



A Reflection: Courageous Leaders or Media

Thomas á Kempis in his writings suggests: “few are lovers of the Cross.” He says many find it too hard to take up the challenge made to his disciples. “If anyone would come after me, he must take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” (Matt 16.24)

Who do we elevate in our Western society today? The Christian author, Philip Yancey writes “...we in the West elevate dotcom billionaires and gorgeous super models. For chasing a ball round a field, we reward our professional athletes with more money than it would take to run dozens of hospitals in a country like India” Celebrities gain all the media attention, but they are not leaders with passion and courage who can make the world a better place. Our society tends to emphasize self-fulfillment, with the ‘me first’ attitude all too common. Headlines in the World News currently show Hillary Clinton and Barak Obama, two US Democratic Party hopefuls in a destructive battle. Each

of them is desperate to win the nomination to stand for the US Presidency. It seems neither wish to consider another way. By working together as a team they could present the most convincing case to voters that the US would be better off with the Democrats in the world’s most powerful leadership role.

Easter has passed but still we reflect on the events of the Cross. The Spirit of the Risen Christ inspires us, convicts us and leads us to make a difference. For centuries people like Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela have taken up Christ’s challenge to put the needs of others before their own needs. They have shown courage and moral authority and the world has benefited. We too are challenged by God’s calling to take up the cross and make a difference. May God give us the wisdom and strength for any tasks, big or small, that he inspires us to do.

Heather Tate -
National Convenor

Regional News

Women Together! On 11 March the women of Hinds, Canterbury hosted the women of Ashburton Presbytery and South Canterbury Presbyterial to a time of worship and education. Over 50 women gathered for morning tea which was followed by meaningful worship and a communion service. Later Mary

Cavanath of Christian World Service spoke about “The House of Passage, Recife, Brazil. Our eyes were opened to see and hear how girls and young women are finding a haven of peace and hope in their lives. An offering of \$218 was received for the House of Passage.

Maureen McRae

God Abides in Humanity

God abides in humanity, because Christ has put on the nature of humanity like a garment.

And worn it to His own shape. He has put on everyone’s life. He has fitted Himself to the little child’s dress, to the shepherd’s coat of sheepskin, to the workman’s coat, to the king’s red robes, to the snowy loveliness of the wedding garment, and to the drab of the sad, simple battle dress.

Christ has put on human nature, and given humans their humaneness, worn to the shape of limitless love, and warm from the touch of His life.

He has given humans His crown, the thorn that is jewelled with drops of His blood. He has given humans the seamless garment of His truth. He has bound humanity in the swaddling bands of His humility. He has fastened human hands to the tree of life. He has latched human feet in crimson sandals that they move not from the path of love.

God abides in humanity.

Caryll Houselander

(The poet uses ‘man’ where ‘humanity’ has been inserted.)



Regional News Cont'd.

Wellington Presbyterian's programme last month was based on 'Violence in the Family' as a follow-up to our UN Committee's urging to use the Community Action Tool-kits to Prevent Family Violence which were sent out to all Presbyterians last year. Our two speakers were involved with the Task Force set up by the government in 2005, and the *Family Violence is not Okay* message. Lyn Campbell, a Commissioner with the Families Commission urged us to recognize ourselves as 'light' and 'salt' in our communities. She told stories of local initiatives that have made a difference in their communities – a message on the rubbish bags in Waitakere, whistles handed out at rugby games to use when games are violent, and the anti-violence message on drink place mats. This campaign is not about what the government is do-

ing, but rather people everywhere finding some way to make a change in behaviour and making a difference. The statistics Lyn quoted are horrifying – 32,000 reported violence complaints to police last year.

- 14 women, 10 children and 6 men killed
- 106 children treated in hospital for serious abuse.

Heather Henare, Chief Executive of the National Collective of Independent Refuges gave more statistics of domestic violence and spoke of the help the Refuges give to women from violent situations. She stressed the desperate need for more funding and workers. Latest trends show that younger and migrant women are now coming into the Refuges and this is creating further challenges.

Lois Robertson.

Reminders

1. All financial books must be closed on **30 June**. More information will be included with the posting of the Annual Return Forms in May.
2. APW National Survey. Hopefully every parish has received the survey. Where there are APW members, please check if the parish has completed the survey and returned it. Please encourage the survey to be completed and returned ASAP. Thank you. P&A Committee.
3. The Global Mission Gazette, published four times a year makes challenging and exciting reading. It is so encouraging to read of the number of young people who have given their time and energy to visiting and working in the various Mission projects. If your APW group or parish does not currently receive this gazette the contact is: Global Mission Office, 1/22 Station Rd, Otahuhu, Auckland 1062 or email globalmanager@xtra.co.nz

Another Travelling Granny!

Daphne Beattie of Opotiki offers us her thoughtful insights after visiting Uganda. Daphne writes: The experience was amazing and contrary to most of what I had expected in my first real slum experience. The church has a big influence on the Natette area of Kampala. I had expected heat, but it was little hotter than NZ and a lot less humid. I had expected rubbish and yes there was rubbish, but mainly plastic bags and banana leaves (used for wrapping food for cooking.) I had expected smell. There was virtually none. I had expected flies. There were none and few other insects. I had expected houses ill-kept, but the ones we visited were meticulously clean, very small rooms, which lacked security as there was only a piece of material for a door. I asked about water and was assured

every home had water. What they didn't say was that it was a five litre jerry-can which had to be carried from a distant water source.

This is a country that makes no contribution towards education or health. If you cannot pay, you cannot attend. The costs vary from US \$50 a term to US\$100 for a three term year. This is a country which asks in its official statistics if each child has one blanket, one pair of shoes, one change of clothing, access to clean drinking water, access to a toilet, and asks if the house is of permanent materials and structure

Uganda is still building and repairing its roads with shovel, and wheelbarrow. Rows and rows of push-bikes and motor-cycles are lined up on the roadside waiting to be hired to carry goods or people. This is a stark reminder of Christ's words of support to those who

waited all day and were not hired. These are a patient and long-suffering people who accept adversity as a normal way of life. Superstition plays into the witch-doctor's hands; poverty and desperation into the clutches of the Pimps who own the only houses of substance.

This poverty stricken country has worked successfully to turn around the scourge of AIDS better than other African countries. It has had the worst floods in 30 years with thousands displaced, and hundreds injured. Now it faces an influx of Sudanese refugees escaping from flooding and Kenyan people fleeing the violence and escalating inequality in Kenya. The Ugandan Church is requesting US\$60,000 to assist with temporary care of mainly women and children refugees who urgently need shelter, food, clothes, bedding, water and medical supplies.