY SERVICES, 9.30 a.m.

Phone (086) 72 5038



Follow the signs from the Drive-in comer.

* Developed from an old dugout and opened as an underground church in 1977. Cut out of sandstone in the shape of a cross.

* An Anglican church, founded and supported by the Bush Church Aid Society.

* Named after the Catacombs in Rome, where early Christians buried their dead and met undisturbed in times of persecution. Just as here we escape the harsh climatic extremes and enjoy quiet coolness and peace.

* Adorned in a simple and natural way befitting the outback opal fields—cross, lectern and communion table fashioned from local mulga wood and an old miner's winch.

* We cater for all comers. Our services are relaxed, informal and friendly, with a tea-break in the middle. We hear God's word and worship Him in prayer, sacrament and song, 9.30 a.m. every Sunday morning.

* We also have Sunday School, Daniel's Den youth group, children's Adventurers Club, and teenage and adult Bible study and discussion groups. Ring 72 5038 for details.

An Outback Poem

*Tourist! Don't just gawk and stare—
This place is a house of prayer.
Get down on yer bloomin' knees!
Say to God 'Thank You' and 'Please'.*



A Story for Tourists

“Danger deep shafts”, warned the notice.

It was the job of the local Mine Rescue Squad to get people out of the mineshafts when they fell in. Not that they wanted people to fall in. That’s why they put the notices up. To let people know what’s good for them.

“Rubbish!” said the tourist. “That’s only the miners trying to stop me getting at their precious opal! The shafts aren’t there at all. Or if they are, they can’t be all that bad. They don’t scare me!”

He strode defiantly over to the nearest white mound, and promptly fell down the 20-metre mineshaft.

He was lucky. Dazed and winded, but still alive, he found that both his arms and legs were broken. He started to yell for help.

A head appeared at the top of the shaft. “You should have read the sign,” it said. “So I should have,” replied the tourist, “but it’s a bit late for that now.”

“Climb up yourself.”

“I can’t, I’ve got two broken legs.”

“Then I’ll throw you down a rope and you can pull yourself up.”

“That’s no good either. Both my arms are broken.”

The head disappeared, and presently the Mine Rescue Squad arrived.

They were the ones who had put the sign there in the first place. But they didn't say, "You shouldn't have done that", "We told you so", or "Now get yourself out". They just got on with the job.

One of their number was lowered down the shaft on a winch with a stretcher. He came down alongside the tourist, strapped up his broken limbs, and attached him onto the stretcher.

Then he got not just alongside the tourist but right underneath him, at the bottom of the shaft, to lift him up. The rescue-man stayed down in the pit, so the tourist could go up on the winch.

As he reached the light at the top of the shaft, and the strong arms that would lift him away to healing and restoration, he thought of the one who had saved his life, down in that joyless pit.

To Think about

* All of us are tourists in this life. Which way are you heading?

* God has made His commandments—His warning-signs of life—perfectly clear. We have broken them and brought trouble upon ourselves.

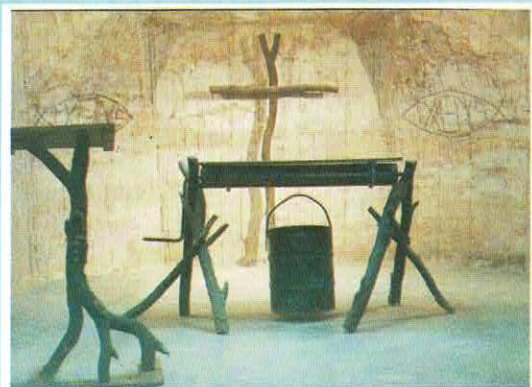
* It's too late for recrimination. God gets on with the job. "For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." (John 3:17.)

* In the pit of sin we are powerless to help ourselves. "While we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ went down into death for those who had gone against God and His laws." (Romans 5:6.)

* Jesus died on the cross and rose again for you. Your life can be His!

* WHY STAY IN THE PIT?

Man's Search for Opal . . .



Communion table made from old miner's winch and bucket

When displayed under light, opal flashes its spectrum of colour, dazzling us with the wonder of God's creation.

Miners struggle in oppressive heat and isolation—dig, gouge, sweat and blast—to bring its beauty out into the open and gain a rich reward.

So also God is at work seeking out gems for His Kingdom.

Just as opal buried deep in the earth fails to display its natural beauty, so too does man buried in his sinful and rebellious attitude to God fail to display his natural beauty. Instead hatred, selfishness, envy, etc., flaw his character.

The opal miner seeks to bring opal from its dark tomb to the light, to reveal its beauty. So too has God reached into the darkness of this world to bring mankind into the light of His Kingdom.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world: he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12.)

God's Search for Man!

A Secret Sign . . .



The FISH symbol was a secret sign or password used by the early Christians when they hid in the catacombs during persecution in Rome.

ΙΧΘΥΣ (ICHTHUS) is the Greek word for "fish".

It's letters also stand for:

JESUS
CHRIST
GOD'S
SON
SAVIOUR

We cannot "help ourselves" in this life. God is our help and strength (Psalm 46:1).

We cannot save ourselves. We need a saviour (a "rescue-man"). God is "our Redeemer from of old" (Isaiah 63:16).

Say this prayer (if you dare!)

Jesus, I need you to die on the cross for me, because I have broken your laws and tried to go my own way.

Father God, thank you for giving your all, your holy Son, to release me and free me to live as your child.

Holy Spirit, show me the forgiveness of all my sins. Fill me with love, with life, with Yourself.



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