

# CANDOUR

News and Views for Ministers

Number 6, July 2008

## What is a Christian society?

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Presbyterian Church  
of Aotearoa New Zealand

# Noticeboard

*Candour* is a monthly magazine about ministry and leadership. For more information, contact:

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The articles in *Candour* reflect the views of individual ministers or contributors writing in a personal capacity. They are not representative of the Church's official position. Please approach the author for permission if you wish to copy an article.

## Contributions

We welcome responses to published articles. If you would like to write a piece replying to any of this month's featured articles, please contact:

Amanda Wells (editor) on (04) 381-8285 or [candour@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:candour@presbyterian.org.nz)

## Advertising

**One-quarter page: \$80 plus gst** (87mm x 117mm)

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The next advertising deadline (for the August issue) is **1 August 2008**.

## Glen Innis Vacancies

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Ministers are welcome to inquire regarding vacancies due to cancellations.

The Church Property Trustees have reluctantly decided to introduce a **refundable \$50 booking fee** for Glen Innis. This fee is payable to Margaret Black and refunded on arrival at Glen Innis. Changing your booking will require payment of another booking fee.

## Transitional Ministry training

We are currently calling for ministers interested in Transitional Ministry training.

The training conducted in three phases – an introductory residential course, a period of supervised field work followed by a second residential course.

The next intake will begin in November this year.

If you are interested in becoming a Transitional Minister please contact Juliette Bowater at [juliette@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:juliette@presbyterian.org.nz) to discuss further.

## Ministers' Information Forms

Ministers' Information Forms are an essential tool for ministry settlement boards looking to make a call. They are also an effective way for ministers to record their achievements throughout their career – including any additional training they undertake.

Ministers are strongly encouraged to update their Ministers' Information Form every three years so that the information remains current. If you would like to update your Form please email Juliette on [juliette@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:juliette@presbyterian.org.nz) for a template. Alternatively, you are welcome to send additional information to PO Box 9049, Wellington.

# Through the looking glass

Amanda Wells

What would a Christian society look like? Perhaps there are as many answers to this question as there are Christians. Your Christian society may be my purgatory, and vice versa.

American network Fox news carried a story last month about a website offering to email your loved ones after the Rapture. After you've been swept up to heaven, you may wish to evangelise your not-so-fortunate relatives/friends, as well as give them access to your worldly goods. Youvebeenleftbehind.com promises "one last opportunity to reach your lost family and friends For Christ". "Our purpose is to get one last message to the lost, at a time, when they might just be willing to hear it for the first and last time."

You pay US\$40 a year for the service, which lets you upload a "goodbye" email to the site and specify recipients, as well as store and encrypt your financial information. If the company's staff fail to log in for six consecutive days, the emails will automatically be sent.

According to the site: "There won't be any bodies, so probate court will take seven years to clear your assets to your next of kin. Seven years, of course is all the time that will be left. So basically the Government of the Antichrist gets your stuff, unless you make it available in another way."

Where to start? I like the assumption that the company's staff are guaranteed to be among those lifted up to heaven. The premise that the reallocation of your worldly goods will concern you post-Rapture is also interesting.

At this point, you might say that there are many weird and wonderful aspects to US Christendom and they bear little resemblance or relevance to our geographical context. Yes, it's easy to find strange American stories, but I suspect that the mindset behind this would not be foreign to every Christian you know.

But, more importantly, such coverage does affect how our society views Christianity. If people's primary contact with Christian beliefs is through the media, no wonder televangelists and Destiny marches figure large in their impressions. A few years ago I had a flat equipped with cable TV and developed a twisted fascination with the Trinity Broadcasting Network, where earnest dis-

course on post-Trib and pre-Trib Rapture theory is far from unusual. The idea that this may be some Wellingtonians' only connection with Christianity fills me with horror.

When someone stands up to proclaim their definition of a Christian society, it's often in a political arena with explicitly political goals. This doesn't tend to endear the concept to the general population, a significant proportion of whom feel excluded by the ideation of nuclear families. When I think of all the people I know in their 20s, 30s and 40s, it's very difficult to think of more than a handful that fit in the married-with-kids basket. If these are the generations we're missing from the church, and every time they hear the "family" message their subconscious sense of exclusion grows, then what should our response be? Should we be concerned that the concept of Christian society has become most strongly associated with these values?

It's easy to go on in this vein, but difficult not to become political or polemical. Perhaps that's the problem with trying to fit a label on to our diverse society. Is there even one society anymore? But there are a set of values that the vast majority of Kiwis adhere to: the right to your own property and dignity. Offence against these prompt real outrage; witness the reaction to a rest home resident's mouth being taped, the sympathy for leaky home owners or the generosity towards victims of fire or flood. Whether these are Christian values is an interesting question and one which I've luckily run out of space to address.

It was slightly difficult to get contributions for this issue of Candour; not a topic that grabbed people for some reason. But in addition to the four articles on the theme, there are two contributions on the theme of worship that were omitted from the last issue.

The theme for the August issue of Candour will be: "paths to God", exploring different ways in which people can be invited into faith. If you would like to contribute, please get in touch by emailing [candour@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:candour@presbyterian.org.nz). The deadline will be 1 August. Just a reminder that if you want to access back issues of Candour online, click on the small padlock icon at the top right of [www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz). The username is minister and the password is candour.

# A vision for our society

*Bert Schoneveld, Waiuku and Districts Combined, South Auckland*

Having lived in Malaysia for five years, I know that Muslims have a very clear vision for the developing of society, indeed the nation. It was a bone of contention between the secularists and the religionists whether or not Malaysia was an Islamic State and, more to the point, whether it should be an Islamic State.

Here in New Zealand, the notion that New Zealand is a Christian country has long been abandoned by the majority of its inhabitants. What New Zealanders do not want, and this includes a significant proportion of Christians, is to turn New Zealand into a Christian state. It is one of the reasons why Christian political parties have had so little success in New Zealand politics. There are numerous expressions of Christianity and many degrees of enthusiasm on the spectrum of Christian faith. When Christian political parties have been formed, there has been an evangelical enthusiasm about a limited set of policies. Historically, in New Zealand this evangelical zeal arouses feelings of suspicion along with a good dose of either anxiety or skepticism in voters. The net effect is the alienation of the electorate towards “Christian” political parties. So pursuing a “Christian” political agenda has not been a successful strategy in this country.

## What then?

### Truth

That leaves us, who profess faith in Christ, with the question, “how can we develop a meaningful vision for our society and implement it?”

Archbishop William Temple, living in the first half of the 20th century, said the following: “If Christianity is true at all, it is a truth of universal application; all things should be done in the Christian Spirit and in accordance with Christian principles.”

### Confusion

Sadly in our postmodern age, Archbishop Temple’s belief has been rejected out of hand by those who are in

positions of power and influence. We find ourselves in a society where all opinions, beliefs and directions are held to be of equal value.

As a result, parliamentarians make decisions that the electorate seems to want at one point in time but six or eight years later new electoral pressures point to the need to change them back. As I write, there is the debate over whether the liquor laws formulated in 1989 need to be overhauled to fit new circumstances. (To be open to change is not bad but here we have a movement from laws that created greater liberty to consideration of reversing that.)

### Leadership

Nations whose leaders are led by the electorate for fear of losing electoral support are in danger of being shaped by the electorate. This, when compounded with serious economic hardship, can lead to confusion and anxiety. Under such circumstances, strong leaders with hidden agendas can be an attractive political alternative. (Note the powerful attraction for Russians of Vladimir Putin.) Such anxiety creates the climate for dictatorships.

### Honest debate

To protect New Zealanders from such a prospect, open, honest and rigorous debate of public issues is essential.

### Truth and falsehood

For such debate to have any substance, we need to come to a place in society where we can agree that there is truth and falsehood, and that our task as Jesus-followers and indeed as a nation is to seek after and bring to light the truth.

### Truth is transcendent

The dilemma that Christians need to face is that truth is not bound by culture or religious adherence or particular traditions. It transcends and tests everything created by human beings. In this our most dearly held beliefs are not exempt. If what we believe is valid, then it will stand the test of the most rigorous scrutiny.

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## Pursuing a “Christian” political agenda has not been a successful strategy in this country

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Moreover, truth has no boundaries. It applies to our justice system, government, scientific endeavour, education system, commerce and trade etc. It is the one reality that can set our society free and keep it that way.

### A painful pursuit

What is so unpalatable about the truth is that pursuing it is painful. The search for truth is destined to change me and everyone who is willing to take the truth seriously.

### The battle

Perhaps the hardest part about truth is that it brings us into conflict with falsehood and deception, both in ourselves and in the world. This is the battle many of us would rather avoid. Sadly, avoiding this battle leads to false peace and often results in injustices being perpetrated.

### The end

Closely connected with the call to fight falsehood is the dawning realisation that there is no retirement in this war. In contrast, when we draw up a programme or a plan to articulate our vision for the future, there comes a point in time when the programme has been completed. But the battle for the truth never stops.

### The great danger

The great danger of being advocates for the truth is self-righteousness. The religious leaders of Jesus' time fell into this trap. Their preoccupation with being right and blindness to what was wrong was a significant element in their demand to have Jesus crucified and in persecuting his followers.

### The great hope

Jesus' response to his persecutors sets a whole new pattern for humanity. Jesus demonstrated his love for his persecutors in a spirit of forgiveness and humility.

If we are to change society, it will not be by some master programme or plan but by the determination to rigorously live out the truth in a spirit of forgiveness, humility and love and to focus our energy on proclaiming that message – the message that is in fact the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. As followers of Jesus this must pervade all we are and do until the end of time.

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pimm.ian@xtra.co.nz

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Waipukurau

Expressions of Interest sought by;  
31-07-08

## Local Ordained Ministry (LOM)

### Assessment Times

At a recent meeting of the National Assessment Workgroup (NAW) it was decided that LOM applications will be processed during two weeks every year:

- The last week in February
- The first week in August

LOM assessments are conducted by Presbyteries together with members of the NAW. Normally two members of NAW join the Presbytery members conducting the assessment.

NAW needs to be advised of pending LOM applications at least eight weeks prior to the week in which a Presbytery would like the assessment to take place.

The reason for designating the weeks in February and August for LOM assessments is due to the volume of requests that NAW receives for LOM assessments.

The steps that Presbyteries ought to follow to prepare for the LOM process can be found on the Presbyterian website. Just follow the link for Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

For further enquiries, please contact Rev Geoff New (co-convenor NAW) [geoffnew@xtra.co.nz](mailto:geoffnew@xtra.co.nz)

# Are we like *The Village* people?

Allister Lane, ordinand, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Dunedin

*What do the Church and Woody Allen have in common? -Both have Jewish roots and both struggle to find a strong voice for themselves.*

In the film *The Village*<sup>1</sup>, written and directed by M. Night Shyamalan, the story is told of people who have gone to extraordinary lengths to live in isolation, attempting to enjoy a life free from the troubles of the world. Each of the founders of this village had a story from their past of personal tragedy and loss that explained their motivation for seeking a better way.

While these people were not explicitly Christian, one might say they sought to incarnate a rationalist interpretation of Biblical morality. They emphasise harmony, fellowship, interdependence, celebration, education, and democracy. Above all these, however, is their attempt to be free of violence, symbolised by their prohibition of the colour red. As the movie unfolds the extent of their efforts to protect the ways of their village are revealed, along with the distorted nature of their situation.

Given the many disturbing horrors of society at large, it is not surprising that people yearn for a more genuine experience of purity and so cloister themselves away with others of like mind. Recent history gives many examples of communities that set themselves apart from society, seeking to live more authentically by following strict self-imposed guidelines. While many of these communities have had religious foundations, it is their isolation that has contributed significantly to an unhealthy existence and internal conflicts often result in eventual collapse.

With occasional exceptions, the Church has always sought to remain immersed in the world, authentically living out the life of the Gospel amongst the turmoil of society. This incarnational understanding means Christians are not culturally dependent, allowing rapid global expansion into virtually all societies on earth.

Opposite but equal to the error of retreating from society is for Christians to uncritically embrace inappropriate elements of the surrounding society. In a time of decline and due to a sense of irrelevancy, the Church can seek its legitimisation from society. With the Church becoming increasingly marginalised and faith regarded as a private affair, the old authority it once enjoyed has almost disappeared. Commitment to social action can be seen to bring recognition and validation by society.

This emphasis on salving the needs of society has its appeal. After all, it is nice to feel appreciated. But is this a mistaken understanding of where the Church gets its legitimisation?

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**The truth of the Gospel is available only from the Church – the world will not get it anywhere else**

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No number of good deeds will endorse a church, because its identity is found in the continuing mission of Jesus Christ. This commitment to Apostolic succes-

sion ensures we continue to witness to the truthfulness of Christ. This is not only important for a people who confess “Jesus is Lord”; it also clarifies our framework for speaking about what is “good” at all.

Social action alone certainly does not make the Church distinctive from other groups and institutions in society. What does make the Church distinctive is living for what God called her into existence: to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. The truth of the Gospel is available only from the Church – the world will not get it anywhere else.

This is an expansive mandate that is not limited to incremental improvements; it is a vision that is ultimately one of total transformation. The Biblical witness provides us with images of uncompromising transformation: liberation from slavery; rivers of water flowing into parched lands; dry bones coming to life; resurrection from death.

It is not that we ignore the world around us for a preference for more “spiritual” interests – such a distinction is a false one. We can expect to engage in good works in society as part of the outworking of our commitment to

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<sup>1</sup> Touchstone Pictures, © 2004.

our life in Christ; we just need to remember which one follows which.

Although there is a tension here between distinction from society and involvement in it, we can engage confidently in just about anything when we know our centre is Jesus Christ.

The preacher Thomas Long reiterates for us how social action derives from our primary call to proclaim the Gospel:

*...the ministry of the Church, like the ministry of Jesus, is a comprehensive ministry addressed to the whole range of human need. Any notion that the Church ought to quit getting involved in non-spiritual matters and get back to its "real job" of preaching the gospel and saving souls misses the point. "Preaching the Gospel and saving souls" means grappling with disease and the demonic, with social segregation and the powers of death. It means, therefore, wrestling with issues of public health care, with racial and social alienation, with the powers of domination and oppression that bleed the life out of a community.<sup>2</sup>*

In Christendom the lines were often blurred between faith and culture; the Church could all too easily forget its primary call and become allied to other cultural forces of the day. In a keynote speech, US senator and Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama<sup>3</sup> acknowledged the role the Church has in working for a better society but warned of how we engage in this politically. In a pluralistic society, we cannot appeal only to Biblical commandments (even if their interpretation is beyond dispute) when passing laws for the whole of society. Our motivation for positive change will come from our faith commitment but we can no longer expect all to share such commitment. For Obama what is needed is for the Church to remain steadfast to its call in articulating the love and compassion of God to all as the impetus for engaging in improving society.

Addressing priorities, Jesus says to his followers: "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."<sup>4</sup> This saying could be regarded as "otherworldly" thinking: focusing on the matters of heaven, ignoring the realities on earth. But I prefer to see that Jesus urges us to recognise that God

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Long, *Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), pp116-117.

<sup>3</sup> Sojourners 'Call to Renewal Conference', 28 June 2006. ([http://obabma.senate.gov/podcast/060628-call\\_to\\_renewal\\_1/](http://obabma.senate.gov/podcast/060628-call_to_renewal_1/))

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 6:33.

reigns over all matters; not only allowing us to relinquish ultimate responsibility over to God but also giving us a better idea of how to relate to the world and the competing demands for our attention and energy. We are enabled to speak out loud and roll our sleeves up, engaging with the plight of the world not with our own feeble perceptions of what is needed but with constant reference to God's righteousness.

Out of our praise and obedience to God we remain distinct from society and, at the same time, are given God's own love to actively share in the society in which we live.

## Hoon Hay Parish - Christchurch

We are seeking a Full Time Pastor who will challenge us to grow in our walk with God and to serve the Lord Jesus in our community

The Parish considers that its "thumbprint" is family – We are a family, and desire to be a family for those who need a place to belong, and want to touch families for Christ.

We are looking for someone who is:

- a. Strong in the shepherding style of leadership – able to provide direction and shepherd people accordingly
- b. A Biblical and vibrant teacher
- c. An enabler/team player who can use and develop people's gifts
- d. Able to relate well to young people.

Expressions of interest to our Nominator – Rev Murray Talbot [MTalbot@clear.net.nz](mailto:MTalbot@clear.net.nz)

# What would a Christian society look like?

Jono Ryan, ordinand, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Dunedin

Given the current electioneering climate, it would be tempting to answer the question “what would a Christian society look like?” with an inventory of “Christian” qualities we wish to see reflected in Aotearoa New Zealand society. This could be a wishlist for our governmental leaders itemising objects of our religious desire: moral values, or safer streets, or lower carbon emissions. Going a step further, we could survey policies offered by current political vendors, utilising our democratic currency to purchase the product most appealing to our desires. A “more Christian” society would seem but a vote away.

Of course, this would presuppose that we actually know what we need. However, it seems that we are far from agreed in this regard; even within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, our political tastes are diverse, and often antithetical. For some, signs of the kingdom come are discerned in sensible sentencing, petrol subsidies, and inoffensive taxation; for others in restorative justice, climate change reform, and alleviation of child poverty. Regardless of where we sit on the political spectrum, many of us assume that “Christian society” is ultimately the product of democratic process; a question of merely “getting our voting right this time”. As if, irrespective of whether we vote for “family values” or “social justice”, a Christian society is simply one that reflects the set of qualities that we call “Christian”. As if, at heart, Christian society is a matter of virtues and principles that make sense disembodied from the people God gathers to witness to them.

However, this is simply not true. For, inasmuch as they are Christian qualities, neither “family values” nor “social justice” have any tangible meaning outside the Christian community. That is, as the polemical debates between our Christian politicians have regrettably displayed, the importance of family for Christians cannot be distilled into a policy of “family values”. Rather, we can only rightly appreciate the distinctly Christian value of family when understood within the context of the whole people of God: a gathering of people young and

old, single and married and divorced, yearning together in our brokenness for the wholeness we anticipate and taste in the kingdom of God. Similarly, “social justice” is an equally ambiguous phrase, used indiscriminately across the political spectrum. Definitions of justice shift to accommodate varying agendas. By contrast, a distinctly Christian understanding of justice has meaning anchored only in the broader narrative that testifies to the just character and actions of God; a narrative that we proclaim and live out in order to remind ourselves what *sort* of justice we are to hunger for, and the appropriate ends and means of this justice.

The more pertinent question then, is what *does* our Christian society — the society of those whose social relationships are formed in worship of and submission

to the Lordship of Christ — look like? As a “chosen people... a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1Pet 2.9), what is the nature of our *societas* or the relations of com-

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### The importance of family for Christians cannot be distilled into a policy of “family values”

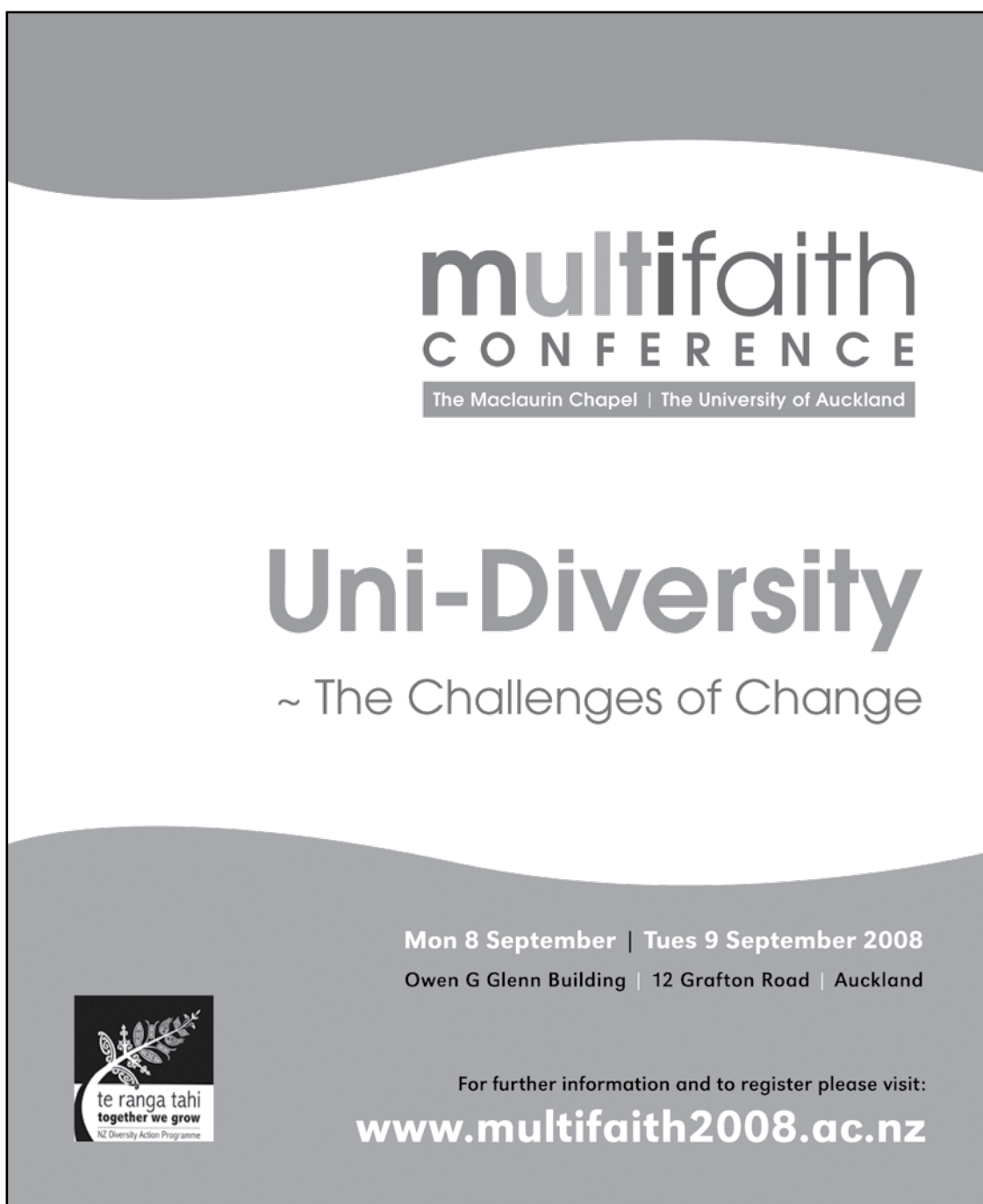
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panionship that bind us together as parishes and as a denomination? Of our life together, can it truly be said that, though we may be maligned by those around us, “they see [our] honourable deeds and glorify God” (1Pet 2.12)? In Aotearoa New Zealand, what does our Christian society, our Church, look like?

While we should affirm our political leaders in their “divine appointment [to] the task of providing for justice and peace,” the *societas* that is the Church is to witness to what “justice” and “peace” look like, by “calling to mind the kingdom of God, God’s commandment and righteousness” (Barmen Declaration, V). Thus, while we should lament breaches of justice and peace within Aotearoa New Zealand, and while we should intercede for our governmental rulers, we must also be reminded of our calling as those who “call to mind the kingdom of God” amidst these realities. How does our Church witness to the justice and peace revealed in Christ, and anticipated in the heralded kingdom of God? What tangible acts of reconciliation, of peacemaking, of forgiveness are our lives caught up in? How do we witness to and embody the Gospel we proclaim?

Perhaps we stray far from this calling. But as those whose citizenship is in heaven, let us pray that the one whom we anticipate with eagerness “will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Phil 3.21). Let us pray that, as the Church, we might be faithful in our witness to the Gospel: not only in word and deed, but also in the very fabric of the lives we live as Christian society. As our increasingly narcissistic culture forgets how to love neighbours, how to honour those with the least, how to steward our creation, and how to facilitate forgiveness and repentance, let us pray that we

*will* remember these things so central to our calling. And so, rather than scrutinising political parties for promises of “Christian” principles and policies, let us pray that *we* will become the ones who are scrutinised *by* political parties, that our witness to the kingdom of God will provide challenging reminders to our leaders of their own responsibilities. In short, let us pray that those observing us will know what a Christian society looks like, and in seeing, they will have cause to glorify the God to whom we bear witness.



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**[www.multifaith2008.ac.nz](http://www.multifaith2008.ac.nz)**

# Making a good impression

*Amanda Wells, Communications Manager, Assembly Office*

During the Standing out workshops, I asked attendees what impressions they wanted others to have of their church. I collected the responses from all 16 workshops, then had them collated into a spreadsheet. I was interested to see what the most popular desired impressions were. After all those workshops, I thought I had a good idea of the most common words, but there were still some unexpected results.

The sample size of 626 people who attended workshops was large enough to give a reliable picture of the Presbyterian-church-going population. When I started to analyse the large number of responses, I thought they would divide into a manageable number of categories. But the data didn't fall that way: despite an attempt to gather the words into sets of synonyms, they refused to reduce to a clear top 10 or even top 20. Even when votes for the most alike words were combined, there were still 80 different words in play. So perhaps the most significant thing about this list is its variety. The following non-scientific attempts at analysis can be taken with a grain of salt.

To my surprise, the top most-wanted impression was a cluster best summarised by "accepting". Other synonyms offered included: "non-judgemental", "open", "inclusive", "diverse", "non-threatening" and "non-intimidating". Why surprise? Because if you asked the person in the street for a word that summed up their impression of church, it seems to me that "accepting" would be a very unlikely answer. There is a painful irony that what we want so badly may be what we are least identified with being.

Second on the list was "caring", along with its corollaries "loving", "warm" and "compassionate". Perhaps a less surprising selection.

Third was "welcoming" and "inviting", with their connotations of hospitality. During the workshops, "welcoming" was generally the first or second word offered and I had expected it would come out on top. But even if fifth-placed "friendly", which has some similarities in meaning, had been combined with this category, the combined total would still come third; such was the dominance of the first two groupings.

At place number four, we have "alive". I grouped alongside this: "vibrant", "active", "lively", "vital" and "enthu-

siastic". These are all about the level of life and energy in the congregation.

Rounding out the top five is "friendly".

If you consider the top five collectively, four of them talk about qualities displayed by the congregation towards newcomers. To be accepting, caring, welcoming and friendly is to invite others into relationship with you; to say that no matter who you are, you have a place in our church and will be loved by the congregation. If these are our top priorities, how are we ensuring we live them out? What efforts do we make to convey these values every Sunday morning (and every day of the week)?

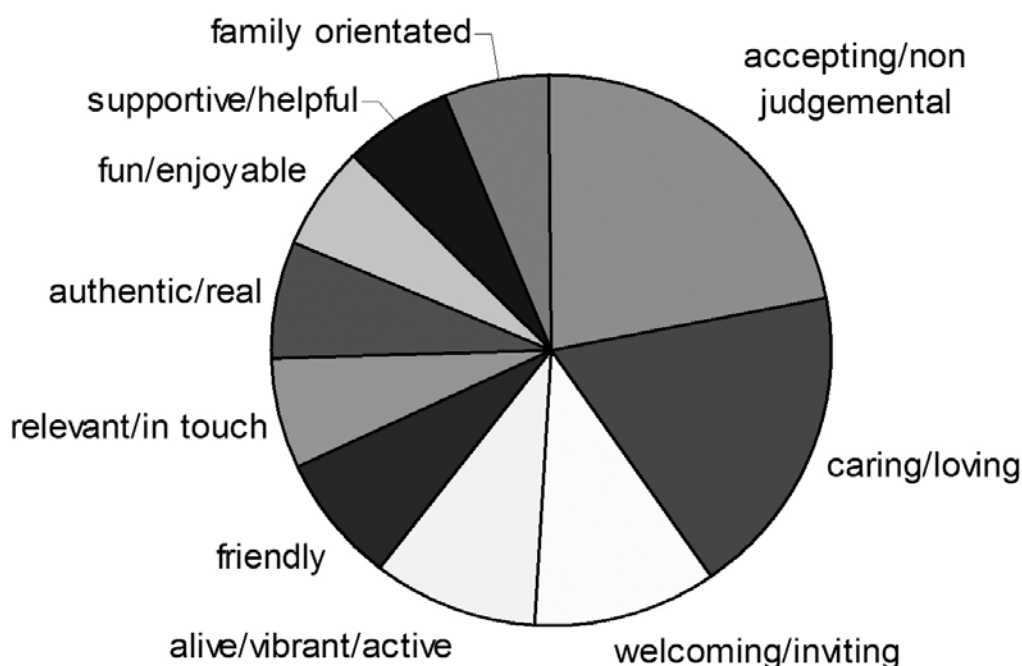
The other values that round out the top 10 are slight different. At number six we have "relevant". This is more about the church experience than the attitude of its members, as is "fun" at place eight and "family-oriented" at place 10.

At seven is "authentic", with its synonyms "real", "honest", "credible", "genuine", "transparent" and "sincere". Perhaps this is about the way in which the congregation's and minister's lives tally with their stated values. Place eight is taken by "supportive," which talks about the active attitude of the congregation towards others.

But the top 10 represent only 161 of the total 384 impressions contributed. That's just over 40 percent, even though I have tried to combine synonymous impressions. What that means is that a huge diversity exists in how we want people to perceive our churches. What do you do if one person in your congregation prioritises "peaceful" while another focuses on "having conviction" or "radical"? How does "questioning" square with being "consistent". The reality is that every person in your congregation on Sunday probably has a slightly different, nuanced definition of what they most want church to convey.

It may seem obvious, but it's worth pointing out that all of these impressions that we want people to have are positive. The implication is that we want new people to feel positive about our worship and mission so that they are encouraged to become part of it. The list of desired impressions suggests that we don't want people to think we are a club that has membership criteria and exists solely for its own members.

## Top 10 impressions that churchgoers want outsiders to have of their church



But what do you think are the person-in-the-street's actual impressions of your church? A couple of my colleagues and I have been conducting a small random survey of non-church people we know, asking "what's the first thing that comes to mind when you think 'church'?" The majority of those we've asked are in their early 30s.

These are the answers our sample has offered: "traditional"; "buildings" (this was offered by a number of people); "pews"; "stained glass"; "cross"; "creepy"; "religion"; "weirdness"; "socialising"; "noisy bells"; "old fashioned"; "judgemental"; "no thanks"; "out of touch"; "sadness"; "conservative"; "run by men".

My first observation is that there is little commonality between this (admittedly limited) sample and our collection of 626 church people's desired impressions.

My second observation is that I'm not surprised. Before I started this exercise, I made a list of the words I predicted people who don't go to church would say: "boring", "judgemental" and "irrelevant". Pessimistic perhaps, but also realistic. Is it a truism to say that if people had positive impressions of church, then they would actually be there?

The disjunction between reported impressions and those desired by church people shows the fundamental misun-

derstanding of Christianity that permeates our society. Why is "judgemental" a word that comes to the mind of non-church people when "accepting" and its variations is our top most-desired impression? How are people generating this negative impression? I suggest that it's not by visiting their local church. It's through the myriad of ways in which we filter information, with the media playing a crucial role. Much media coverage of the church has focused on controversies and negative statistics.

But our problem is that, because of their impressions, it's likely that the people in our sample will never visit their local church. We may never have the chance to change their impression through personal contact and experience. This is why external impressions are so important; continued positive coverage in your local community paper can go a long way towards generating different associations that are specific to your church and mission, as can specific outwardly focused projects in your community.

We know what impressions we want people to have; the challenge is to find ways of creating and conveying them to people whose existing impressions may well be negative.

# Ministry Exchange/Overseas Ministers Opportunities

## From the Employment Advisor

I have received expressions of interest from overseas ministers wanting to either exchange charges with Presbyterian ministers or serve in Presbyterian parishes. I have provided a brief outline of the opportunities available. Please contact me for further information at [juliette@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:juliette@presbyterian.org.nz).

### United States of America – Presbyterian Church (USA)

A minister in a team ministry situation is looking to exchange with a New Zealand minister. The minister comes from a large parish (average weekly attendance 450 people) in Charlotte, North Carolina. This would be a good opportunity for a minister wanting to gain experience in a large parish whilst being supported by a senior minister.

### Canada – Presbyterian Church in Canada

A minister from Guelph, Ontario, is looking to exchange with a New Zealand minister for 6-10 weeks during 2009. It is envisaged that only half of this time would be spent providing ministry with the rest of the time left free for the families to do some sight-seeing.

### England – United Reformed Church

A minister from North Kent would like to exchange with a New Zealand minister for three months at the end of this year. He has links to New Zealand and has been here previously but this would be the first time in an exchange.

### United States of America – Christian Reformed Church

A minister from Alameda, California, is seeking a year-long exchange from July 2009. The parish has a strong missional focus within the wider community and the minister would ideally exchange with a similar parish here.

### England – United Reformed Church

This minister has previously served in a New Zealand Presbyterian parish for 3.5 months and is looking to return for a period of five years. He has a family of four (the children are primary-school age). The minister currently leads two very different congregations in Surrey and is looking for a city parish that is "ready to face current challenges to faith". This charge would begin early 2009.

### Sabbaticals

From time-to-time I receive expressions of interest from ministers interested in undertaking a sabbatical or period of study in New Zealand. These ministers are looking to engage with a wide variety of Presbyterian parishes as a part of their own development or to assist their study on a particular topic. Such a visit is usually self-funded and can last for two-three weeks up to two-three months. If you are interested in hosting such a visit, please contact me with a brief outline of your church's identity.

### Corrections/Updates

Please note that the exchange to Saskatchewan that was advertised in February is no longer available.

# Musings and mumblings on worship

*Martin Stewart, St Stephen's, Christchurch*

Worship is a strange activity... sometimes in the midst of it I have zoned out and found myself observing what is going on as if a stranger – and the words and postures, the songs and prayers are very peculiar... I'm glad there is a God otherwise we would need medical intervention, especially in our more exuberant expressions of worship!

I believe that you have to do worship to get what worship is. It unfolds. I can see why people who don't believe there is a God think we are crazy. I wonder if we should explain ourselves more so that the stranger who comes along is allowed some access.

In my pre-Knox days, after having been accepted to train for ordained ministry I went through a stage of rather debilitating doubting and began drifting away from church (I didn't dare tell anyone!). One day I was asked to join the small worship group that provided the music at the Opo-ho evening services. It was in worship that I found a way to live with my doubts. It was in the praise of God that God ministered to my needs. I find that a helpful thing to pass on to someone struggling with their faith... don't step back but immerse yourself more.

One Sunday early in my ministry in Gore, I had the opportunity to sit among the congregation on a Sunday. Susan Jones led a wonderful service and I got the chance to worship among the people rather than lead their worship from a distance. I learned so much about them. I noticed how they participated in the prayers – how they responded when their hurts and pains and struggles were given room to be acknowledged. I observed how they looked out for each other with nudges and caring looks. I heard their murmurs of assent when a truth was spoken. I had thought that their worshipping was fairly passive (it seemed that it was from a way up front) but I was proved wrong. There was heart and soul and body and mind in their worship. I think I became a better worship leader after that.

A few things annoy me. I can't stand dry and dull prayers. If someone is leading the prayer the least they can do is

lead it as if they believe it! It doesn't mean that they need to go over the top but nor does it mean they should pray as if they are making a statement in court and having to go slowly and carefully so that the stenographer can keep up. But then, nor can I stand prayers that are reeled off as quickly as possible so that we can get onto the next bit. Quiet space in prayers made up of carefully chosen words doesn't have to mean dry and dull. John Hunt's prayers are gentle, quiet, and careful and rich... they find their way deep inside so that what is deep inside becomes an offering to God.

I also get annoyed by the trend of contemporary worship leaders to offer what I call little "I" prayers: "God I just want to offer you my thanks and praise..." - that sort of thing. I get the idea that these people are embarrassed by the idea of prayer as a corporate activity and them as the leader of this corporate prayer. I think that they believe

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## Prayers carefully offered by one very quickly became of the prayers of the many

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that worship is a collection of individual prayers that must be offered individually and that no one can pray on behalf of the whole. Yet the Lord's Prayer is in the lan-

guage of "our" and "us". Sitting among those people at St Andrew's in Gore, I gained a new sense of how the prayers carefully offered by one very quickly became of the prayers of the many.

I'm warming up here... worship isn't so much about us at all anyway. Isn't worship participating in the way God is in Godself? A participation in the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, us being lifted up into this dance of love, and this love coming down – a taste of "on earth as it is in heaven"? How might we get a sense of the breaking in of the Kingdom of God in our worship? I sense that when the African-American churches (a big influence on many charismatic churches) do worship, that they have a sense that that is exactly what is taking place. I don't see why this cannot be seen to be what is taking place in any of our worship. But why is it that I feel as if the breaking in of the kingdom of God is the last thing we would expect or want in many of our churches?

Finally...there's a therapeutic thing that happens when we worship that I believe is vital to our well-being. It

is that the worship of God counteracts our tendencies to worship other things and ourselves. Our little worship gatherings are counter-cultural acts – acts of resistance where we declare “God first” to a world that thinks “me first”. We live in self-serving cultures – people are caught up in the disease of “me” and “my” and they will bring these tendencies with them to church. They will look at church as a product and they will go to another church if they feel that their needs are not being met and they are not at all embarrassed to declare exactly this as the reason why they are moving on! It is vital that this individualism is challenged in how we do our worship – thus we need to take some care.

We shouldn't follow the latest trends just because they seem to work without questioning the ways that we are playing into consumerism. But nor should we lock ourselves into a cultural vacuum that increasingly struggles to be accessible to emerging cultures. This is not an easy tension to live with. Maybe it is enough here to say that our commitment to communion and community needs to be our baseline. Where we declare by how we worship that this is not so much about you but about God, and that a God-shaped world is ultimately better for you and all of us.



Presbyterian Church  
of Aotearoa New Zealand

### National Assessment date changes

**20 December 2007:** Presbytery recommendations and student papers to be sent to the Registrar, School of Ministry, Knox College, Arden Street, Dunedin 9010.

**May 2008:** National Assessment weekend. Location and dates etc to be advised.

For more information, see  
[www.schoolofministry.ac.nz/nationalassessment.htm](http://www.schoolofministry.ac.nz/nationalassessment.htm)

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21st July 2008

# How does hymnody influence worship?

Janet Sim Elder, Dunedin

*The following is an extract from a study written up in 2002-2003 when Janet was a sabbatical visitor at Westminster College in Cambridge*

Questions of how appropriate choices are made by those responsible for leading worship<sup>1</sup> and choosing what is appropriate in any particular service have intrigued me for many years.

The “who” question is intriguing. Whose experiences, whose bias is evident, and what musical or literary sensitivities do those who choose bring? What theological critique is there of what is sung? How do we craft what is sung into a coherent, cohesive flow of worship, remembering that even in our planned cohesiveness, God still breaks through and surprises us with joys of incoherence?

How are we formed by what we sing?

I have had so many frustrated questions, even as a child; questions which I was barely able to articulate at times. At times I felt fragile, too unsure of my ground to ask, for fear of being misunderstood. Points of view seemed determined by the “I like what I know” ideology which is always frustrating for the trained musician/music educator to counter. What have been termed the “worship wars”<sup>2</sup> seem to rage unabated and unchallenged.

How could we in the church ever reach what C. S Lewis<sup>3</sup> calls that “constant state of grace” which must exist between the trained musician and the musically less literate in any congregation? Was it reached in the Western Southland of my childhood, the Dunedin of my adolescence, young adulthood and later life, or anywhere in Aotearoa New Zealand for that matter? Do we sometimes, conversely assume musical “illiteracy” predominates in the pews of our parishes, when in fact many parishioners can and do cultivate varying degrees of sensitivity in such matters?

This Hymnody Pilot Study therefore, has been my God-given opportunity to ask questions boldly of others and try to discern what actually goes on in the minds of ministers and congregation when musical offerings are planned for public worship.

## The Hymnody Pilot Study – aims and methods

I set out to explore the growing repertoire of hymnody in Aotearoa New Zealand and to see how far, if at all, we have moved from a dominant Victorian style. I believe there are past styles still worth preserving and teaching each new generation.

I also looked for any indication that at least we have begun to think theologically about our practice of hymnody within our context as Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Therefore I wanted to determine and affirm the contributions of those involved in music-making in their parishes and to determine the level of informed leadership and decision-making about musical/literary style, presentation, and theology of hymnody in public worship.

I wanted to explore the inter-relatedness between text and music in the Presbytery of Dunedin, alongside hints of underlying theological assumptions, and how that reflects diversity within the church.

Much has been written about the practice of hymnody as Hymnology (the study of hymns) however it seems there is little written about how Hymnody is practised, according to the definition given (see endnote 1), in the New Zealand context and how much understanding there is in the church about why we do what we do.

Therefore I set about constructing a pilot study in three parts to try to determine how consciously and wisely hymns and songs are used in public worship today. The sample of the population is all the parishes and the School of Ministry in the Presbytery of Dunedin. At the time of gathering the information (April 2002) there were 28 parishes from Waikouaiti in the north to Maungatua – Strath Taieri in the south west of the wider city of Dunedin. This area contains one multi-cultural church (Cook Island, Samoan and European), one Pacific Island Church (Nuiean, Cook Island and Samoan), one Chinese Church.

## Top 10 Survey

One of my main aims was to document how connected our hymnody in public worship is to the past, in par-

ticular, the past of earlier generations who settled in this country in the early to middle part of the 19th century.

The Top 10 Survey confirms that our connections to the past are quite solid indeed among the older generations within the Dunedin Presbytery. The Victorian English past of Joseph Medlicott Scriven's (1819-1886) *What a friend we have in Jesus* [number 2] with three possible tunes from the mid nineteenth century to the early twentieth (Converse, Ebenezer and Blaenwern) is an obvious example.

*Abide with Me* [number 8] with words by Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847) and the tune *Eventide* by William Henry Monk (1823-1889) is another, alongside *Immortal Invisible* [number 7]. Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908) has his popular words set to *St Denio* a Welsh hymn melody written in 1839.

The earliest hymn in the Top 10 is the evergreen ancient Irish text translated by Mary Byrne (1880-1931) – *Be Thou my Vision* [number 6] - sung to the traditional Irish tune *Slane*.

The Scottish Psalter (1650) version of Psalm 23, if coupled with the Victorian paraphrase *The King of Love my Shepherd* is, would be by far

the most popular hymn, far outstripping numbers 1 and 2 (*Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah* and *What a friend we have in Jesus*). In Ian Bradley's survey John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876), composer of *Dominus regit me* (*The King of Love*) is the most popular hymn composer of the Victorian era.

American revivalist/folk music influences are strong with *Amazing Grace* (John Newton's (1725-1807) earlier words at number 4 and *How Great Thou Art* (number 5) with its Swedish words and tune translated and arranged in 1936.

For a Scottish settler community to have a translated Welsh song with 18th century words and a Welsh tune from the Edwardian era seems perhaps a mild oddity, but *Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah* is a firm favourite in the Dunedin Presbytery. It was number 6 in a Radio New Zealand survey in 1975.<sup>4</sup> Note that *What a friend* was number 2 then as now. Then, as now, there is little evidence of any of the strong 17th-18th century German hymnody influence in our choices even though that in-

fluence is quite evident in most of the hymnals used in Presbyterian churches in the Presbytery.

The Dunedin poll top 70 responses show that the first New Zealand – composed hymn/song is Richard Gillard's *The Servant Song*, published in 1977 by Scripture in Song. Colin Gibson's *He Came Singing Love* is number 28.

*Where the Road runs out*, also by Gibson, is number 62 and *Our Life has its Seasons* (Gibson and Shirley Murray) is at 63. Thus only two "indigenous" hymns come in the top 50. [See Appendix]

## Diaries and questionnaire

It is important however, not to rely solely on the Top 10 Survey for indications of our connections to the past. The April diaries showed clearly that we tend to use more evergreen traditional hymns at Easter, a high time in the church calendar. In the July diaries (a low time) there was considerable variety, where of the 136 songs sung - many of the HIP variety (Endnote 21) - only four were twice sung through the whole Presbytery.

Are we guilty of being "so mesmerised by novelty" that we devalue anything traditional merely on account of its age?<sup>5</sup> In some parishes this might be true, but in

many others I sense that there is some exploration of contemporary hymnody which reflects our growing sense of being of this place, this Aotearoa New Zealand.

There is more work for me to do on the inter-relatedness between text and music in Hymnody. Perhaps that would be the basis of another particular study. With only just over half of the questionnaire respondents [10/18 = 55%] indicating they thought words and music were equally important when choosing hymns or songs, with 27.7% [5/18] ranking words more important and the remaining 16.6% [3] ranking music more so, there may be some value in further work or discussion about this inter-relatedness.

Theological understandings of what we do in worship and why are mixed in some places. There are many parish ministers who exhibit sound understandings of what governs their choices in worship. In a few parishes the planning of hymnody in public worship seems less carefully crafted and perhaps more determined by what is the most popular music of the time, often that which is im-

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## The Top 10 Survey confirms that our connections to the past are quite solid indeed

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ported from Australia or the United States. This is particularly evident where the “worship leaders”, usually lay people with little or no theological training, have overall responsibility for making the choices. Ministers in parishes where this is the case may need to look carefully at their own role as outlined in the Directory for Public Worship (1995).

The diversity which we experience as the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is certainly reflected in public worship in the Dunedin Presbytery. However there is little to show in both the Top 10 Survey and the questionnaire and diary, that we value the music of tangata whenua. New Zealand composers feature only in pockets in the diaries. The Church in Dunedin seems a little more attune to the music of the Pacific Island members which is understandable when we consider the multi-cultural components of the Presbytery, but there remains much to explore for us in this area.

We may have something to learn from the broader “mosaic” model which my friend Will Loescher and his congregation are exploring in the West Midlands of the UK. It may be that we are still tending towards the “ghetto” mentality in our parishes and feel comfortable staying within our own narrow cultural confines.

Again there is more here to be explored. Do we continue with “byte-sized” texts of many choruses or do we respond to the challenges of the theological density of a Prudentius, a Wesley or a Shirley Murray hymn?

The joyful picture of music-making in Exodus 15 where Miriam the prophet sings her heart to God with tambourines and dancing, is an image of an aspect of hymnody I hoped to explore in the study, that is, the role of women in writing, composing and leading music in worship. I have barely touched on this and you will have noticed as you have read through the study, that women do feature in writing hymns, and in leading worship (e.g. the seven women respondents to the survey, five of whom were ministers, all were actively involved). The Top Ten survey reflected very clearly the ratio of women to men (2:1) in the Church.

Note: There is one Hymn for a Southern Easter with words by Shirley Smith sent from her parish pile of responses to the Top Ten Survey included in Appendix E which may be of wider interest. The Tune given is Kil-libegs 8888 (LM)

Accountability? How can we foster and maintain the very best of our growing tradition, especially with young

people? Generations to come will have no understanding of the past and how we have been shaped by it. I say “our growing tradition”, because I believe firmly that it is a developing, growing tradition of hymnody where the best of the old is valued and the challenge of the new is accepted. A considerable amount of discernment is necessary to separate the better examples of contemporary hymnody from the very mediocre. How do we develop that both in ourselves and in those who come after us?

In his *A History of the Churches of Australasia*, Ian Breward, when discussing Hymnody and Congregational Life<sup>6</sup> in the latter part of the 19th century, states that the “rediscovery of the musical heritage of the Western Church was slow in reaching...New Zealand....At First Presbyterian Church in Dunedin, the congregation first stood for singing psalms in September 1875, but no hymns were sung until 1884. Hostility to “instrumental music” divided many congregations until late in the nineteenth century, when many began choirs and installed organs. At Knox Presbyterian Church in Dunedin, the Sunday school began using a harmonium in 1881, although the congregation had rejected the introduction of an organ a decade earlier. Once the Sunday school had led the way, and some prejudices had been removed, Knox installed an organ in 1882.”

Our settler history is such a young one in comparison with other Western nations. The resistance and prejudices against our musical heritage, including that of the pre-reformation (deemed “popish” in the past and still to some degree even now), exhibited by our forbears in the Dunedin Presbytery still linger. We are fast becoming a Pacific nation, and the church has been slow to adjust, but adjust we must. However we should never be apologetic for the rich and varied hymnody tradition that has formed us and shaped us as God’s people throughout the ages.

I believe there has to be more accountability and energy for teaching confidently and creatively the fine hymns of our tradition to our younger members and children. Otherwise the tradition at its best will be lost to future generations as those of us 50 years old and above grow old and die. Those of us who are older must conversely open our minds to what is the best of the new, both theologically and musically, and above all, we must encourage more discussion and greater discernment about how we define “contemporary” and “traditional” in both texts and music.

Caution must be exercised about how we use music and text together. The pastoral implications of what we choose are important and music and texts can be misused in ways

that are not helpful. Music and words must always exhibit a high degree of complementarity to each other. Language does matter. For example some of us “strain to be inclusive”, some of us cannot be bothered, and some side step the issue entirely. Do we value the language of the prophet/poet/musician, or are we too often content with the mediocre?

Questions about all these issues raised in the pilot study, including the preparation, presentation, the use of hymnody in public worship and how we are formed as Christians together must continue to be asked. The Church may need to consider its role in educating parishes, Presbyteries and perhaps most importantly its teaching elders, especially during their years of preparation and formation. Some ordinands, upon completing formational studies, replicate the very polarities and prejudices of the parishes from whence they came, without considering the vast repertoire of the Church throughout the ages. This repertoire may be unfamiliar to them, and ignorance of the wider possibilities of the tradition is thus perpetuated in the parishes in which they go out to serve. This ignorance of tradition, I would suggest, is as unsound pastorally as it is theologically. “One-size-fits-all” in terms of musical style, neither reflects the infinite creative nature of who God is, nor does it reflect the diversity of aesthetic responses which enable each individual person in any particular congregation to worship her/his Creator.

The church also needs to consider how well it uses the tools of theology in educating the wider church about our particular Presbyterian theology of worship, as Marva Dawn says “what we do and why...in worship?” Her question remains. How can we teach “Christianity’s specialness” when often our choices of hymnody lack stylistic variety?

I trust that this small offering of mine encourages us not to “cease from exploration” of these issues, but to continue “our exploring”, the discussions and the journeying; knowing that whenever we think we have arrived, we will have merely begun again, hopefully with a deeper understanding of what it means to worship and enjoy God forever.

## References

1 Directory for Worship (1995) 9, states that ‘The minister is responsible for the actual conduct of worship and in a particular service of worship for :  
the selection of Scripture lessons to be read,

the preparation and preaching of the sermon or exposition of the Word,  
the prayers offered on behalf of the people and those prepared for the use of people in worship,  
the music to be sung or offered,  
the use of drama, dance and other art forms.

The minister may confer with a worship committee, the Session/Parish Council, or others in planning services of worship. Where there is a choir director or other musical leader, the minister and that person will confer to ensure that anthems and other musical offerings are appropriate for the particular service. The Session/Parish Council should see that these conferences take place appropriately and on a regular basis.

2 Marva Dawn,. *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down. A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture*. (Eerdmans 1995) 3.

3 C.S Lewis,. *Christian Reflections* .( Geoffrey Bles, London, 1967).Chapter entitled On Church Music, 95-96

4 *Dunedin Star* newspaper clipping dated 30.10.75. Kindly sent to me by Rev Russell Thew, whose father in law, the late Alan Mrum (former organist and choirmaster at First Church, Dunedin and City organist for a number of years) must have clipped and inserted in a worship book.

Blanaid Fitzgerald of RNZ’s Religious Broadcasts Section applied the British idea in NZ.

- 1.The Lord is My Shepherd (Crimond)
2. What a friend We have in Jesus
3. Amazing Grace
4. Be still my Soul
5. How great Thou Art
6. Guide me O Thou great Jehovah
7. Abide with me
- 8 The day Thou gavest
9. Love Divine
- 10 Love that wilt not let me go.

5 Bengé op.cit. 1

6 Ian Breward. *A History of the Churches in Australasia, Oxford History of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2001) 171-172.

### The Church and the town garbage heap

I have been travelling around presbyteries, engaging in the difficult discussion about our Church's future, its use of money and resources, and our expression of mission and faithfulness to the Gospel. I find that I am drawn back again to questions of ecclesiology. Ultimately, what are we about as the Presbyterian part of God's church?

George Macleod, Presbyterian minister and founder of the Iona community, wrote a wonderful poem that many of you would be familiar with:

*We simply argue that the cross be raised again at the centre of the marketplace as well as the steeple of the church. We are recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a crossroad so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek...at the kind of place where cynics talk smut and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died. And that is what He died about. And that is where churchmen ought to be, and what churchmen should be about.*

I am not sure that even someone with the genius of Macleod could have imagined the complexities of the marketplace and the crossroads that characterise the community in whose midst the church now finds itself. The economic, technological, cultural and social diversity and experiences of our communities are overwhelming the old categories and dualisms that have been used to describe theologies and view points in our historical debates.

I am finding that questions of our organisational future, in terms of the Presbyterian Church, are lost in the concerns and anxieties about the future of each individual's worshipping community. It is difficult to press the case for some greater good when we each know that we will return from our presbytery meeting to confront our own congregation's committees anguishing over the day-to-day challenges and practical issues of being the church in the local community. I wonder if this is what "being in the marketplace" and "at the crossroads" does for us. Rather than dealing with the complexity, we end up instead choosing the known way of seeing our mission in terms of the familiar stories, the people we know and the buildings we love.

I was reading an interview with America's foremost "retail anthropologist" (yes, there is even a science around how people shop), Paco Underhill. He was speaking

about the role of art galleries but I think his comments are interesting for us as well. He asks

*where are people asking questions about what's going right and what's going wrong in the world in which we live? .....That role, I think has been taken over by the Natural Resources Defence Council or Greenpeace. So many issues now which challenge us as a species are not about politics but about morality. The idea that someone can be an avid ecologist and a fundamentalist Christian isn't a disconnect. Someone can be a member of the Sierra Club and the National Rifle Association....*

In my discussions, some people tell me that the Church's first commitment is to worship; others remark on the important role the Church has in providing pastoral care and support for its members. We know what these things are - pastoral care, worship. And we know that they should be at the heart of our Church's life. It does not seem right to set these commitments against the grand claims of our scripture that the Church should be involved in God's mission expressed as "so loving the world that he gave his only son" or that we are here to "find and restore the lost". We know that the Church has to do all these things.

The concern I have is that Underhill is right. That politics, defined as the process by which groups of people make decisions, has replaced morality in our Church. That our churches have shied away from being at that difficult place. The place where people's fears, hopes, engagement with a changing world and concerns about the future, provide the substance and focus of our theology, liturgy, sermons and involvement with our communities.

I would like to have a theologian with me as I travel around and listen. Someone who can discern "what the Spirit is saying."



# Depression is very disabling - but there is hope!

## Depression - Recovery & Prevention Seminar



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Medical Doctor from Ontario  
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- Youth Depression
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A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words. The presentation of them here is not intended to diminish the seriousness of the issues concerned, BUT help us see the real need and to work to make a difference.



Many adults are still wounded children inside.

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SouthLife Church, 24 Union St.,
- Christchurch:** 2.00pm to 9.00pm Thurs. 7th Aug.  
City Church Christchurch,  
336 Manchester St., Central City
- Wellington:** 10.30am to 5.00pm Sat. 9th Aug.  
Assembly of God Church,  
22 Marsden St., Lower Hutt

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Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional Development Day Certificate of Attendance** will be provided and posted upon request for an administration fee of \$5.00.

I am paying by: Cheque/Visa/Mastercard/Postal Money order

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature (for card)

Please make cheques payable to: "Jubilee Resources Intl. Inc." (receipts will be issued)

**REGISTRATION DETAILS:** Post to: Jubilee Resources Intl. Inc.  
Freepost 4014, PO Box 36044,  
Wellington 5043

or Fax to: 04-939-1911  
or Email to: [registrations@jubilee.org.nz](mailto:registrations@jubilee.org.nz)