

faith in **focus**

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Reformed Churches
of New Zealand

VOLUME 33/3 APRIL 2006



"BUT FOR YOU WHO REVERE MY NAME,
THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL RISE
WITH HEALING IN ITS WINGS."

MALACHI 4:2

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Editorial

Have you ever wondered how some people get all their work done? You know, those people who are always busy. It seems like they're involved with everything—and actually they usually are! And they just keep on going.

Now, we need to know that some are over-worked. They are under stress which will, like cracks in an earthquake, herald a collapse of some kind. With others it's all an image—a carefully-crafted mask to make them seem like someone they're not.

But there are some who do honestly work that hard. And while sometimes they turn things down, often they're the ones you turn to when things need to get done! "If you want something done ask a busy man," the saying goes. And it's true.

Why? Because they make work a part of their everyday life. Work which is not restricted to what will turn over an immediate profit for them, but work which becomes their life. In believers, this is the spiritual motivation for service. They love to work because of the love that is in them.

Another thing you note about them is that you can approach them. A good worker like this will be part of a team. In turn, he will have others he knows he can go to for help. So he's not actually doing all the work at all. It's a co-operative effort. And certainly, your thanks at his helping out will lead you to be more open in helping out. Ephesians 4:16 pictures the church as a body, "*joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*" These people are models for others to emulate.

The third aspect about them you'll notice is that they sometimes get 'put down.' The world calls this the 'tall poppy syndrome,' because it thinks these people are cut down for standing out too much. With the believer, the high stand he takes on God's Word means that others don't like what he's doing. They feel it rubs them up the wrong way—but it's actually the right way. And because that believer is busy, he will often brush up against others!

These are only a few characteristics to a busy person. Perhaps you could add more. Once you've done that, who do you think covers it all? Which one is the busiest of all? Then we cannot go past our Lord Jesus Christ. In His doing and dying He was always working for us. He still does.

Do you think you could do more?

*"God give me work till my life shall end,
and life till my work is done."*

Winifred Holtby

Photo: A Nelson sunset looking west from the Port hills.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not to be considered the official position of the Reformed Churches of NZ unless they expound the Biblical system of doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, or reflect the successive Acts of Synod of the Reformed Churches of NZ. On the other hand, care is taken to ensure that articles and opinions do not directly contradict the official position of the Reformed Churches as contained in the above sources without attention being called to that fact.

Those others who arose

The glorified Saints of Matthew 27:53

Sjirk Bajema

The shout will go up again this Easter Sunday from pulpit and pew all over the world: "He is risen!" For on this day, we especially remember the resurrection from the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was triumphant over all the powers of the evil one.

But Jesus was not the only one to be resurrected. When He died, many others arose from the dead. After His resurrection they went into Jerusalem and appeared to many people.

That's a strange story, and one that evokes many questions. One of those which keeps popping up isn't actually directly related to what we read in Matthew 27. Where did they go? Where did the bodies of those resurrected saints end up after the Resurrection?

Of course, that's not the main point of what Matthew is telling us. He is declaring 'The Miracle of the Open Tombs'—Christ's victory over death. The Advent Church returns to symbolise the fact that, because of Christ's death and resurrection, they are in glory right now!

However, the question remains. Where did these men and women end up? For that matter, where were they in the three days between the supernatural opening of the tombs and their appearance in the city?

There are other questions, too. This is a true, but unique, story. Let's see why.

The time these saints reappeared

The first thing we note is the time frame for this event. This is where Matthew says, *and after Jesus' resurrection*. Remember that they haven't actually been seen yet. Their witness to Christ's victory over death lies in the fact that they couldn't be seen—at least, not their bodies! Everyone saw which of the opened tombs had the bodies missing. They were the ones who had believed and prophesied that the Messiah would come.

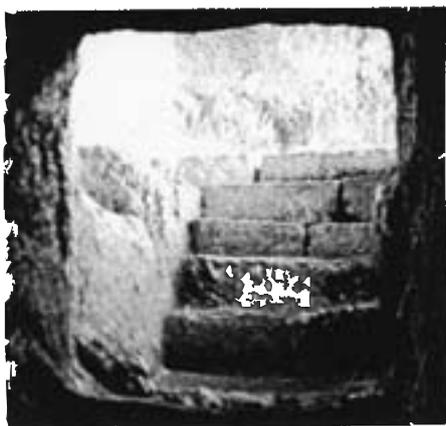
Now no doubt remains: they are seen. All thoughts and talk about their disappearance vanish, because the people are right there!

In the same way that the torn curtain, the earthquake, the rocks splitting, the tombs opening and the bodies of the dead being raised occurred when Christ died, this appearance of the resurrected saints marks the time when He arose from the dead.

We read of something similar in the story of the transfiguration. There was a definite purpose for that: it was a foretaste of the glory of the Messiah. The three key disciples are pointed clearly to where it is all going. And it happens at a particular time in the ministry of Jesus.

In the same way, there's a clear reason for the presence of these saints on this occasion. They give us a foretaste of the glory of believers. We realise we're being joined with them in the Church.

The Jewish rabbis taught that in the messianic era many righteous would arise from the grave. They had even gone as far as to name which patriarchs would appear. Now, those righteous people are here. The word of



prophecy is falling into place. It's all coming at the right time, because these saints only appear after Christ has risen. They could only be witnesses after the Great Witness Himself had testified.

Klaas Schilder points out that the first Sunday of the Christian church, the first Sabbath of the New Testament, is here acknowledged and kept by the dead before being discovered and celebrated by the living. In the words of Romans 14:9, "*Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of the dead and the living.*"

This makes the ultimate difference. For the people of this world go to the cemetery to mourn, and some of them spend the whole day there doing just that! But Easter Sunday, for the Christian, turns the cemetery into the greatest reunion in history. Man's way leads to a hopeless end: God's way leads to an endless hope!

Together with Christ, who is the first-fruit,

there comes all this other fruit. It's the beginning of the most incredible harvest in the world!

That's why Matthew tells us about the reappearance of these saints. It couldn't happen at any other time but this: God's perfect time.

The place these saints reappeared

It couldn't have been in any other place. Matthew 27:53 says, *They went into the holy city.* And because of what we've read before, it seems as if they came from the cemetery outside the city.

Not necessarily, though. Where had they been during the three days in between Christ's death and resurrection? If it is true that they had risen from the dead and come out of the tombs on the Friday afternoon, it all depends on where they had been since then.

This is commonly acknowledged by the commentators to be a mystery. They say it's part of the unexplained—something we might get to know about in heaven, if we're really that interested in it then!

Could it be, though, that in their glorified state they had been in heaven itself for that period of time? That's where a number of other equally glorified saints are—people like Enoch, and Moses, and Elijah. When it was time for them to reappear, they did indeed go into the holy city. The holy ones entered the holy city to testify to the Holy One!

Could they still now call Jerusalem the holy city? She who had persecuted the prophets of the past, and now murdered God's own Son—the greatest prophet of them all!

Jerusalem is the holy city—she represents where God is with His people, and by God's sovereign grace she was the place where He had been among His people. Not by virtue of the people themselves: we could never look to them. As indeed we could never depend now on the leaders and members of the Church universal. But because she is Christ's, she is holy!

While we may despise what people in the Church may do, let's never disparage the Church. She is our mother as God is our Father. In Christ He is the husband who, like Hosea, has been the faithful husband, constantly saving her. And in the end, He paid His own life for her. She still has His purpose for her to fulfil!

In Acts 1:8 the Lord Jesus, as He is about to ascend back to heaven, tells his disciples, “*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” Therefore, the city of Jerusalem is where it starts. She is the capital city of the King. From here the Gospel goes throughout the whole world.

Matthew’s readers would have been so overwhelmed! Heaven has come down to earth. The soldiers of the King tell us D-day has come, and the battle has been won. They come in the Name of the Son!

The place where the Lord had His visible presence is now only the first place of all the places His presence will go. And it will be in Jerusalem that everything for us will end: the new Jerusalem! As the apostle John pictures it in his vision of Revelation 21:2-3, *I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.’*

The Jews have an expression which has passed down through the generations. They say it to their fellow Jews when they take their leave. When they say goodbye, they say, “Next year Jerusalem!”

Christians, let’s look to enter the holy city, too, which is for us the heavenly Jerusalem. Because we’re going to the One up above—the One where we’ll stay forever!

The way these saints reappeared

The *time* and the *place* these saints reappeared is vital. It points to what Christ has done and the difference that will make all over this world and for all eternity! But these two things themselves could only occur because of the way these saints reappeared. So we come to consider now the last phrase in verse 53: *After Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.*

Over the years we can meet all kinds of people. Many we won’t remember at all in time to come. So what makes us remember them? Because meeting these saints would have been an unforgettable experience! Why do we recall certain people and not others? What stands out about them? Perhaps it is the way they look, the way they talk—maybe it’s the unusual name they have! What would make these men and women not only unforgettable, but also quite recognisable? Even if they had died hundreds of years before?

The account of the Transfiguration helps us here, for it is quite clear who Moses and Elijah are (Matt.17:1-8). Jesus becomes glorified before them there in the presence of two old covenant saints who already live in eternity: they whose brightness is awesome!

Their glory is so obvious that Peter wants to put up shelters for them. But that’s when the voice from the cloud speaks, and they realise why Moses and Elijah are there. That is why those two were gone when the disciples looked up after humbling themselves before the voice. They

had completed the witness to their Lord.

And it’s the same in our text. As soon as they had testified to the Lord, the saints went up. Let’s not think otherwise. They couldn’t have lived their lives ever again amongst us. Just think of the confusion and disruption that would have created for those who had died only a few years before! Would their spouses have to take them back, even if they’d remarried in the meantime? Hebrews 9:27 makes it very clear, *man is destined to die once.* That’s God’s order for us. Not even a hint of reincarnation here!

These saints didn’t live human lives again. Nor either did they stay until Pentecost, as some have suggested. If that was the case, we would be sure to find other references to them in scripture. And, anyway, what would that add to their purpose in being here? That purpose was to connect Christ’s death to His resurrection. They proclaim that He is the One—the Messiah all the ages of the Church have looked hopefully for. They prove that Christ is the second Adam, for they have glorious bodies. What was sown in weakness, to use the words of Paul in 1st Corinthians 15 verse 43, is now raised in power. We’ve got something out of this world to look forward to!

And it’s all due to the One they witness to. To take our eyes off Jesus for a moment is to miss the One Whom this is all about. He is Christ the King! He rules everything because he has conquered death’s sting! He has comprehensively defeated sin.

Making room in my Father’s House

The place of hospitality

Hans Voschezang

Every Sunday Jack, Emile and their little daughter Carol went faithfully to the village church. Shabbily dressed, they always sat at the back in the last pew, not wanting to draw attention to themselves. The people in church looked down on them and made snide remarks about “these undesirables,” just loud enough to be heard by Jack or Emily. Nobody wanted to talk with them. They were labelled as ‘that family living at the edge of the woods.’

It embarrassed Jack that his family couldn’t measure up to the people’s expect-

tations. How could these people treat them like that? Were they not supposed to show hospitality, love each other and treat each other with dignity? It was not their fault that circumstances had caught up with them. The way people looked at them disapprovingly—the ‘shouting’ silence—was too much to bear. Jack decided not to come to church any more.

But little Carol insisted on going; she didn’t want to miss out on Sunday school. So every Sunday Jack drove his daughter to church by horse-drawn cart. She sat all alone throughout the service, and then through Sunday school. Jack

always picked her up afterwards.

One Sunday Jack dropped her off as usual. After church when everybody had left, Carol stood at the church doors waiting for her Daddy, but no one came. She looked out of the window, nervously watching the road that led up to the church. The pastor got concerned: something must have happened. He started small talk, the kind of awkward conversation that you expect from a minister talking to a nervous child. But, Carol assured him that her Daddy would come—he always did. The pastor became annoyed. How could “these people” have forgotten to pick her up, and abandoning a sweet little girl in this way?

After a while the pastor grew more concerned and offered to take her home, if she would tell him where she lived. They went to his car and drove for nearly 15 minutes over country roads, Carol pointing out directions to the pastor. When he finally turned into the driveway of Carol's home, he couldn't believe his eyes. The place was nothing more than a run-down, battered and weathered old shack. It had withstood a number of storms, but it looked as if it would fall apart with the next. What a dump!

The pastor could not hide his alarm at the condition of Carol's ramshackle home: it looked as if it came out of a horror story. What had he done to alleviate their situation?

Her parents had tried so hard to be part of his congregation. Jack looked after the gardens and mowed the lawns; he had even repaired a broken window.

It took the pastor a while to get over the shock. He was overwhelmed by guilt. Meanwhile Carol, sitting in the passenger's seat, saw the expression on his face. She noticed his upset reaction, and sat quietly as he drove up to the 'house.' Then, just before she got out of the car she turned to the pastor, and said, "Thank you for the ride, Sir. I know my house isn't much to look at, but my Daddy makes it a great place to live. He reads me stories from the Bible, he hugs me when I'm hurting because he loves me, and he makes me laugh." Her Daddy meant everything to her. She didn't worry about where she lived or how she lived. Her only concern was her Daddy, who loved her. With a choking voice the pastor said goodbye and drove off.

Making room

It's remarkable what a high profile hospitality has in the New Testament. It's even described as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Christians are called to be hospitable towards one another and to strangers. But what has this to do with Easter? Discussed from a particular viewpoint, it has everything to do with Easter and living as Christians.

For centuries theologians have pondered God's act of creation. One traditional question is: "If, before God created the heavens and the earth God was all that there was and all that there had ever been, then 'where' exactly did God create the universe? It's not as if there was an empty space waiting to be filled. If God was all that there was or had been, didn't He need to carve out room for the universe even before He created the universe in all its particular splendour?"

Think of it this way: If you are thinking of

building a house, you'll start by designing it. An architect makes drawings and plans every detail of your new house, even to the kind of knobs you want on the kitchen cabinets. But you can't build a house unless you have a vacant lot to build on. Without that piece of land available, your house cannot be built no matter how detailed your plans and drawings are. So it was for God, He intended to create a universe with galaxies, stars, planets into invite minute detail. But since God was all that existed, there was at first no equivalent of the vacant lot on which to build this creation. Before He could begin to build the cosmos, God needed to invent a space that had not been there before.

In our Reformed tradition, we believe the universe is separate from God. We view the Creation as God's ultimate act of hospitality. However He did it, God made room for us. Our Creator God is the ultimate Divine Cosmic Host. He carved out a place for us. This is part of the reason why, when we read the account of creation in Genesis 1, we read so much about that entire "separating." God separated waters from waters, light from darkness, water and dry land. All that Divine work was to create space for us, and for all creatures. The Gospel of John tells us that it was the Son of God, "the Word of God," Who had been with God from the beginning, that same Word that later became flesh and took on the name Jesus.

In the Incarnation, the One who had made space for us came down to this world He had made. John's opening chapter tells us that the Word became flesh and became one of us, but...when He came to His own people, they didn't receive Him. We were not hospitable at all to the One who is our Ultimate Host. It's the nature of this very sin

that Jesus came to die for. As human beings we constantly build walls, looking down on people, shutting other people out, and doing the spiritual equivalent of slamming the front door in someone's face.

If Creation began on a note of Divine hospitality, then that was meant to set the tone for the rest of our Christian living. Yet we keep on acting inhospitably to one another. Even when we have experienced the sting of being shut out, we sometimes turn right around and shut out someone else. To a certain extent it looks as if we have become a 'Members Only' club: the 'us and them' mentality.

In Jesus' days, the religious community was the ultimate 'Members Only' club. The Pharisees were experts at shutting out undesirables. When Jesus rode in to Jerusalem on a donkey, the people shouted "Hosanna!" It was a plea for salvation. But what did the crowds have in mind when they shouted this? They thought the salvation Jesus was going to achieve would bolster their exclusive religious community, but they had a second thought coming.

Jesus shattered that illusion straight away. He went directly to the Temple and chased out the merchants and the moneychangers. In principal there was nothing wrong with the presence of those merchants. The religious laws required that people offer sacrifices in the Temple. The merchants only provided a service by selling the animals the people needed to fulfill God's sacrificial requirements. The problem was that those stalls were not set up in some neutral spot in the Temple grounds, but in the Gentile Court. This was the place designated for non-Jews and others who wished to come and pray to God. By occupying that space, access to the



Temple was denied to people God wanted to see and hear from.

Jesus came to this earth not to close doors behind Him, but to fling the doors to the Kingdom wide open. That doesn't deny what Jesus Himself said: that the road that leads to life is the narrow way, and not the broad and easy highway most people prefer to follow. It's not to deny that Jesus alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life. There is no other way to the Father but by Him. It may sound exclusivist but the invitation, however, is freely given to all without distinction. It's not intended to shut out, but to invite. Just because the invitation is specific doesn't mean it is discriminatory. Jesus came to remind us that hospitality is the universe's keynote, and it has been so from the beginning.

Matthew tells us how Jesus made room in the Temple. What happened next? The blind and the lame came to Him and He healed them. These were all people who had previously been shut out. The very essence of Easter is here in this picture. Jesus died on the cross for more reasons than we can imagine. The salvation Jesus accomplished for us is as wide open as the cosmos.

Jesus died to make room again

No matter how hard we try we cannot complete a list of all the hurts Jesus healed, all the wrongs He put right, all the brokenness He made new. The fact is that by dying as a human being within His creation, Jesus the Word of God, Who hospitably made all things, died to make room for all once again in His Father's house with the many mansions. This is a community that defines the goodness of being an insider by Divine grace only. That grace is such a precious gift that you want it to come to everybody. You wish nobody to remain an outsider.

But the Pharisees found this a tough act to follow. Their precious Temple was inundated with the lame, the blind and other undesirables. Worst of all, screaming kids were running all over the place shouting "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna!" This was getting out of control. The Pharisees were indignant.

Matthew picks up the story: "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they shouted over the noise. "Yes", Jesus shouted back, "and have you never read Psalm 8?" "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise." On that note Jesus left for the day.

The importance of the fact that Jesus quoted Psalm 8 is that it is a celebration of God's handiwork in Creation. O Lord. Our

Lord, how majestic is Your Name in all the earth!...When I consider Your Heavens...the moon and stars....what is humanity that You take any notice of us, that You even care for us? That was David's experience: he felt dwarfed by the immensity of the universe, although he could see only a small part of it. *We do matter to God*, as small and insignificant as we are, because the main work of creation was to make space for us in God's act of Divine hospitality. By quoting this psalm, Jesus brought back to creation's intention of making room for all the last, the least, the lost, the lowly and the lonely people whose lives have been fractured by sin.

We follow Jesus on His final journey to Calvary's hill—to victory over death and sin. And as the Church of Jesus Christ, we ought not to try and follow Him unless we are prepared to show hospitality by inviting all others to the Gospel's feast of joy. Any good host can tell you that hospitality always costs you something. It's not easy to withdraw and pull back to make room for others. We have to give and take in order to

exercise good hospitality. As the saying goes, "Hospitality is the knack for making others feel at home even when you wish they were." It's sometimes hard work, and it can require personal sacrifices.

One of the most inhospitable lines that comes to mind is, "But, we've never done it this way before." Then again, when Jesus hung on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, He could have said to all of us, "I've never done it this way before either." But the result is life abundant, to be shared with everybody to the glory of God! Someday the earth will be filled with God's glory cascading forth like a mighty waterfall. Some day...!

We live, however, in the present day, and our vocation is to make that glory known in the way we treat the people around us and by showing love in the way we walk with our God. If the Bible is our guide in life, it is demonstrated clearly by how well we walk with God.

For further reading

Salvation's Hospitality by: Scott Hoezee.

World in focus

Jews largest target of religious-based hate crimes

Jews remained the greatest target of religious-based hate crimes in the United States in 2004, according to a report released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The FBI recorded 1,374 incidents of religion-oriented hate crimes in 2004, and 954 of those were directed at Jews.

+ Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover Building, 935 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20535-0001

Eight House churches shut down in Indonesia

Government officials in Bandung, West Java, ordered eight house churches in the Rancaekek Kencana housing complex to cease meeting in private homes starting 15 Jan. Each church received the order by letter, following a meeting on 12 Jan. attended by local government officials, police, the commander of the local military, and the leader of a local Muslim forum. Several of the churches in the complex met for worship services, anyway, saying they had no alternative venue. The churches applied for permits in 1993 but were rejected. Under a ministerial decree issued in 1969, all religious groups must apply

for permits – and since neighbors must give their approval before a permit is granted, the decree is a huge obstacle for churches meeting in majority-Muslim communities.

+ Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0304

President of Miami Urban League calls school choice a "Civil Rights Issue"

Willard Fair, vice chairman of the Florida State Board of Education and president of the Urban League of Greater Miami, called school choice "the civil rights issue of the 21st Century." Fair issued a call to action for Blacks to demand change. Blacks "must lead the charge, because it is in our interest" to do so, Fair said.

Fair's support of school choice, his willingness to work with Republicans, and his candid public criticism of other Black leaders often put him at odds with other leaders in the Black community. Fair was particularly critical of Black leaders who think that school choice and reform "must be part of some evil, White, Republican conspiracy" because the ideas are popular with Republicans. Fair said that kind of thinking was preventing Blacks from finding solutions to their problems.

Fair said "people who run for office must know that those who do not support school choice will not get our votes."

As an example of what kind of action was needed, Fair stated that there are 80,000 families in the Miami-Dade County area eligible for tuition assistance vouchers, which could be used to help students from low-income families escape failings schools. But most of the vouchers go unused because the system has no interest in promoting them. Fair said an organized effort to show parents that the vouchers are a viable option should be promoted.

+ Willard Fair, State Board of Education, Vice Chair, Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc., 8500 NW 25th Ave., Miami, FL 33147 (305) 696-4450 ext. 0

Sham marriages scandal

Rev. Mteteleli de Villiers Soga, 73, former head of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, has been arrested and charged with fraud involving organizing bogus marriages for local women to foreigners they have never met.

Soga, the leader of the Inter-denominational African Ministers Association of South Africa, which led local churches in anti-apartheid struggles in the 1980s, stated to the court he would hire a Legal Aid Board lawyer to defend him when the case went to trial.

Soga is facing nine counts involving fraudulent marriages, but the number of charges could increase once the investigation has come to an end.

The State alleges that Soga illegally obtained copies of South African identity documents belonging to local women and proceeded to marry the unsuspecting victims to Pakistan nationals seeking citizenship.

A woman from Ficksburg in the Free State filed a fraud complaint with the police when she discovered she had been married without her knowledge. Soga apparently was arrested afterwards.

In November, 2005, 38 women from the metro found they had been married to foreign men whom they did not know. The campaign also revealed that 1,329 women in South Africa, 80 of them in Eastern Cape and 38 in the metro, did not know they were fraudulently married.

+ Interdenominational African Ministries' Assoc. of Southern Africa, PO Box 498, Ulundi, 383, Kwazulu-Natal

Consent law helps decrease abortions

An informed consent law put in place in Minnesota by a government health department appears to be working, as evidenced by the state's lowest abortion rate since 1975. A study of abortion statistics released by the Center for Health Statistics of the Department of Health

for the year 2004 shows that more than 2000 women changed their minds about having an abortion after receiving information supplied in accordance with the law. The law, known as the Women's Right to Know, requires a waiting period before aborting and provides full information regarding the nature of abortion.

+ Women's Right to Know Act, Minnesota Dept. of health, PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975 (651) 201-5000

New Tribes Mission of Venezuela

In order to comply with a resolution ordering missionaries to leave tribal areas, New Tribes Mission of Venezuela (NTM), has begun relocating personnel.

The relocation began 27 Jan., as part of a two-week plan, in order to complete the moves by the mid-February deadline. The resolution went into effect 14 Nov., and gave NTM of Venezuela 90 days to leave tribal areas.

The mission had been hoping the Venezuela Supreme Court would issue a stay of the order - and the court still may - but it was necessary to begin the relocations in order for the mission to maintain its historic adherence to the laws of Venezuela.

It is still possible that Venezuela's Supreme Court will annul the resolution. In the meantime, missionaries will meet with NTM's Venezuela leadership team to discuss future ministry options.

+ New Tribes Mission Venezuela, USA Home Office, 1000 E. First St., Sanford, FL 32771 (407) 323-3430

Hymns and music site

If you would like to know what a particular hymn tune sounds like for worship planning, personal devotions, and other occasions, you will find "Tunes to Hymns of the Trinity Hymnal" a helpful source. The hymns can be accessed by hymn title, author of lyrics, composer of tunes, hymn number, tune name, or Scripture references. Hymns are played by MIDI or piano.

+ <http://www2.ccm.org/~reformata/trinity_hymnal_rev_ed.htm>

Murder in Nigeria

The Ven. Elijah Abubakar Yisa, Archdeacon to the Bishop of Bida in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was murdered on the evening of Tuesday, 24 Jan., by two assassins who had made their way into the Vicarage Compound of St. John's Cathedral Church in Abuja. The assassins have yet to be identified. Some early reports identified Archdeacon Yisa as the a bishop, but those reports were not correct.

The Registrar of the Cathedral Church, Mr. Abraham Yisa, commented, "Without any prejudice to police investigations, I can say that the deceased is not controversial, he is not involved with any dispute with anybody." The

Rt. Rev. Jonah Kolo, the Bishop of Bida, called upon the killers to "voluntarily offer themselves to police so that they will not go to hell," also asking them to, "confess their sins and ask for forgiveness."

Archdeacon Yisa was born in 1947 and attended the Theological College of Nigeria in Bukuru. He was ordained priest in 1977 and preferred Archdeacon in 1993 by the former Bishop of Minna, the Rt. Rev. Nathaniel Yisa. His ministry was largely in Northern Nigeria and he was particularly noted as an evangelist. He is survived by his wife Millicent Amina and four children; he was to be buried at the Cathedral Church of St. John in Bida on 31 Jan.

+ Rev. Mr. Charles A. Collins Jr., 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445

"Missionaries" from Africa ... to Scotland

Ministers from South Africa are being appointed by the United Free Church of Scotland to serve in three congregations in Leith, Stonehouse, and Wishaw.

The United Free Church has recently faced a shortage of ministers, so when the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa heard of the need in Scotland, their response was to immediately offer to assist by sending several of their ministers to serve there.

The ministers are Rev. J. Patrick Coltman to Stonehouse, Rev. Joseph Naika to Leith, and Rev. Peter de Villiers to Wishaw. They have all arrived in Scotland and are already serving these appointments.

The appointments are initially for three years. It is hoped these appointments will not only benefit the three congregations but also be an encouragement to the wider church in Scotland.

+ United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, PO Box 96014, Brixton 2019, Johannesburg, South Africa

+ Rev. John O. Fulton, General Secretary, United Free Church of Scotland, 11 Newton Pl., Glasgow G3 7PR

Christian Worldview Essay Contest

The Trinity Foundation's 2006 Christian Worldview Essay Contest is underway.

Entrants must read the new book "Not What My Hands Have Done" by Charles Hodge and Horatius Bonar, and write an essay about it. A special price of US\$10.00 for the book is available to those who intend to enter the contest.

First prize is US\$3,000, second prize, US\$2,000, and third prize is US\$1,000. Essays must be received by 1 Sept. 2006; and winners are scheduled to be announced on Reformation Day, 31 Oct., 2006.

+ John Robbins, Trinity Foundation, PO Box 68, Unicoi, TN 37692 (423) 743-0199 <www.trinityfoundation.org>

Diocese of Sydney ordains 47

In what is believed to be the largest ordination in Australian Anglican history, the Diocese of Sydney, noted for its Calvinism, ordained 47 men (the diocese does not ordain women) to the diaconate on Saturday, February 4. The ordinations come four years after Archbishop Peter Jensen announced his mission to convert 10 percent of Sydneysiders to Bible-based (although not necessarily Anglican) churches. Many of the new deacons began their studies in response to Archbishop Jensen's call and will be appointed to organise new parishes. At the same service two Sudanese men were licensed to serve in the diocese and two women were commissioned as Diocesan Lay Workers.

+ Rev. Charles A. Collins, Jr., 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445

The Master's Trumpet Online

The Master's Trumpet is available online. The periodical is published by the North American presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), on the internet without charge, and in a printed edition available at an annual subscription of US\$25 to addresses in North America, and US\$30 to addresses elsewhere.

Each issue may be read online in pdf, at <<http://www.masterstrumpet.org/>>

The periodical is primarily supported by donations from friends who desire to see the principles of the Scottish Reformation spread in North America.

+ Rev. R. Sherman Isbell, Clerk, Presbytery of Great Lakes, Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), 3155 Lindenwood Lane, Fairfax, VA 22031 (703) 359-0192
+ The Master's Trumpet, subscriptions and donations: PO Box 2331, Fairfax, VA 22031-2331

Romance leads to communal hatred in Addam, India

Noor Jehan Ahmed, 55, lived peacefully in the village of Nagaon, in the northeastern state of Assam, India, along with her extended household of 29 people forming a Christian enclave within the majority-Muslim community. Then a Muslim father angry over his daughter's relationship with a Christian man hatched a conspiracy to accuse Ahmed of forced conversion. Ahmed's family was shattered and she spent two months in prison. Court cases are still pending and the community is now divided on religious lines.

+ Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0304

Putin okays return of book collection to Hungary

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed into law a bill approving the return of the Sarospatak Reformed College's book collection to Hungary.

The books have been kept in the archive of

the Lenin Scientific Library in Nizhny Novgorod. They were brought to the Soviet Union after World War II.

The law upholds Hungary's request for return of the books, which "represent unique cultural valuables increasingly important from the point of view of history, art, and science that were transferred to the Soviet Union after World War II and have been kept at the Lenin State Regional Scientific Library in Nizhny Novgorod."

The bill was adopted by the State Duma on 20 Jan. and approved by the Federation Council on 25 Jan.

+ Federal Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, 103426, Moscow, ul. Bol'shaia Dmitrovka, 26

Pastors sue Navy for discrimination

Navy Lt. Gordon James Klingenschmitt, an Episcopal chaplain says his battle to say prayers in Jesus' name has cost him any chance for a promotion, and Klingenschmitt is now joining an effort to allow chaplains in the military to pray according to their own traditions, instead of abiding by generic, pluralistic texts.

It was reported in the Toledo Blade that 65 ministers have signed on to a class-action lawsuit alleging religious discrimination by the Navy. The chaplains claim they have been passed over for promotions because their faith practices have not conformed to the Navy's pluralism policies.

Klingenschmitt told the Toledo Blade "This is the result of the political correctness movement." "My commanding officer told the Navy board to end my career, saying I overemphasized my own faith system in sermons and prayers. They also punished me, in writing, for quoting the Bible in chapel."

Seventy five members of Congress, led by Rep. Walter Jones, R-NC, have requested President Bush sign an executive order granting chaplains in the armed forces permission to pray according to the beliefs.

+ Rep. Walter B. Jones, 422 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-3415

US passes 47 million mark for abortions in 2005

More than three decades after the Supreme Court issued its Roe v. Wade decision legalizing the killing of the unborn the US has probably experienced its 47 millionth legal abortion sometime in 2005.

The statistic is based on data since 1973 gathered by the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute and on estimates by the National Right to Life Committee. In the first full year of abortion legalization nationwide (1974), Guttmacher counted 898,600 abortions.

Since 1975, the US witnessed more than

one million abortions each year. Unless the laws are changed, the number of abortions will pass 50 million in 2008.

Guttmacher compiles data on abortions by contacting abortion clinics, and its latest data is from 2002 (1,293,000). The 47 million figure is based on Guttmacher data from 1973 through 2002, and on the 2002 count remaining fairly steady through 2005. By including a 3 percent under-report that Guttmacher estimates it misses, the figure of 47 million is derived.

Guttmacher in a 2004 report stated that only one percent of women said their abortion was the consequence of rape, and less than one percent cited incest. Eighty-six percent said they were having an abortion for the sake of convenience - either they weren't ready for a child (25 percent), they said they couldn't afford to have one (23 percent), they didn't want any more children (19 percent), they didn't want to be a single mother or had relationship problems (eight percent), they said they were too young to have a child (seven percent) or they believed a child would interfere with their education or career (four percent).

+ Guttmacher Institute, 1301 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036 (202) 296-4012

+ National Right to Life Committee, 512 10th St., NW, Washington, DC 20004 (202) 626-8800

Christians in targeted Indian rural area hold their own

An estimated 300,000 converged on the Dangs region of Gujarat state, India, during a three-day nationalist rally which began 11 Feb.

The Shabri Kumbh, or Hindu Re-Awakening, was organized by Hindu extremist groups. The rally was designed "to trigger the return of thousands of Christian vanvasi (forest dwelling) converts back to the Hindu fold."

But the threat of forced reconversions, violence, and expulsions did not deter many local Christians as they gathered nearby for a three-day Joy Mahotsav (Festival of Joy).

This annual Festival of Joy brings more than 25,000 local Christians from the Dangs and the surrounding areas. Even though the threat of the Hindu rally loomed large over the preparation of the festival more than 10,000 local Christians attended the first day.

+ Jerry Dykstra, Open Doors USA, <www.opendoorsusa.org>

Bible Society to cease working in Gaza

As part of the intensified popular reaction in the Middle East to a few Danish cartoons, Islamic militants in Gaza in Palestinian Authority territory have ordered the Bible Society to cease working in Gaza. They have instructed the landlord to evict the Bible Society by 28 Feb., threatening to bomb the building on 1 Mar. Churches were

vandalized and priests attacked in Lebanon and Turkey, with one death reported.

+ Elizabeth Kendal, <eliz@alphalink.com.au> WEA Religious Liberty Commission

Russia Mission Team report

Alfred and Jean McCroskey asked for prayers a while back for a Bible For Russia mission trip to pagan "reindeer people" who live out their pagan lives above the Arctic Circle which is a full two day train ride north of Moscow.

The team which was sent has reported back that prayers were answered above and beyond what was asked for. Many gospel tracts, books, song books and Bibles were distributed; messages were delivered in five Russian churches; orphans were ministered to and given socks, fruit, candy, and other gifts; the poor elderly in nursing homes were visited

and ministered to; the team visited, and stayed, in the homes of Russian pastors and their families; five Ukrainian missionaries joined the American team and worked with the team; old friendships were renewed and new ones made; and most importantly, the team was able to minister the gospel to numerous Ninicy tribal people, eight of whom made professions of faith; and Russian and Ukrainian pastors and missionaries will follow up on the new converts and disciple them.

+ Alfred and Jean McCroskey, Bibles for Russia, PO Box 69, Florence, AL 35631 (256) 718-3660

Nigerian Bishop's family suffers attack

On the evening of Friday, 17 Feb., a group of men armed with clubs, knives, and guns descended on the residence of the Rt. Rev.

Benjamin Kwashi, Bishop of Jos, Nigeria, injuring the gatekeeper, the Bishop's sons Rinji and Nanminen, and the Bishop's wife Gloria who was violated. The Diocesan offices were robbed and several members of the Bishop's staff were also injured; Bishop Kwashi was out of the country when the attack occurred.

In a letter written 21 Feb., Bishop Kwashi noted that his wife had made substantial improvement from her injuries and gave all glory to God. Kwashi requested the continued prayers for her, his family, those investigating the attack, and his attackers.

+ Rev. Mr. Charles A. Collins Jr., 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445

Fraternal Greetings from the Reformed Churches of New Zealand

Address to the Synod of the Reformed Churches of South Africa (GKSA)

John Rogers

Mr Chairman, I feel very embarrassed. I have been dressed ready to give these greetings so many times I have run out of shirts to wear a tie with. May I make my penance with words from that hymn much used by Billy Graham in the 50s and 60s:

*Just as I am with but one plea,
and that thy programme hath un-
dressed me.*

I would like to do everything correctly from now on, so could you please advise me: should I introduce my ecclesiastical greetings with the old haka or the new haka? ... Some people have been rather upset with that new haka, but they misunderstand that movement of the hand across the throat. The truth is, knowing how polite and proper South Africans are, it is just that our boys want to make sure their ties are straight before they meet the Springboks on the field.

Our situation

Mr Chairman, members of the Moderamen, delegates and visitors, it is a pleasure to be in your country and to have fellowship with you once more. This is the third time I have been here representing the RCNZ. I always feel very at home here and so I thank you

again for your welcome and hospitality.

You know us a little by now so perhaps I only need to inform you of some of the more significant decisions taken at our synod in September of last year and so keep you up to date with where we are as Churches that want and strive to be

obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Over the past half dozen years, something new has arisen on our horizon, namely, another reformed denomination in NZ. In about 2000 the Grace Presbyterian Church was established as a result of deep dissatisfaction, going back many years, with the



L to R: Rev KK Shimbi (Confessing Reformed Church of Congo), Rev John Rogers and Rev G van Schie (CRCA Perth, Western Australia)

direction being taken by the Presbyterian Church of Aoteroa-NZ. We send observers to each other's synods & our Interchurch Relations Committee was charged at our last Synod to discuss with them how we may relate more closely with each other. We also had at our Synod this year representatives from the Korean-American Presbyterian Church – NZ Presbytery. We do not know very much about these Churches as yet but will be seeking to talk to them. There are also in Auckland some congregations of the Kosin Church, a sister church of yours from Korea and fellow member of the ICRC. So, increasingly, NZ becomes more cosmopolitan.

Our Overseas Mission Board continues to be active. At present we help support a missionary of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Papua-New Guinea, Rev. Stephen & Dorinda 't Hart; we also have a support couple in PNG, Wally & Jeanette Hagoort. They manage a missionary guest house in Port Morseby as well as being very active in the local Reformed congregation. Janice Reid continues training radio announcers for FEBC and now HCJB in South America. And then a retired minister with his wife, the Rev. Barry & Anne James have done another couple of 10-12 month stints at the Training College of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Uganda, this in conjunction with the OPC in the United States.

In respect of missions, we often have young people who like to travel and who also have a desire to serve the Lord. Our people also like to share of their wealth in good and worthy diaconal causes but it is not always easy to know, from a distance, where we may best do so. Our National Diaconate has designated our last two special Christmas Appeals for the Henry Murray School for the Deaf in Zimbabwe; we also work with our brothers and sisters in the CRCA with Aids relief in India. With both these factors in mind, the week after Synod brothers Ben Fourie and Henk Stoker have organized for me to visit some of the mission & diaconal works that your churches are engaged in. Perhaps there is some way we can work with you in those missions. Maybe even some of our young people could do their big OE by visiting you and giving some time helping in some practical way as they like to do. No doubt, brothers, we are not painting the town red, but we are trying, with all our sins and inadequacies, to serve our Lord to the best of our ability.

Like you, we also are looking at new translations of the confessions, updating the language of our liturgical forms, looking at new translations of the Bible.

Something that is very close to my heart and for which I was very thankful, our Synod in September approved the work done over the previous three years by the Psalm & Hymn Selection Committee. All our 50 years, we have used the old Christian Reformed Psalter-Hymnal and it has served us well. But in 2002 a committee was charged to assemble a new selection of Psalm versifications and hymns for use in our Churches. We have made good progress and it is our hope, and for which we have Synod's authorization, to present to the Churches late this year our provisional selection of Psalms for the congregations to 'test-drive' while we continue to work on the hymn section. Not meaning be too big-headed, but it will, of course, be the last word in English-speaking Psalter-Hymnals. I have my order book in my bag, if any of your English-speaking congregations would like to take advantage of our special, pre-publication deal.

We had a record number of churches sending delegates to our last Synod, including two from your Churches, the Revs Henk Stoker and Ben Fourie. We appreciate that. It was good to hear from them and good to hear of the work you are seeking to do to take the Gospel to all South Africans. We salute you in it; many of you are very active; may the Lord bless all your efforts with the salvation of many souls for the praise of God's glory.

Our relationship with you

I would now like to speak for a moment of the relationship between our Churches and yours. Let me say first of all that our Interchurch Relations Committee thanks your Deputies for Ecumenism for having your most important decisions of your last Synod translated and sent to them. That was very helpful and we appreciate your going to that trouble. There are two matters in regard to this about which I should make some comment.

Your charge to your deputies to help us work with South African immigrants and integrate them into the RCNZ: the Rev. Jan Lion-Cachet continues to work as a minister of the Reformed Church of Wellington among a group of South Africans in a nearby area. That group is growing and now comprises 44 families, according to our latest Yearbook. Brother Jan is also from time to time called upon to take occasional services in Afrikaans for other congregations where there are numbers of ex-South Africans present. One of our congregations in the city of Hamilton has also worked very hard seeking to incorporate South Africans and

in Auckland; two Churches, Bucklands Beach and the North Shore, had Dr Pieter van Huyssteen conduct services once per month for about ten months in 2004 with the intention of reaching South Africans who had not found a home in either the Reformed Churches or the Afrikaans Christian Church. Perhaps there is more we could do, but we have and are continuing to try. So far as my own congregation is concerned, we have about twelve ex South African families, and after our elder and deacon elections held last month, it is only my Chairman's casting vote that hangs on to the balance of power in our Church Council! (But really, it is not like that at all.)

The other matter I should comment on is in respect to your decision at last Synod to open the office of deacon to women. When you made that decision I expressed my concern that, while your Church Order and your version of the Belgic Confession do not see the deacons as part of the Council and therefore rule of the Church, nevertheless your CO does allow deacons to serve on the council when there are three elders or fewer. I said in 2003, "*That infers that you see the office of deacon as an authority-bearing office. There must be a biblical rationale behind that. But you have made your decision today without first studying whether that rationale was a correct understanding of Scripture or not.*" Furthermore, it seemed to me that you had not thought about your theology of ordination. "*If ordination confers an authority derived from the apostles, the question of the relative authority of the offices needs to be settled first.*"

Brothers, we have no problem at all with unordained deacons, male or female, albeit in some other way formally recognized, serving the Churches in non-authority-bearing functions. But in our view, very un-PC though it is, Scripture reserves authority in the Church to men.

Our Synod in September decided, therefore, and has charged me "*to express our deep concern to the GKSA concerning its decision to allow the ordination of women as deacons (Art.62).*" We also passed two other resolutions in connection with your Churches in general and this matter in particular.

Art.66

1. That the RCNZ sponsor the GKSA's application to join the International Conference of Reformed Churches notwithstanding our concern about women as deacons.
2. To continue to monitor closely the ongoing discussion in the GKSA on the role of women

in the church and to report on any further synodical decisions in this area.

Women in office

Before I left NZ Dr Pieter van Huyssteen kindly translated the Majority Report on Women in the Church. I read it carefully on the plane. I had also sent it to the secretary of our Inter-Church Relations Committee, the Rev. Dr Michael Flinn. I presented a summary of his and my impressions of that Report to your committee on Thursday night.

It disturbs us, brothers. There are many red herrings in this debate. In our view, this report chases a few. To be very brief, let me just make two comments;

The report makes a number of unsubstantiated assumptions in respect of the status of women in the various cultures of Bible times, all of which we would challenge, but which, having been made, predispose the exegesis and reasoning of the report in a certain direction. Brothers, to depend on cultural assumptions so heavily as this has the tendency to move us from the authority of an infallible Bible to the authority of the infallible historian. But brothers, the historians are not infallible and the effect of this sort of approach is to take the Bible out of the hands of the ordinary people.

Secondly, the exegesis is not rigorous. Sometimes it is simply assumed, eg, in respect of Genesis 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 11:5. James tells us that we all stumble in

many ways. We believe this Report stumbles rather badly. The consequence is that it leads to quite inadequate conclusions.

For these reasons we find ourselves much more in sympathy with the line of the Minority Report.

Brothers, in 1995 our Churches broke relations with the Christian Reformed Church of North America with this being one of the presenting issues, although our ultimate concern is the hermeneutic behind it. We do not take an action like that lightly and certainly not quickly. Ultimately, this is your debate and you must go where you believe the Lord is guiding you. But a move in the direction of the recommendations of the Majority Report will place a strain on the relationship between our denominations. We ask you: please consider very hard whether this really is where Scripture, and therefore our Lord, requires you to go.

We have expressed concern over certain decisions you have made. We trust we do not do so from any sense of censoriousness or superiority. We wish to do so only out of hearts that feel at one with you and wish to remain so. We have been together for quite a long time – maybe forty years. We both found ourselves compelled to leave the Reformed Ecumenical Council together in the eighties and over the same concerns. We are now also fellow members of the International Council of Reformed Churches. Over the past ten years we have got to know one another

pretty well. So we speak as brothers, seeking to be as iron sharpening iron, helping each other on our different paths through history and life in this world to the great day when our Lord returns in glory; to glorify us also.

Closing remarks

In closing, Mr Chairman, again I thank you heartily for your invitation to be present and your welcome. I want also to thank brother Hannes Vorster who has done so much to help us foreign delegates; also your translators; they do a wonderful job.

Brother Henk Stoker, when he closed his address to our Synod, asked that we would pray for your Churches “*in a troubled nation in troubled times.*” Mr Chairman, we have and we do, often; and we will continue to do so. We ask you do the same for us. For we are at least as pagan a nation and with as pagan a government as yours. But the Lord reigns and as the warrior on the white horse he still marches through this world slaying his enemies with the sword of his mouth, the sword of the Word of God, and calling out his chosen to himself. We have been called, by God’s grace to be among that number, and through prayer and the Word of God, we too shall share in Christ’s victory.

May the Lord guide you all here in the decisions you must make in this Synod, to his honour and glory and the upbuilding of his Church in South Africa. Thankyou.

A feminine focus

Sally Davey

Marianne Williams – A Woman to be Praised

Marianne Williams is one of the real heroines of our short history as a nation. And yet, she is not one whose name will appear in the standard histories. She didn’t campaign for women’s votes like Kate Shepherd. She wasn’t one of the first women doctors, lawyers or university professors. She didn’t serve in Parliament. She never made world news, or made sporting head-

lines like Yvette Williams or Susan Devoy. She did nothing to put New Zealand on the world stage in the way that a woman like Kiri Te Kanawa has, as a friend of royalty and opera singer of great acclaim. She is certainly not the kind of person a government like ours would add to the Order of New Zealand. Marianne Williams was no celebrity. She was, however, a Proverbs 31 woman of distinction, and one of whom it can truly be said:

*“Her children rise up and call her blessed;
Her husband also, and he praises her:
‘Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all.’
Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,*

*But a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.” (vv. 28-30)
And I intend to praise her.*

Her key role in our history

Marianne Williams was the wife of one of New Zealand’s earliest missionaries, Henry Williams. They arrived in the Bay of Islands in 1823, sent by the Church Missionary Society from England to bring the gospel to the Maori tribes; and to help bring order to the Society’s work there. In fact, she was one of the very first British women ever to live in these islands. In anybody’s estimation, it was a remarkable feat of faith and practical endurance to come from the background she did, to the place she did, with the prospect of spending the rest of her life there. Never did she expect to see her family or

her friends again. Neither did she—in this world, at least.

Her background

Born in 1793 in Yorkshire, Marianne was the daughter of an evangelical Anglican, Wright Coldham. Her father was an enterprising man, and when she was 3 years old the family moved to Nottingham, where he hoped to make his fortune in the lace-making industry there. She was his oldest child; and witnessed, during her childhood, the death and burial of seven younger brothers and sisters. She probably became old for her years. In Nottingham, her father did well. By the time Marianne was 16 he had become Mayor of the town. But in that same year, her mother died after giving birth for the eleventh time. This young teenager assumed heavy responsibilities—for her three little sisters (including baby Anne) and blind grandmother, and for the daily management of the three-storied mayoral house with its domestic staff. In addition, she took on the task of acting as “Mayoress” to help her father at official functions. Five years later her father died; and at 22 she was now the senior member of the family.

It was in this year that she renewed acquaintance with Henry Williams, whom she had known in childhood as his father had also been involved in the lace-making industry of Nottingham. Their fathers had shared the role of Sheriffs of Nottingham. Henry’s father had died in 1804, however, and his mother, Mary, a firm Christian, had sold the family business and moved the family to Southwell (just north of Nottingham) where she opened a school for young ladies. Two years later Henry (aged 14) had joined the Royal Navy, and for 11 years he served his country during one of the most exciting times in British naval history—the Napoleonic Wars. He saw much action, even hand-to-hand combat at one stage, and at the end of hostilities retired as an officer on half-pay. Henry was a resourceful, energetic and practical man. He was not afraid in violent situations, but the action he had seen convinced him that he did not want to take up arms again. Moreover he was a committed, single-hearted Christian man who wanted to serve God. He had been converted through the friendship of his cousin and brother-in-law Edward Marsh, an evangelical clergyman who was deeply interested in the Church Missionary Society.

Marianne and Henry meet again

Henry and Marianne met when Henry took up work as a drawing master at a girls’

school near Nottingham, shortly after Wright Coldham died and Marianne was left with her weighty family responsibilities. He soon became a regular visitor at the Coldham household. They were married in Oxfordshire by Edward Marsh, who at the wedding reception passed them a copy of the *Missionary Register*, a magazine published by the Church Missionary Society. They read this during their honeymoon, and learned of the newly-established mission settlement at Kerikeri in the Bay of Islands. There were plans to provide the settlement with a supply ship. Henry began to dream of working for the CMS in the South Pacific. Of course, his naval experience could be useful.

Not long afterwards he offered himself to the CMS in his naval capacity, but they turned him down. Danger from tribal warfare was posing the very real possibility that the



Marianne, aged 19 years

mission would have to be closed—but they suggested instead that he go as an ordained missionary. With Marianne’s complete support, he accepted. Over the period of the next three years they prepared themselves. Henry studied medicine and surgery, and learned practical boat-building skills. Marianne was thoroughly realistic about the basic conditions she would find in the Bay of Islands—no tea shops, no doctors, no schools. She busied herself training in midwifery, nursing and teaching. Though used to household management, she had yet to learn to cook herself. This she did with the aid of *Domestic Cookery by a Lady*, a book she took with her to her new home. She also

learned how to start a vegetable garden, and how to build a fire in a river bed. Marianne was a sensible, practical, resourceful lady. Her daughter, Marianne Davies, later wrote this description of her mother at the time of her marriage:

“Tall, about 5 feet 9 inches, slender, very fair, with large blue eyes and a dazzling complexion. Hers was a very gracious personality, but under an apparent sweet gentleness there was an unbending will. [This is reflected in the silhouette drawn of her at this age. By her middle years her strong character and the effects of the demanding experiences of her New Zealand years may be seen in a photograph taken then].

She was a very accomplished young woman, her education far above the average, she had a clear, logical brain, an inexhaustible fund of humour, a very strong sense of the dramatic and would express it in writing and painting. She was an excellent letter writer.”

By the beginning of 1822 Marianne was expecting their third child, and the family moved to Hampshire to be nearer cousin Edward Marsh, who was preparing Henry for ordination. Less than a fortnight later, she gave birth in a very difficult experience (a breech birth) to Samuel, named so because he had nearly died and his parents saw him as especially given in service to God. (Samuel was their only child to become a missionary). It surely must have crossed Marianne’s mind that where she was going, there would be no medical expertise to help her in any second birth such as this.

Their going to New Zealand

At a special farewell meeting at the CMS headquarters in London Henry addressed the governing committee, and said this of his wife: “With regard to Mrs Williams, I beg to say that she does not accompany me merely as my wife, but as a fellow helper in the work. Though it will be, for some time, her chief care to watch over those tender plants which are committed to her immediate charge, yet she will, I trust, be performing therein no inconsiderable duty to the Mission.” In fact, Marianne was to watch over 11 tender plants, all of whom were strong, healthy, and survived to a ripe old age. In this her contribution to the foundation of New Zealand was very considerable indeed.

Henry and Marianne and their 3 small children set sail for Australia on board a women’s convict ship. It carried 170 women convicts and 100 free women who were going to Hobart to join their convict husbands. Henry had been engaged as ship’s

chaplain; and in preparation for this task spent several days with prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, a Christian lady who gave him practical suggestions on helping the women during the 9-month voyage. On board, Marianne did all she could to assist; and certainly they saw this time as an opportunity for the gospel in the lives of these poor women.

On arrival in Sydney they spent time with Samuel Marsden while they waited for a ship to take them on to the Bay of Islands. He introduced them, first-hand, to the situation in New Zealand; and explained the state of the Maori people, the fruit that had been seen from the labour so far, and also the tensions that had developed between some of the missionaries already stationed there. He himself accompanied them to New Zealand to deal with some of the difficulties. They arrived at Kerikeri, where they stayed with the Butler family. Marianne took an instant liking to Mrs Butler; but Marsden had no choice but to dismiss John Butler for habits of drunkenness and his overbearing manner. Henry Williams's arrival as an ordained man was a new development for the mission in New Zealand. He was put in charge by Marsden, and applying his gifts of leadership, soon improved the situation greatly. The family, after Marianne recovered from giving birth a few weeks following their arrival, settled in a new settlement at Paihia beach. There they were to spend the next 27 years.

The early days here

At first they lived in a raupo hut connected to a storehouse. It was 40 feet by 18 feet, and was to accommodate 2 families and a workman (11 people in all). Later they lived in the wooden house marked by a cross on Henry's drawing. Paihia was chosen because of its concentration of local Maori, and its good location for embarking on trips to the pas of the Bay of Islands and the interior, as well as to set off on exploratory trips to the Bay of Plenty, the Thames and the Waikato.

The first task was to learn the language; and this they did through their contact with the local people. However, Henry was determined to learn it more formally—to work out the structure and grammar of the language, so that he could translate the Scriptures into Maori for the churches of converts he hoped would be organised. This he eventually did, with the help of his brother William, who arrived a few years later. Marianne's work centred around the home, where she trained numbers of young Maori women in household tasks and in habits of cleanliness. Among them were the daughters of chiefs. This was not easy work: it required consider-

able patience, as frequently the girls would refuse to do what they were asked, and would simply disappear if it didn't suit them to stay. She also kept a school to teach the missionaries' children in Paihia, and one for teaching the Maori children.

Henry was an active, well-organised and busy missionary. He worked hard at preaching, teaching, and preparing converts for baptism. But there were great difficulties in the work, among them Hongi's devastation of the other tribes of the northern North Island following his purchase of muskets. The habit of warfare was endemic; and a number of times the fearless Henry physically separated two or more combatants by standing between them—always unarmed himself. On one occasion this happened outside the house, with Marianne and their terrified children inside. Numerous were the times they encountered physical danger. Henry took many long trips into the interior of the North Island, and trips by sea around the country to investigate prospects for new mission stations. Often he was away for months, and there was no way of sending news home that he was safe. Marianne was a courageous woman. But over the years, living among the Maori, teaching them, talking with them, and letting them see their example, they won deep respect. Slowly, even among those not interested in the Gospel personally, the more extreme of pagan customs began to diminish. Cannibalism occurred less often—at least in the proximity of the missionaries. Ritual plunder was less and less a matter of course, and slowly the *tohungas'* sway over the people through fear weakened. By the time the Colonial Office sent Captain Hobson out to New Zealand to negotiate a treaty with



Marianne Williams when close to eighty years of age with her granddaughters, Agnes Lydia Williams (right) and Evelyn Maud Williams (left).

the Maori tribes, the missionaries—who believed this was the best way to safeguard them from negative settler impact—were so trusted and respected that their word on the treaty was sufficient persuasion to sign.

Church politics

But Henry did not enjoy these “political” demands on his and the other missionaries' time and energy. He was firmly committed to the goal of seeing souls turned to Christ, and was glad when the Governor moved the seat of government activities to Auckland. A difficulty he had not foreseen, though, was friction between the CMS missionaries and the Bishop, in the years following his arrival. Church life had really been established



The Paihia Mission Station in 1845. Marianne and Henry's house is just to the right of the boathouse.



Marianne Williams

in New Zealand with the preaching of the Word, the baptism of converts and their admission to communion. Henry was even teaching promising Maori to teach others in the faith. But he was unable to ordain men for ministry; and there were other reasons why a bishop was necessary to complete the establishment of the Church of England on New Zealand shores. So George Augustus Selwyn was sent from England to fill this role, and the missionaries were delighted. On arrival in 1842, he stayed some time with Henry and Marianne: newcomers usually did. At first, Henry believed Selwyn was a man of like mind; but over time it became obvious that he and the clergy he had brought with him were of High Church leaning, embracing positions on the role of the sacraments and the role of the clergy that were really opposed to the gospel of salvation by faith alone. But more than this, the Bishop began to interfere in CMS affairs, resenting the fact that the missionaries received their instructions from England. He believed he should have sole jurisdiction over them. After some years of friction things came to a head when Selwyn disputed some land purchases Henry had made from the Maori some ten years before. Henry had been concerned about the future of his children in New Zealand. They had come, as a family, for good; and were determined to make their lives permanently in this country. He himself was supported by the CMS, but if his sons did not take up missionary work themselves, they would need another source of livelihood. So he purchased land, at what was deemed at the time a fair price (and was later deemed to be so, upon investigation). Selwyn corresponded, without Henry's knowledge, with the CMS in England over the matter, and insisted that Henry be dismissed. In the end, after representation (it turned out, on false

premises) by Governor Grey, the CMS felt it had no choice but to dismiss Henry. After 27 years of solid labour in the Gospel, this, and the accompanying sense of betrayal, must have been a sore blow. Within a week of receiving the letter of dismissal, Henry and Marianne left their home in Paihia and all their work, their schools and their church. They retreated inland to the home of their son Henry and Jane, his wife. Their children welcomed them with delight. There they stayed, and worked as they could among the churches, for the rest of their lives. Henry was finally reinstated by the CMS after his brother William traveled to England to bring the facts before them, but the effects of such a dismissal could of course not be entirely obliterated. Marianne, his dear wife of 32 years, had shared everything with her husband—sickness, health, fruitful labour and difficult times—better, and worse. She was a faithful wife, and at this sorrowful crossroads, she made no complaint.

A remarkable wife

After such a brief life's survey, what conclusions may we reach about Marianne? What can we learn from her example, from the way she has walked before us? I think there are two things that deserve special focus. Firstly, she was a remarkable wife. From the very time she married Henry, she was prepared to enter into all that his life would entail. Henry, without doubt, was a loving, faithful and wise husband; and I suspect his mother had been a remarkable woman. It is clear both Henry and his brother, William, knew how to love their wives and care for them as true Christian gentlemen should. Given that their father had died young, it must surely have been their mother—and possibly their cousin Edward Marsh—who had taught them how to be good husbands. But nevertheless, Marianne was a wonderful wife. She was whole-hearted in her support for Henry's missionary calling, and worked hard to prepare herself for the practical tasks she would need to undertake in New Zealand. She was obviously prepared to be flexible, accepting sudden changes in plan and circumstance without fretting. She could endure sickness, domestic discomforts, and material sacrifice without complaint. The continual call on her resources for the demands of hospitality was heavy—but it was were part of her calling as a missionary, and she was a cheerful hostess. All sorts of people came into her home, from Maori chiefs to the newly-arrived English Resident; and later, Bishop Selwyn and his wife. Her home was often a crowded one, with the

noise of running children's feet, the slamming of doors, of meetings, housework and food preparation. She also endured Henry's many absences, lengthy ones, in which she knew there were many potential dangers. She suffered disappointment, criticism, and the slights of the Governor and the Bishop with him. Doubtless Marianne had wise and gentle words of counsel for Henry during this time; but the simple fact that she was with him, beside him, uncomplainingly enduring what he endured, spoke volumes of encouragement. Any husband will attest to that.

A remarkable mother

Marianne was, secondly, a remarkable mother. Her acceptance of the missionary calling, with all its sacrifice and hardship, was acceptance for her three small children as well. Going to New Zealand, with its lack of doctors, good housing, infrastructure, or any certain prospects for the future, had its risks for a mother who cared about her children. In this she took a giant step of faith. In New Zealand, she and Henry were blessed with eight more children. Eleven children were a goodly heritage, but they were also a big responsibility in such circumstances. One striking thing about the Williams family—the wider family—was their remarkable vitality. None of the children of either family were invalids; none died in childhood; and almost all lived to very old age. This was a tremendous blessing, of the type promised to Old Testament believers for faithfulness to God. But much more important than good health for these children was the faithful witness of their father and mother. Marianne taught them thoroughly, and served as a model for the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. Their children walked after them as Christians; as godly farmers, judges, legislators, clergymen; and as husbands, wives and parents. It is no surprise, given this, that the Williams family have been prominent as leaders and examples in New Zealand society as the generations have passed on.

Standing by her man

I love many aspects of Marianne's story. While she gave up much in leaving England with her husband and three small children, expecting never to see her home again, God was good to her. What He asked her to relinquish, He gave her back in abundant good measure. Perhaps you are an immigrant to this country? Do you yearn for the home and the loved ones you left behind? Do you worry about the future of your children in your adopted home? So little seems certain in this life. For sure, your situation has not

involved the sacrifices Marianne made: we have air travel, telephones and email. But consider her walk of faith; tell yourself the things she told herself; make her choices, adopt her attitudes and look to the future as she, before you, has done. Are you a wife whose husband is facing disappointment, unjust treatment—perhaps redundancy or some other trial? Stand by him, as Marianne did. Be a pillar of encouragement: give him courage by your lack of complaint. Look to

God, the giver of all we have. Take hold of the big picture of life, the one that includes eternity—not just today. Develop of clear sense of your calling in life, one that will keep you going even when others question your choices. Make Marianne’s source of strength yours too, and remember these words:

*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
But a woman who fears the LORD is*

to be praised. (Proverbs 31:30)

Note: If you would like to read more about the lives of Henry and Marianne, these two books will encourage you greatly: *Letters from the Bay of Islands: The Story of Marianne Williams*, [contains many extracts from her letters] edited by Caroline Fitzgerald; and *Te Wiremu: A Biography of Henry Williams*, by Lawrence M. Rogers

A trip around the ancient walls of Jerusalem

Beginning at the Sheep Gate

Patricia van Laar

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Tim. 3: 16,17 (A.V.)

Did you find the trip around imaginary walls of Palmerston North as confusing as I would have found a description of the same around, say, Hamilton? The order was random, starting near the cemetery, following a haphazard collection of parks and buildings, and finishing with the airport and hospital, not so much order, as out of order! Will a trip around the walls of Jerusalem be like that too?

God is an orderly God - He does not do things randomly or haphazardly, so we can expect a sense of direction in His description of the ancient walls.

And Jesus told two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, that in all the Scriptures were things concerning Himself. Therefore we should also look for Him in this.

As we begin our trip around the walls, we shall pay special attention to Nehemiah’s record in chapter 3, of the ancient gates. We shall observe the repairs to the gates, the people who did the work, the position of each gate, and the purpose, known or surmised, of each. The walls themselves may seem grey and dull, but encased in the whole are beautiful gems, encrusted ready for those with a will to chip until they are discovered, and their glowing colours and glory are revealed.

As in all Scripture, there is much in Nehe-

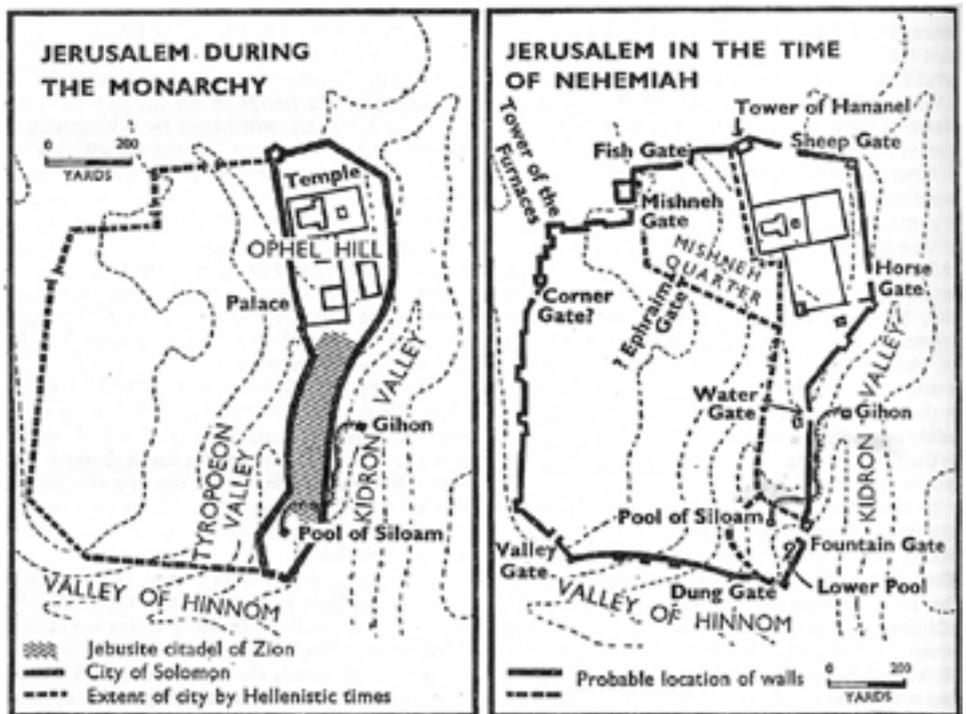
miah to be learnt by the Christian about the Lord Jesus, and about ourselves too in all the ways that Paul, quoted above, mentioned in his letter to Timothy; teaching, rebuke, correction, training in righteousness, as the N.I.V words it.

So what do the gates suggest to us? Teaching from the building of the wall between the gates also gives us more than a hint of the response that Christians should make to the lessons learnt.

Our journey

The building of the walls of Jerusalem present some problems for our understand-

ing. There is a certain amount of uncertainty about these walls. At the time of Nehemiah, they had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (587 BC.) In later historical times they were destroyed by Antiochus IV (restored by Herod) and again by Titus the Roman, in 70 AD. So it is not surprising that doubt remains as to the exact outline of the walls, and as to which gates were in the external city walls, and which led into the Temple area. Nehemiah mentions two extra gates in the latter part of his book. Some commentators have suggested that these may have been internal gates, and so were omitted from the record of the external ones in chapter three.



Neither does Nehemiah indicate general direction or changes of direction. Further, the names of some gates have changed from time to time. So it is that a Bible aid such as The New Bible Dictionary (IVF), for example, labels its illustration “probable location of walls”.

There is no doubt, however, about the order given in Nehemiah’s account. The detail given in his book strengthens our confidence that his is an accurate record of the gates repaired by his workers. Nevertheless, we can be certain of the positions of some of the gates. These are sufficient to indicate that Nehemiah’s order followed an anti-clockwise direction from the first mentioned, and this is the direction we will go in our imaginary encircling of the city. Owing to the undulating ground, the walls were not built in an exact square. Like Nehemiah, we begin at The Sheep Gate in the northeast, and move westward.

Why did God begin His record at the Sheep Gate?

An intriguing question! What is the significance of starting at an animal gate? What are we told about this gate?

We are told that the Sheep Gate was rebuilt and dedicated, the doors set in place and the walls built to the Tower of the Hundred (Meah) and the Tower of Hananel. Most of the subsequent gates have a similar account, but this is the only gate where the writer speaks of a dedication. *There was something very special about this gate!*

The identification of our starting point is fairly certain, as the Pool of Bethesda has been discovered in archaeology. In the Gospel of John (5: 2) we read that the Pool was near the Sheep Gate. The siting of the pool establishes, therefore, that the Sheep Gate can be placed in approximately the North-east corner of the wall. The line of the wall ran westward via the Towers of Hammeah and Hananel, so we can follow this anti-clockwise direction. This places the Sheep Gate in close proximity to the Temple.

What was the purpose of this gate?

A Priestly Gate

The gate was the one through which the sheep of sacrifice were brought into the city and the temple. All of these animals came through it. So it was appropriate that the high priest Eliashib and the other priests were responsible for its repair, for the gate opened to what was a priestly work. How noteworthy it is, then, that this is the only gate where the writer speaks of a dedication. For the gate suggests the will and purpose

of the Father, that His Son should be the offering for sin. “The One who passed through that gate was the only one who has ever lived in complete dedication to His God.” (H. Ironside)

Now, in the Christian life, this is the very place where followers of the Lord must begin. The Prophet Isaiah (53: 7) was given an understanding of the Saviour when he wrote, “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter...” How much this meant to the prophet is not clear to us, for the prophets frequently spoke beyond their own knowledge and understanding. John the Baptist seven hundred years later had further revelation when he pointed to Jesus and said, “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” (John 1: 29) God had shown the Baptist that this wonderful cousin of his, was the one who would go through the ‘Sheep Gate’ on His way to die. How else could He take away the sins of the world?

Our trip starts

It is fitting that we begin our journey here, for did not our salvation, our new life begin at this very gate? If we would enter the City of God, we must enter by means of none other than the Sheep Gate. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.”

He also said, “I am the gate.” John 10: 9 (A.V. “door”). Usually this metaphorical claim is interpreted as the gate of a sheepfold. Nor is this interpretation wrong. Those who know the method of eastern shepherds in Biblical days, tell us that at night the shepherd himself would lie in the gateway and act as a door to prevent thieves and wild animals from entering in and stealing the sheep. So it was in this context Jesus added, “I am the door of the sheep.” But is it beyond the range of symbolism to think also of the Sheep Gate in connection with this saying?

Let us also turn back to John 5, and think again about the palsied man. This palsied man was healed close to the Sheep Gate. The Son of God brought healing in His wings. This was a purpose of His – healing. But even more, for here eternity was at stake - “Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”

Every word in Scripture is inspired and important. John specifically noted that the palsied man was healed at the Pool of Bethesda, *close to the Sheep Gate*. Perhaps Jesus was thinking of the special significance of the gate when he said, after healing the man, “Go, and stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you.” For only at the Sheep Gate is there forgiveness.

The wall

The men of Jericho built the next section of the wall. These men came from the place of a curse (Jericho) to a place of blessing (Jerusalem). We may come to this first gate from the way of the curse of sin, into the way of blessing, the way of forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation. Anyone attempting to enter in any way but through trust in His sacrifice, will fall flat on his back, still on the outside. We must enter by way of the Sheep Gate. This comes first.

So, this is the starting place for our journey through eternal Life. Can we see that it is clearly shown by the first gate into Jerusalem?

Do we see Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, dreading to go through the Sheep Gate, praying to His Father that if possible, He might avoid it?

Do we see Him, a crown of thorns pressed on His head, scourged, mocked, suffering?

Do we see Him led as a sheep to the slaughter, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree?

Do we see The Gate of the Sacrificial Lamb?

Have we gazed at it?

John Bunyan, in his incomparable book ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’, wrote: Christian ran till he came to a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, a sepulchre... He looked therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks...

Then Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on, singing:

*Thus far did I come, laden with my sin;
Nor could ought ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither: What a place is this?
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back,
Must here the strings that bound me to it crack?
Blest Cross! Blest Sepulchre! Blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!*

Mission in focus

Janice Reid

What about you?

by Rev. John Goris

Perhaps you have finished your schooling (at long last?). Now what's next?

Have you been wondering about some meaningful way of serving the Lord overseas? Mind you, there are also many challenges nearer home!

Perhaps you are about to retire and you feel fit enough to tackle something totally different, something like a stint of short-term assistance on the mission field, teaching English, for instance.

Perhaps you are nowhere near retirement yet, but you have studied a foreign language, say Portuguese. You would like to apply your understanding of the Scriptures in a different context, using your skills and experiences, plus the knowledge of that other language in a country like Brazil.

Opportunities abound the whole world round!

Ask your session or contact the OMB for the Survey booklet published recently by the ICRC. It shows where member churches have mission workers, and where you could possibly use your skills for a longer or shorter term.

Of course, all these challenges are not only found overseas. At home too you can use and/or gain cross-cultural experience to reach out with the Gospel. Although missions abroad has its fascination, the real joy of inter-cultural communication boosts our sense of the vastness of and variety in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It makes that sentence of the Creed a greater reality: *I believe one holy catholic (universal) church.*

Something of that togetherness in the Lord was experienced at the ICRC conference in Pretoria, South Africa, in October 2005.

The ICRC (*International Conference of Reformed Churches*) is primarily a gathering of likeminded churches of Reformed/Presbyterian conviction. It provides opportunities for the various delegates of churches to challenge each other about the spread and defense of the Gospel in their region.

What a wonderful thing it is to meet fellow Christians from such a variety of countries

and cultures, yet detect a strong bond of unity as to the message proclaimed and professed in daily life! The conference theme *The Lordship of Christ* offered much to think about, to stir us to action inside and outside the church. To what extent does it play a role in the lives of Christians and in that of the Church as the body of believers? The Lordship of Christ means the death-knell to self-importance, both as individuals and as church. Too often our selfish, limited wisdom plays a major role as to our beliefs and their application.

There is no doubt that the Christian Church in the continents of Africa and Asia is growing rapidly. What about the West? What about our own RCNZ? Is consumerism holding the Western church back? Are we too man-centred in practice, even if we are Christ-centred in our preaching and teaching?

Delegates testified to the grace of God in their region, both in small beginnings (e.g. Sweden, Spain) or in bigger, more phenomenal growth in places like Nigeria and the Congo. And let's not lose sight of the growth despite persecution in such areas as Eritrea, Myanmar, and Indonesia.

We had the privilege of having a young lady from Ivory Coast (see picture) in our



R-L: Rev JH Dawxon (ARP, USA); F Gomez (Reformed Churches of Spain); Rev D Bergman (Evangelical Reformed Church of Sweden)



Rev Tom Tyson with the lady mentioned in the article

midst who testified in song to the multi-national and multi-cultural worship of heaven as recorded in the book of Revelation: "Worthy is the Lamb!"

The work of the Missions Committee received a good overhaul at the conference and a better representation was proposed and adopted. Each main region will be represented by at least two delegates, viz. Asia/Australasia (Korea and Indonesia); Africa (Congo and South Africa); the Americas (Canada, USA and Latin America) and Europe (Scotland and Holland). The Survey booklet compiled by Mr Mark Bube was highly appreciated and will serve as a welcome guide for young and old, mission board and session. It makes us aware of the numerous places all over the world where missions are conducted by member churches of the ICRC.

Even if we are only a small cog in a wheel, it is the wheel that makes the history of the world go round at the direction of the Maker. We can pray for the coming of the Kingdom, and participate to speed its coming (2 Peter 3:12; and LD 48).

What about you?

MIF prayer notes

Walter and Jeannette Hagoort ask for our prayers as they settle back into work in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, after their home assignment in NZ. Pray for fruitfulness in their work, both at Mapang Guest Home, and also as they assist with the rapidly-growing Reformed Churches of PNG. Ask our blessed Father to help the leaders of this fledgling church to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Janice Reid appreciates your prayer as she gets established in her work in a country that is antagonistic to the Gospel. Janice's work involves teaching Christian radio announcers how to produce programmes that are suitable for their local communities, and a good testimony of Christian life and faith. Pray for clear thinking and communication as Janice maps out a plan for training new announcers, and for visiting stations on different islands to provide individualised help.

Jared Berends continues his ministry of teaching English in a restricted country. Please pray for him as he works with a local fellowship to help Christian leaders as they grow in the knowledge of God; and as he helps new believers to understand the need for personal involvement in evangelism.

Heidi Posthuma is still busy teaching English to more than 1,000 students each week in a closed country. Pray for strength and health, and also for opportunities as Heidi seeks to do Bible studies with individuals who have expressed an interest in learning more about her faith.

Kevin and Machi Rietveld and **Jack and Trudy Visser** in the Solomons are grateful for our prayers. They are keeping busy with many projects, including ongoing Bible studies with prison inmates. Please pray for spiritual fruit in all their work.

Books in focus

'A King's Bible'

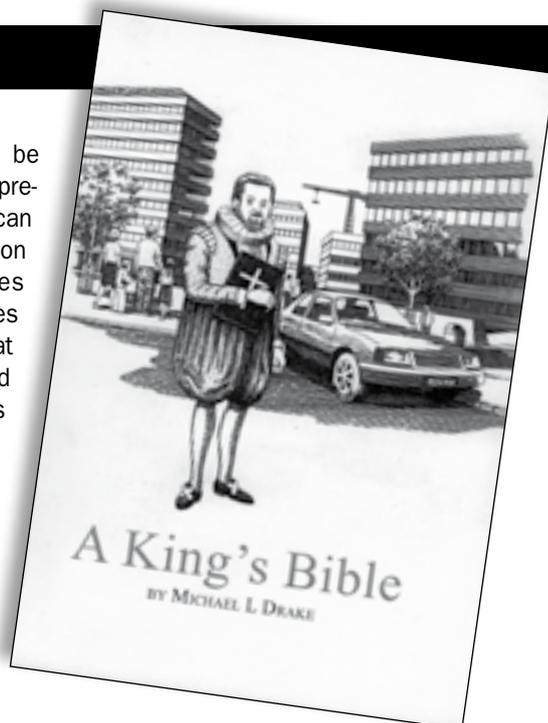
by Michael Drake

The King James, or Authorized Version as it's also known, is one of the great Bible translations, loved and cherished by many English speaking Christians. "A King's Bible" examines and exposes several myths in the context of the religious- and political background of the 17th Century Church. The rich language and history of the KJV helps the reader to evaluate its merits and make a clear choice which Bible to use. The KJV has earned the respect of generations of Christians, but the kind of English it represents is debatable.

The author explains that a Bible must

clearly convey a language that can be understood, without the aid or interpretation of a pastor. To use a Bible we can understand is to stand in the tradition of believers who over the centuries gave their time and talent, sometimes lost their lives because of it, so that people like us can read and understand the Bible message today. "A King's Bible" explains that it was the King's desire to suppress Puritan theology and anything in favour of Calvinism was to be omitted from the marginal notes, as the Calvinists had used this technique to good effect in the Genevan Bible, a translation from late in the century before.

'A King's Bible' tells the story of



the time in which this bible was translated with all its political- and religious intrigue and infighting within the Anglican Church. It shows how the King James' Version was his version - written in an upper class English, manipulated and dictated by the King to his own advantage. The author describes in detail how the KJV came in to being and the reasons why this upper class English was used. It's a translation which is hard to read, especially for a person like me, who has adopted English as a second language. There is so much argument about the distinction between accurate and inaccurate translation. When we discuss today's Bible translators, we insist on godly people who are specialists in their particular fields of Bible translation and we are skeptical when we find out that there are secular linguistics involved. But we tend to overlook the kind of people who were involved in the translation of the KJV. In chapter 6 you will find some revealing character references.

When I started reading "A King's Bible"

I was very skeptical and pre-judged it as "just another commentary on the KJV." But in reading this book, I found a total different picture. It's a book well researched, informative, interesting and easy to read. It reflects clearly the problems we are having with the KJV. But, on the other hand, God has used these men to give the people of England a Bible. "A King's Bible" was a real eye opener to me. There are a lot of things we simply don't know. I've only one serious recommendation: Read it!

Reviewed by Hans Voschezang

Michael Drake is an elder of the Tamaki Reformed Baptist Church and Principal of Carey College. Theology, History and English Literature are among areas of special interest. His published works include: In God's world (a Christian curriculum) and Maori Culture in a Christian World View.

the material well to make it interesting and well-presented. The questions create good discussions in helping to understand the text. The study is suitable to be led by others in the group. To get something out of it, it is important to put the time and effort into the study preparation."

"Writing a short answer 'on the dotted line,' adequate for most other study booklets, was never enough for *The Life of Joy*. I appreciated the way we were forced to dig deeply to unearth gems of wisdom written not only for the saints at Philippi, but for all Christians in every generation."

"I have found this study very encouraging and challenging. The questions through each chapter made me focus on what the Bible is saying to me and how I need to live. Throughout the study the author brings out Paul's incredible commitment to Christ, and the need for us to check out where our focus is."

"This was an excellent Bible study. The questions were thought-provoking and created some worthwhile discussions. It would also be very suitable for men."

"I really enjoyed this study for a number of reasons.

It is an in-depth study of one epistle of the Bible so by the end of the study you feel you understand the book better.

It is written by someone I know and respect so I don't have to worry about strange teachings and incorrect doctrine.

The questions are well thought out and lead to good discussion. Many studies have yes/no questions or comprehension questions only. Sally Davey's questions make you think.

It is a study that isn't really a women's study. Anyone could use it and benefit from it but you have to put the work into preparing to get the most out of it.

It there is one thing I've learnt personally, it is again the reminder to "...be content whatever the circumstances" (Phil.4:11b). This is because our focus is to "...press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus (Phil.3:14).

This study book is a great encouragement to get our focus and perspective as Christians right. Thank you Sally for bringing out the treasures in this book so well."

The Life of Joy – Getting to Know Philippians

A Bible Study by Sally Davey

(Reviewed by the Pukekohe Women's Bible Study group)

We have had the privilege of using *The Life of Joy* over 2005, and appreciated the studies so much we decided to write a review.

It was an opportunity for us to study the book of Philippians in depth, and the circumstances of the apostle Paul and the Philipian Christians at the time it was written.

Paul is imprisoned in Rome, dependent on outside help for his very survival. Yet he is not despondent, but thanks God for everything and encourages others to do the same. His example encourages us to be strong in the faith, no matter what comes to pass. He is content in all circumstances, as we should be.

One of our ladies took a memory verse from each chapter of Philippians:

"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." (Phil. 1:27a)

"Do everything without complaining or arguing." (Phil. 2:14)

"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13b-14)

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it

again, rejoice!" (Phil.4:4)

Sally Davey helps us realise that Philippians, such a small book, covers every aspect of Christian living...peace, joy, unity in Christ, encouragement, humility, thankfulness... Paul's total commitment to Christ, and his selflessness in putting others' needs before his own, shines through. He continues to rejoice through all his troubles. In Philippians 2:5-7 he writes,

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

These verses, at the heart of the Gospel, explain what motivated Paul as he wrote the letter to the Philippians. Sally's study guide, *The Life of Joy*, encouraged us to search every aspect of this motivation and apply it to our own lives.

Below are some comments from members of our study group:

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the study on Philippians by Sally Davey. She has researched

Focus on home

Gleanings from our bulletins...

Andrew Reinders

Bishopdale

Wedding Announcement: The Lord Willing and no lawful objections arising, Michelle Braam and Anton Posthuma will be united in marriage on 11 February, 1:30 pm @ 'St Andrews at Rangī Ruru' 21 Merivale Lane, Christchurch. The wedding celebrant will be Robert van Wichen.

Pastoral. David & Andrea Benfell will present their daughter, Livinia, for baptism on 26 February in the morning service.

Buckland's Beach

Church picnic. Our first outing for the year will be held on 18 February with the whole congregation invited to a picnic on Eastern Beach. Please bring your own meat for BBQ with salads and desserts to share. We will meet at the end of Eastern Beach from 5:00pm onwards with the BBQ starting around 6:00pm.

Christchurch

The elders met in mid-December last year with Megan Van Leeuwen, Claire Chapman, Nicole Dirkze, Danielle Bangma, and David Kent to discuss with them their desire to publicly profess their faith. On 12 February d.v. we look forward with joy to witnessing their individual professions before God and His people and their friends. Let us give thanks to a merciful God and Father who works in the hearts and lives of His people, bringing them to a conviction of God's saving grace, believing the Bible is the Word of God revealing Christ and His redemption, accepting and affirming their union with Christ, and their promise with the help of the Holy Spirit to strengthen their love and commitment to Christ. Please pray for them that we all may be encouraged in the great things God has done and continues to do in each of our lives.

Wedding invitation. It is with great joy and thanksgiving that we Peter Braam and

Kir-sten Yvette de Vries, together with our parents Harold & Adrienne and Roy & Michele invite you to join in celebrating our marriage on the 25th of March 2006 at the Reformed Church of Christchurch at 1.00 pm and afterwards for supper at Bramble Grove, 19 The Old North Road, Kaiapoi at 8.00 pm. No RSVP necessary.

The sixty forward camp. The 2006 camp will DV be held from Tuesday 7 – Friday 10 March 2006 at Hanmer Springs Forest Camp. This is the 11th year of coming together as a group of seniors of our churches for a few days of relaxation and fellowship. We walk, talk, we rest and swim, and laugh a lot together and underneath there is always the common bond of Christian faith and love binding us together.

Pastoral wedding banns: Nicholas Alberts and Kirsten Dam have signified their desire to be united in marriage in this church on Saturday 25 February 2006. If there are no lawful objections, the ceremony will take place at 1.30 pm on that date.

Dovedale

Men's group: It's time to start up our men's group again on Saturday mornings at 8.00 a.m. We will be working through the discussion questions in Steve Farrar's book *Finishing Strong*. The group is open to all men who would like to come and join with us. The first meeting will be on Saturday 25th February (M. Flinn to provide breakfast – please let me know if you are coming!!).

Ladies Walk: Time to walk again. Hill walk this Monday 13th February 2006, Where: Meet by carpark opposite Princess Margaret Hospital on Cashmere Road at 7.30pm. We will have a coffee afterwards. All welcome. Sue van Garderen

From the Pastor: Muslims around the world have reacted strongly to the publication of cartoons depicting Mohammed, the founder of their religion, in a derogatory light. Some of you may have noticed the coverage of this story by TV1's *Close-up* in which a blasphemous and insulting video clip was shown depicting Jesus as a pop singer and a stripper, who, while singing the words "I will survive..." was run over by a bus. I have made a formal complaint to TVNZ about this and if I am unsatisfied with their response, will refer the matter to the Broadcasting Standards Authority. I believe there are

grounds to show that TVNZ breached broadcasting standards by showing this material. If you saw this video and also want to make a complaint, feel free to ask for a copy of my letter. MF.

Dunedin

Seniors' Meeting. On Thursday 2 February it will be time again to meet in the church hall at 10:30 am for a time of fellowship. We trust that all you seniors have been waiting to start again and that you will be there. If you think that you can no longer be part of it, let us know. We are even willing to collect you and take you to the church and carry you in. Looking forward to seeing you all. We will be your hosts. Dini & Peter Braam

A warm welcome to Andrew, Lydia, Arwen, Corrin and Kenrick Nugteren! The Nugterens arrived on Tuesday and will spend this week settling into their new environs whilst also hosting family members from North America for a few days this week. Andrew commences his vicariate with us next week.

Church Picnic. A church picnic is planned for tomorrow, Waitangi Day, commencing at approximately 10:00 am. The venue is McKerrow Bridge Fields on Whare Flat Road. If approached from the Taieri end the Fields are on the right hand side soon after the end of the asphalt. There are toilets, shallow water for paddlers and, at a distance, deeper water for swimming. Please bring sports gear, bathers, towels, plenty of food, and a portable barbecue if possible.

Foxton

An invitation: The congregation is invited to come and celebrate the 80th birthday of Wies van Echten. An afternoon tea is being held on Monday 6th Feb at the Masonic Village Café in Levin. (located on corner of Arapaepae Rd and Queen St – 1st entrance from town). The celebration will run from 2 – 6pm.

Marriage banns: Congregation, Graeme Zuidema and Amanda Van Echten have indicated their desire to be united in marriage. They want to begin their life together in the name of the Lord and in the presence of His people, and continue it to His glory. If there are no lawful objections, the ceremony will take place at St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Levin, on Saturday the 25th February, at 3:30 pm.

Session meeting report – 30th January 2006:

This first meeting of the year was held at the home of br Allan Thomson. After the usual opening the elders had a discussion with Jonathan van Echten and David van Echten, since they had both expressed a desire to publicly profess their faith. Session is pleased to advise that they gave a good account of themselves and will therefore do their public Profession of Faith on Sunday 12th February DV during the morning service.

Hamilton

Advance notice of 8-week dvd presentation. This is to advice that, the Lord willing, beginning Tuesday 14 February we will show a DVD called "Amazing Grace, the history and theology of Calvinism" in approximately half-an-hour sessions each over 8 subsequent Tuesdays in the church. This DVD shows us the history and the theology of the Reformed faith. Watching and listening, you will learn and appreciate what it means to be a "Reformation" Christian and why it is so important to hold on to what was rediscovered at the Reformation. The presentations will start at approximately 8.30pm and coincide with the catechism class of the older youth. Everybody, young and older, is urged to keep these evenings free and attend.

Bare knowledge. The bare knowledge of God's will is inefficacious, it does not better the heart. Knowledge alone is like a winter sun, which has no heat or influence; it does not warm the affections, or purify the conscience. Judas was a great luminary, he knew God's will, but he was a traitor. Thomas Watson

Profession of Faith: With great thankfulness and a joyful heart we commit Melissa Klinkhamer and David Klinkhamer to our Lord and Saviour as they will publicly profess their faith in the Lord Jesus this morning and be received in full communion with the people of God, and the full life of this church's fellowship. We thank God for His grace in Jesus the Messiah to give you this desire and pray that He may continue to carry on the good work He has begun in you unto the day of complete redemption. May all of us who confessed Your name never cease to wonder what You have done for us. Help us to continue firmly in the faith, to bear witness to Your love and to let the Holy Spirit shape our lives. Take us, good Shepherd, into your care that we may loyally endure opposition in serving You.

Church picnic. The Sunday school teachers would like to initiate a church picnic for the

whole church community and have extended the invitation to Hukanui Church as well. The date for this is Sunday 26th of February. We will meet at Parana Park, Memorial Drive by the childrens play area at 1pm. Bring a picnic lunch and something to sit on. (Postponement date in case of bad weather - 5th March). All are welcome, so please join us! Thank you - Jackie Hemmes

Hastings

From the Mission Committee. Today, after the morning service Bob and Anne Bruinsma will give a presentation to the congregation. Bob and Anne are from Blacktown in Sydney. They are the co-directors for the Crossroad Bible Institute (CBI) in Australia. This is an organisation which assists to establish Bible study with prison inmates via mail. CBI subscribes to the Christian faith of "Scripture alone, Christ alone, Grace alone, Faith alone and to God alone be glory."

North Shore

At last Sunday's congregational meeting we voted, without dissent if not quite unanimously, to accept the Vicariate Committee's request to give brother Pieter van Huyssteen a vicariate this year. At the time of writing Pieter was still in Taranaki visiting his wife's sister. We are making preparations to get that underway as from the beginning of March.

Baptism: In case we have missed it over the holiday period, congratulations to Johan & Elbie Baker on the birth of their daughter, Leyla, on 2nd January. We rejoice with you and thank the Lord that all is well. Lord willing, Leyla will be baptised next Sunday in the morning Service.

Church Photo: A church photo is being planned for February the 19th after the morning service. The best site for the photo seems to be downstairs on the grass area between the church and the lake. So wear your Sunday dress. See Frank with any enquiries.

Men's Bush Bash: For all men and able-bodied sons. A day tramp up to the top of the Pinnacles and down is tentatively planned for the 18th of March 2006. The idea is to leave from church on Saturday morning (early - 7:30 am) and arrive at the Kauerunga Valley car park about 1½ hours later. On a clear day, this tramp offers some of the most spectacular world-class views available to us, not to mention some hilarity along the way! Please contact Frank for more details.

Palmerston North

Open Invitation to celebrate Shirley Ronsons 80th Birthday! Everyone is invited to celebrate the 80th birthday of Shirley, on Saturday 11th February, 7.00pm at Harmony House. Please contribute a plate of goodies, and if you would like to provide some entertainment or share something inspired by Shirley, please advise Marcelle. Please pick up an invitation with the details in the foyer.

We have the privilege and the blessing of witnessing and taking part in the baptism of Ruby Maaik Reitsma this morning. She will receive the sign and seal of God's covenant love in the administration of the sacrament. We pray for the Lord's richest blessings and her parents, Eeuwe and Rachael, as they raise her and their children for the Lord.

Pukekohe

The Willemse family arrived on Monday 16 January and have settled into the church manse and organised themselves. We extend a warm (written) welcome to Michael and Gea and to their children, Hannah, Abigail, Yvette, Michael and Josiah, and a baby due to arrive, DV. in July. We trust this will be an enjoyable and helpful year for Michael especially, but also for the whole family, and we hope all of you will soon feel at home in the congregation. We also pray that this vicariate year will be of mutual blessing to you as a family and to us as a congregation.

From the Pastor: Last week I reflected on the various services Harriet and I attended while on holidays. We noticed how difficult it was to find a church that had an afternoon or evening service. Most churches only had one morning service or perhaps two morning services. The practice of having a second service at the end of the day seems to have lapsed for many churches and those which have kept this up often find it poorly attended. Yet this second service is a good habit to maintain. Coming to worship is a command of the Lord and is a privilege and a blessing to us. Beginning and ending the day with worship gives us two opportunities to praise the Lord and helps us to keep our mind of the Lord throughout the day and. It

BOOK WANTED

I am seeking a book by P.Y. de Jong, entitled, "The Church's Witness To The World". It is a commentary on the Belgic Confession of Faith and is published by Padeia Press. If you can help me with this please write to me: Albert Reitsma. 841 Poplar Rd, R.D. 4 Opiki, Palmerston North

Our student at the RTC

David Waldron is a member of the Reformed Church of Palmerston North and is currently in his last semester of study at the Reformed Theological College.

After commuting between Palmerston North and Geelong for a semester, David and the rest of the Waldron family relocated to Australia in order for David to complete his studies for the Ministry. It was a relief to be back together permanently with his lovely wife Jenny and their seven blessings from the Lord – Naomi, Zipporah, Elijah, Josiah, Vashti, Isaac and Solomon.

Moving house often puts a family under pressure; this was certainly the case for the Waldrons as they arrived in the Western Island of New Zealand with 43 pieces of luggage and began the search for a (large) vehicle and a place to live. Have you not found that it is when our lives are in the greatest turmoil that we see the Lord's hand so much more clearly at work? This was certainly the case for the Waldron whanau.

Finding a vehicle and a house large enough for a growing family of 9, in a country where having more than three children puts you firmly into the 'weird' category, is no mean feat. However, the

Lord provided abundantly. We saw the sovereign provision of God in supplying furniture and essentials for the house which we rented. A Christian couple graciously gave us their piano, which has been a constant source of blessing as we sing from our Psalter Hymnals after family devotions.

Reflecting on God's goodness towards us gave us courage as we went through the many difficult adjustments which the move involved. We have always educated our children at home, so fortunately there was much less change in this area than would have been the case if they had attended an external school. Jenny and the children have experienced the strain of supporting David, of reduced financial circumstances in an expensive country, and of often feeling like aliens in a strange land. Most people in Victoria don't even know who the All Blacks are!

We have all experienced the pressure of changes to church, friends, food, climate and lifestyle. However, we have been blessed with finding music lessons and activities close to home for the children; the oldest four of whom have also found part-time jobs. We have appreciated the support, friendship and encouragement of the congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA) in Geelong. David has been given many opportunities to preach in the PCEA

(which is a sister church to the RCNZ) as well as within the CRCA.

For David, juggling study, family and work commitments has been a constant challenge in Australia. In the book of Romans, Paul speaks of his weaknesses, and the difficulties he has faced. He recognises that the power of Christ is displayed in his weakness 'For when I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Cor 12:10). In the last few years, the Lord has pushed David beyond his own capabilities to a place where he has had to rely on the grace of God alone. *Sola Deo Gloria.*

David has been grateful for the opportunity to study at the RTC. The integration of exegesis and preaching courses at the College has been particularly valuable. Class sizes have been small, enabling plenty of lively interaction with the lecturers and other students! David is actively involved with the Student Representative Council, and Jenny with the Student Ladies Association.

At the time of writing, the Waldrons are hoping to work with Australian Indigenous Ministries (AIM) for the second half of 2006. Aboriginal Christian leaders are asking for theological education so that they can go out and train their own people to preach the gospel and build up their churches. There are a number AIM staff in the Northern Territory, where David and family hope to be able to go and work alongside some of the missionaries there.

We will all miss the friends we have made in Geelong (some of whom have already returned to New Zealand), and also the warm dry weather which characterises so much of Australia.

However, all the family are very much looking forward to coming home to New Zealand and plan to attend Family Camp at the end of 2006. David is excited by the prospect of a vicariate within the RCNZ which would start early in 2007.

To help you identify each of us in the photo we are (from left to right): Solomon (3), Jenny, David, Josiah (12), Zipporah (15), Elijah (13), Isaac (5), Naomi (17) and Vashti (7).



gives us another time to fellowship together and to consider God's word and its application to our lives. It is encouraging to see many of you here for both services each Sunday. The Holy Spirit urges us through the Scriptures; "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Heb 10:25).

Session report: (Meeting of Tuesday 7th of February 2006). The session interviewed Warrick Loveday who has expressed the desire to profess his faith in the Lord Jesus and join the church as a member. After an encouraging discussion with him the session is pleased to give him the opportunity to do this.

Wellington

Welcome to Vincent Leander Marinus who was born on the 4th of this month. He came at his own pace and was received with great joy and gratitude by his parents Jonathan and Kelly.

CHURCH OUTING. Please mark next Saturday – 28th January in your diaries. We will meet at 10am at Kaitoke Regional Park (gathering in the same area we did last year – see map below). From there those who want to will go for a one hour easy walk (buggy friendly), then return to base to have a picnic lunch together. There are coin operated BBQ's for your use. There is a cost of \$1 per person to use the area. Please bring that with you and we will collect it there. Any questions see Diane.

Congratulations to Nathan and Miriam on the new arrival into their family: a *brother* for Martha! His name? Johannes Wybe! He was born last Wednesday by c-section. Mother and son are doing well, and father..... you can guess it!

National Youth Camp – 2007

To help with the organising of this camp we would like to locate the location of any trophies which have been used at previous national camps.

If you know of the whereabouts of any of these. Could you please contact Ryan Nugteren at dutch_kidd@hotmail.com, providing details of the trophy and how it has been used at past camps.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

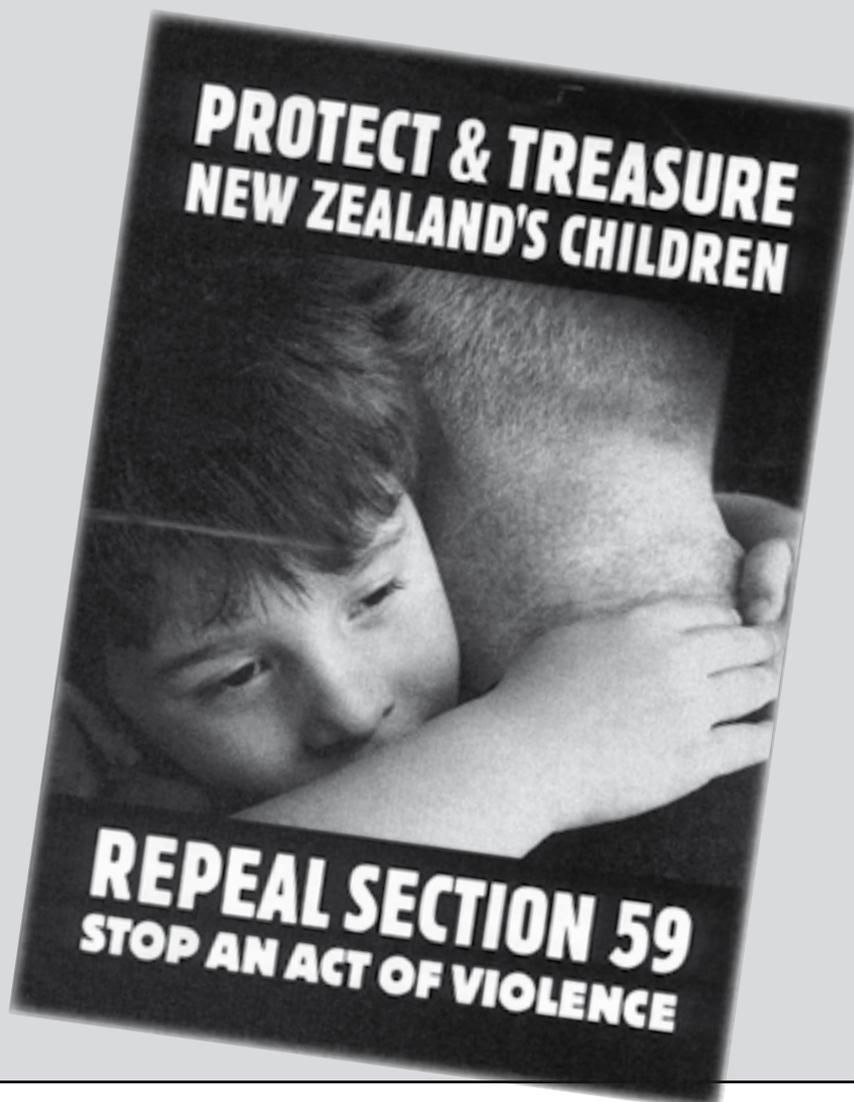
Your Feb. 2006 by Berwyn Hoyt is a very timely one, as I have only just noticed that the taxpayers are at present funding, through the Ministry of Social Development ("Social Stagnation" or "Social Degeneration" would be far more descriptive) a number of pamphlets in favour of abolishing parents' rights to corporal punishment of their children, which is called "hitting" them. A petition to repeal Section 59 is also being sponsored.

I only wish there were a concerted effort to reprint and widely distribute Mr Hoyt's excellent article as a countermove. The pamphlets include a lot of emotional and illogical rot about some recent infamous cases of little children's deaths after horrible cruelty - as though these crimes would not have been perpetrated if the parents/guardians had not been legally allowed to use reasonable force to discipline their children. Did the writers

really think the perpetrators believed the law gave them free rein to inflict torture, so that they would never be charged or convicted? Come off it!

Only a few months ago, I was disgusted to learn that our own great Plunket Society, so justly famed for a century of wonderful work for mothers and children, has been brainwashed into supporting all these socialist/anarchist/nihilist tactics to destroy the family and marriage - the aim of this Labour Government. Overthrowing parents' authority is all part of the strategy. Reasonable parents, guardians and teachers have always tried gentler methods where they will work; but with kids who don't understand any other language, I've long said, as a last resort, "Tan their a...s!"

H. Westfold, Wellington.





National Youth Camp

If there is one thing arriving at camp late it's turning up and it's raining. Which starts to make you think, "Man, I hope the weather is going to be better than this!" And it was. You could not have asked for better weather at such a greatly organized and super-fantastic camp. There were so many things organized for the week it was a huge task for the committee. And there were the studies, led by Rev. John Ter Horst, about what it means to be "Called to Serve" and how God has equipped each and every one of us to witness to others in the way we live our lives.

There were also the sports, which were riveting and full of excitement. And the masked dinner, where everybody had to come to dinner wearing a mask. There were some very interesting ones out there.

The 'serve-reach' was huge. The whole camp, apart from 40 people, jumped onto buses and were taken to different areas where they could "serve-reach" to the people we did the work for. It was a great way to witness to these people in the way we worked and talked as a huge team.

We also had a talent quest, where we had a number of contestants both talented and maybe not-so-talented, performing their various pieces. Some were amazing, some were comical, and it was a great night.

For me, the main event was the Cowboys & Indians feast/Barn dance. It was set up outside in the beautiful sun, perfect for barbecues and barn-dancing. There were many people dressed as cowboys and Indians and there was also a cactus, horse, and convicts—tied together with a ball and chain. The barn-dancing was spectacular—a great way to mix with everybody.

All in all the camp was great and I can't wait for the next one. I'll see you there!

Jeremy Posthuma

