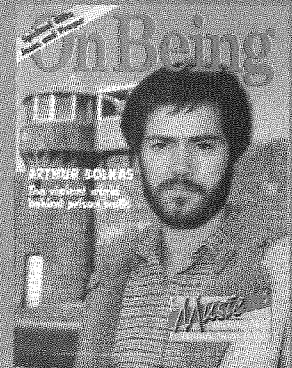
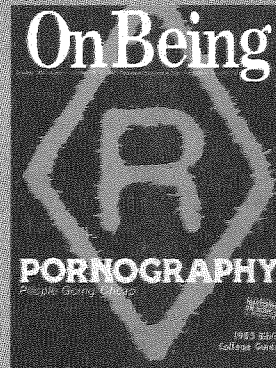
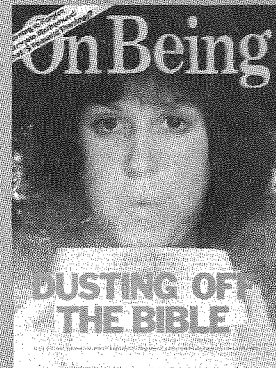
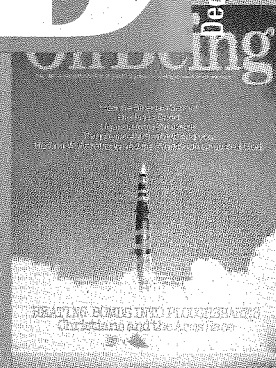
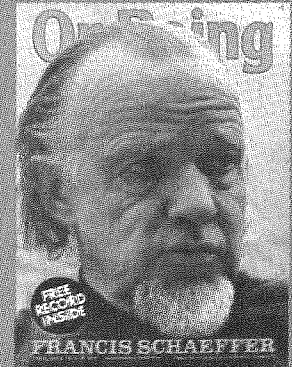
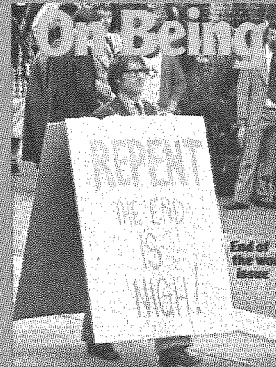
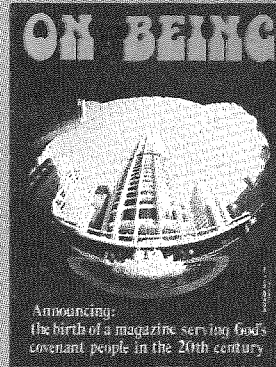


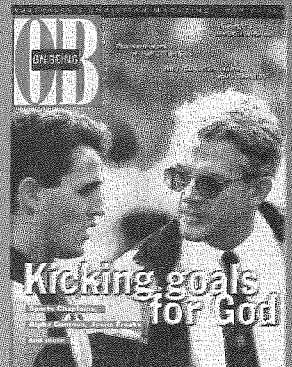
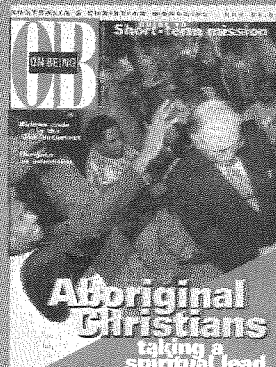
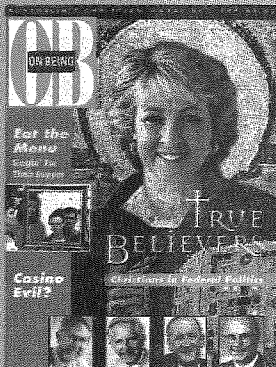
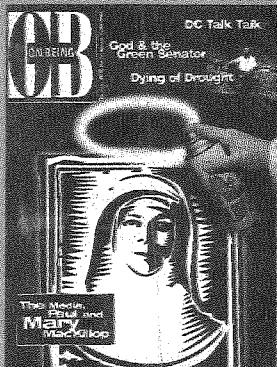
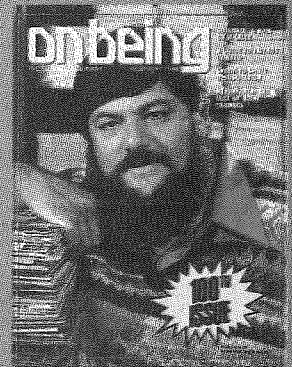
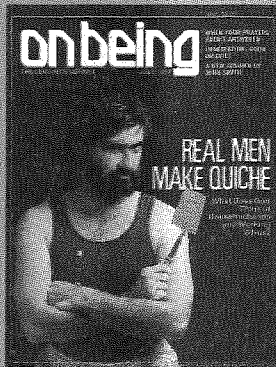
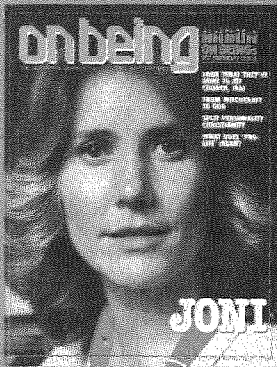
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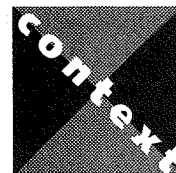
God has been good

The journey of Australian Christians over 23 years



Michael Cassidy Australia's spiritual future Christmas Rituals

Worshipping the **Box**



I was soon to leave for the annual meeting of the Church of the TV Generation. Last year we celebrated our Fortieth Anniversary, reflecting on that magical moment in 1956 when the word was spoken in a new way. The focus had been "Renewal by TV Specials". Even though our union with the Church of the Video had been helpful, we had not stopped the flood of people leaving for new and supposedly more exciting faiths.

I remembered that there had been a couple of significant events at the 1996 meeting, mainly due to the new meeting procedures. All members communicated to the Station Control through the use of their remote control, including indicating their agreement or disagreement with each motion. At one stage two members had not recorded their position, which in church law indicated disagreement. Disagreement was allowed, but one was not allowed to keep the nature of one's disagreement secret.

Eventually the Most High Meeting Host called for the station security, who quickly surrounded the members. Upon personal contact they found that the members were no longer able to participate in the meeting, nor even able to watch TV. The Meeting Host quickly organised a moving memorial service, including the use of dubbed scenes from that immortal classic "Weekend at Bernie's". This culminated in the shutting down of the main TV for a minute's silence as the bodies were placed in their TV caskets.

The other major change was the

introduction of the new 'closed session', when all the members of the church meeting left, while the visitors stayed behind to decide a controversial matter for us. While perhaps slightly unorthodox, it certainly streamlined the proceedings.

Other parts of the meeting proceeded as normal, including beautiful sacred readings from the Holy Guide Book, *Logies for Ever*, and inspiring singing by the choir using our authorised book, *Australian TV Themes*. Also popular were the early morning daily devotional spots with the current edition of *Everyday with TV*. There were the usual reports from program areas including new game shows, lifestyles and soap operas. The program highlight was "This could have been your life". It received a standing ovation, as members realised what this past member could have achieved if he hadn't been a bloodsucking backstabber.

The annual presentation of awards proved to be the most controversial period. All awards had been hotly contested, but none more than the one for "Member displaying the most self-righteous indignation" (separate awards for those from the left and the right). One member who liked to take both sides scooped the main prize pool, capturing these awards as well as "Most emotionally manipulative speech" and "Most incoherent speech".

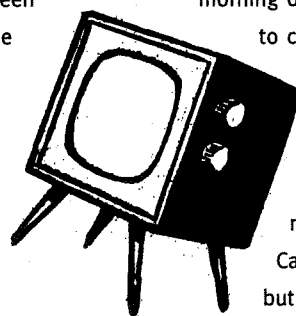
The award for saying the most times "I will stay in this church until I die" was presented posthumously.

The game show panel had a difficult

time selecting the recipient for "Youngest person to make a meaningless statement", but after the annual meeting agreed to change the definition of 'young' it was easy. It was won by the same person who took out the nostalgia category: "When this church was founded it was . . . ". We even showed our respect for the visitors by introducing a new category: "Best attempt at making a political point by a guest or visitor who should have known better". This was presented to our visitors as a group.

As usual, the awards ceremony provided the suitable closing note to another year and people left on a brainwave high. I had made a mental note to write a letter to the Most High Meeting Host praising the excellent program content, but unfortunately writing ability was something I had placed on the altar of the remote control several years back.

I turned my TV set on to begin my morning devotions, and was just about to chant the greeting "Come on Down . . ." when the door bell rang. I opened the door cautiously to reveal two representatives of that new sect, The Church of the Cable TV. I knew of this church, but had never personally experienced their offerings. Was this a sign? I was challenged to speak to them, to learn more about their faith. Where they perhaps the church of the future?



Peter Bentley

is a writer on church affairs and an avid attendee and watcher of the annual meetings of most mainstream churches.