

faith in **focus**

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The men were amazed and asked,
“What kind of man is this?
Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Matthew 8:27

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Editorial

This month's Faith in Focus has a definitely musical focus. We see from three different perspectives how music truly comes from the joy which in us - the joy which in the believer is intimately joined to his faith in Jesus Christ. As one teacher put it to me: "You cannot truly sing when you are sad."

I only need to recall here the grand singing at our recent Synod, or, even more recently, the voices of our Christian school choir. Different sounds and some different songs but when they are lifted up to the Lord you are truly moved deep within.

I remember how singing was one piece of advice a speech specialist gave me. For singing regularly trains the mouth to be the instrument for your mind. So how much don't those exhortations of the psalmist to sing to the Lord ring true in practice! In Psalm 96 he calls out to us, "Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples."

*Next to theology I give music the
highest place and honour.
Music is the art of the prophets,
the only art that can calm the
agitations of the soul;
it is one of the most magnificent
and delightful presents
God has given us.*

Martin Luther

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 Dordt, 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.

Singing a New Song

The ministry of music

Jason Coghill

I suppose you could say that my ministry is essentially a ministry of the Word of God sung, and the Word of God preached. Is it a youth ministry? Yes. Is it an adult ministry? Yes. Is it an elderly people's ministry? Yes. Is it a children's ministry? Yes. It is a ministry for every part of the body of Jesus Christ, because God's Word is for the six year-old, the sixteen year-old, and the 96 year-old (see Psalm 148, esp. vs. 11 & 12).

When it began

I started putting music to the psalms back in the early 90's, when I became a member of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. One of the aspects I love about our church is its wonderful tradition of singing unaccompanied psalms in public worship. Exposure to the psalms sung in this way motivated me, along with Matthew Jacoby, to explore composing music to the psalms as they are written in the English text, using mainly the NIV. We found a third musician, Rod Gear and eventually formed the band Sons of Korah. Around this time I also successfully completed my Diploma of Theology at the Reformed Theological College of Geelong.

I played with Sons of Korah for a few years, then eventually made a solo album titled *Songs of Deliverance* - ten psalms set to contemporary, acoustic guitar-based music. My aim was (and still is) to put appropriate musical arrangements to the biblical text as found in our translations, without letting the music determine the word structure. Having the words rhyme and fit into a standard verse/chorus arrangement is not important to me. I want people to be able to sing, and more importantly, remember the Word of God verse for verse in both whole psalms and portions. It's an amazing advantage to your Christian walk when you can have the Word of God stored in your heart and head ready for use in the battle! (see Psalm 119:11).

A record company signing

It was while ministering with *Songs of Deliverance* at a Presbyterian Church in Melbourne that Mark and Niki Tulk introduced themselves. They were really blessed by the ministry and wanted to help in some way, both having been convicted for several years of the need for a different approach to Christian music and ministry, a conviction that eventuated in the creation of Small House Records Australia. We started recording some songs that I had recently arranged and some that I'd arranged six or seven years ago. I signed with the Small

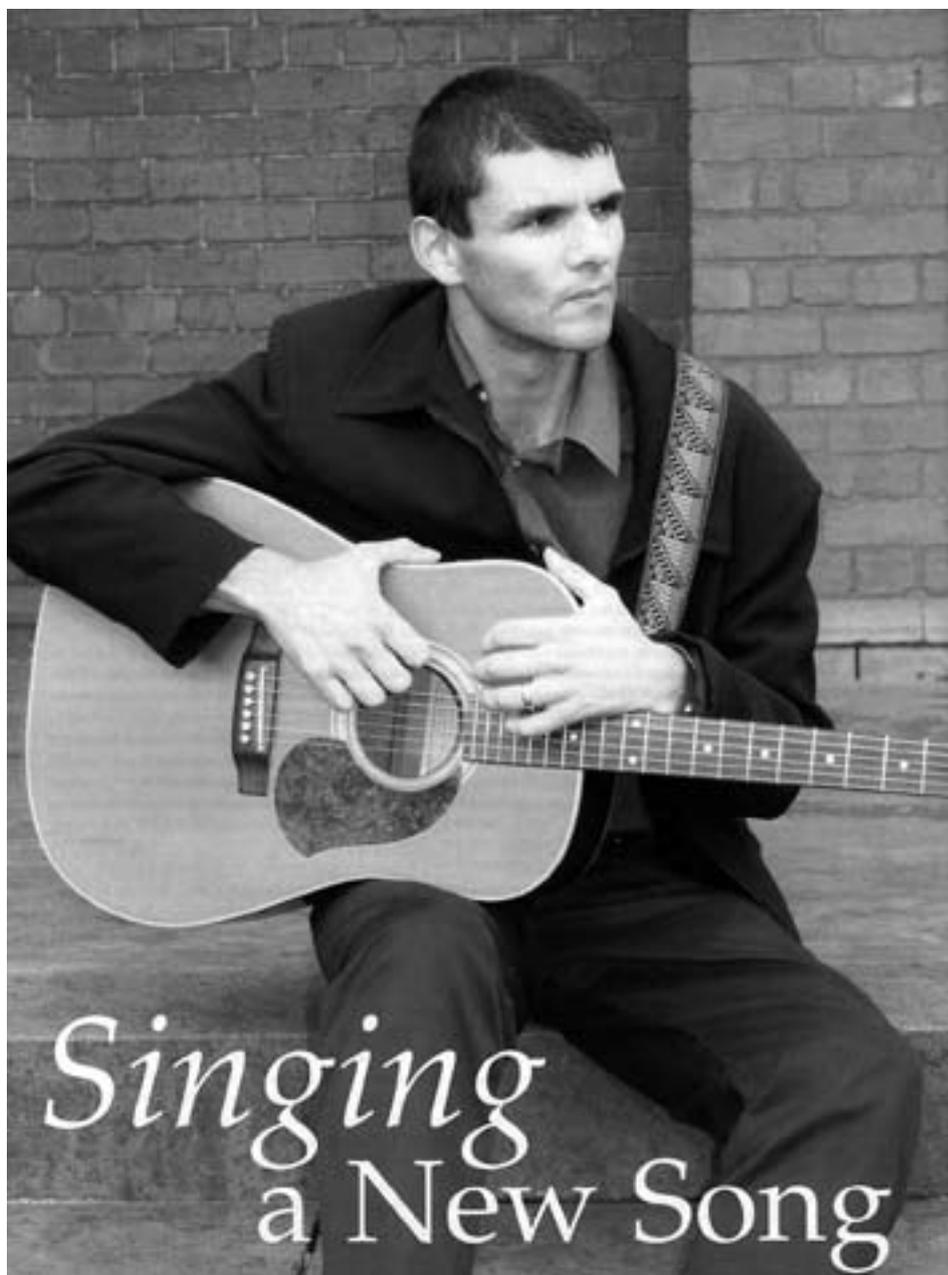
House Label and then things really started moving quickly. At this time, my wife Jane and I were just about to leave for the USA on a tour to promote *Songs of Deliverance*, so the recording at Small House had to wait six weeks. The tour went really well. We ministered in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Denver, Colorado Springs, Phoenix, Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Diego, getting four or five days to wind down in Southern California before flying back to Australia. Meanwhile, Small House had organised an Australian tour of capital cities and regional areas that would start in July and finish in November! Jane and I prayed, took a

deep breath and said, "Let's do it!"

But first it was back in the studio to finish the album before the fast approaching release date. By God's grace and a lot of hard work, *Wells of Salvation* was released on the 26th June. It features nine psalms (one taken from Isaiah 12) and the hymn, Crown Him with Many Crowns.

The most powerful words are in the Word

As I have already explained, the ministry I lead is a ministry of songs, the words of which are the most holy and powerful words known to



man because they are the Words of God. To my mind, they are the most appropriate, and beneficial words a Christian can listen to and sing: *“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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* (2 Tim. 3:16).

At a typical ministry event I will sing through about ten psalms. Everyone in the congregation will have their Bibles open and follow along as I sing, (or they'll sing as well if they know the tune). Before each psalm is sung, an explanation is given of a particular point of the psalm, and related to the gospel of Jesus Christ and living the Christian life. At an appropriate time, a short gospel sermon is preached from a particular psalm.

It is a very simple set up. Either just myself on guitar, or accompanied by my wife on flute. This is so there will be more focus on the song and less focus on the singer. There is no dimmed lighting or stage effects, and if the congregation wants to show their appreciation, they are encouraged to do so at the end, rather than applauding after every song. This fosters an atmosphere of reflection and meditation after the Word is sung.

I should add here that the CD itself is filled with harmonies, cello, bass, piano and other instruments, so that the effect is to really bring the psalms to life in a melodic, musically more elaborate way. I feel comfortable with the difference that exists, arrangement-wise, between my live and recorded music. When listening to the CD, it is the psalms themselves that are 'up front' - again, the song and not the singer being the focus.

Our churches need major reforming

I suppose I keep doing what I do because I feel so strongly about the need for holiness in the music we hear and play within the church. In fact, the more I read the Bible and other Christian books, (especially the older ones), and the more I travel and sit in different churches, the more I am convinced that our churches need major reforming; particularly in the area of music and song both in private listening and public worship.

It seems a tragic pattern of the 'world' that so many young people are becoming more distanced, even separated from parents and authority figures, and largely through the influence and fashions of the mass media, particularly the music culture. It is even more tragic to think that the evangelical church could actually be fostering this same pattern by conforming to it. I'm convinced, to a large degree, that this is actually happening.

One of the easiest ways to promote false (unsound) doctrine and unholy teaching is to wrap it up in a pop song. The nature of music is such that it can easily bypass the mind and stir us up only on an emotional level, to the point

where we don't discern the unsound doctrine or unholy teaching that is wrapped up in the music. One example I noted from a radio station whose official music policy states *“100% Christian music.”* This song actually refers to Jesus Christ as a U.F.O:

He's an unidentified flying object you will see him in the air

He's an unidentified flying object and you will drop your hands and stare

Where the world has taken over the church

At best, the content of many songs I hear that pass for "Christian" is flippant and worldly; at worst, they take the name of the Lord in vain (see Exodus 20:7). I believe it is a mockery to the Lord Jesus Christ and in no way a *holy* witness to the world, the way so many "Christian" songs are so wrapped up and fashioned to sound no different to the pop music of the world. Though they may include the name Jesus and contain 'holy' words, they are of such a style that is inconsistent with the holiness of those words.

If you want to be *thoroughly equipped for every good work*, listen to and sing the Word of God! Not only will it transform you and conform you to holiness individually; your *family* will be thoroughly equipped if you make the Word of God the content of your songs; your *church* will be thoroughly equipped if it makes the Word of God the content of its songs.

The right style

Equal to the importance of having righteous content in Christian singing, is that of having the appropriate form or style of music to fit the words. For at least two reasons this is important.

Firstly, the medium must not betray the message. The music must fit the mood and context of what is expressed in the words. If you're singing Psalm 51 or the first 3 verses of Psalm 6, it would be inappropriate to use an upbeat, major key melody. Conversely, Psalm 117 would sound very strange sung as a dirge.

This relates especially to congregational singing, where the music must be such that *all* can sing and appreciate it. The arrangements on *Songs of Deliverance* and *Wells of Salvation* are not primarily for public worship (although some people do sing along). They are more for private listening and meditation. I do however, usually at one point in the ministry, lead the congregation in singing together. When it comes to congregational worship however, we must ask a question, and the question is not, *“What will certain people (mainly youth and young adult) like?”* But rather, *“What will the whole body of Christ be able to sing and appreciate, whether 18 or 98 or 8 years old?”* I choose my words carefully - it is *appreciation* and *appropriateness* that is vital, not personal choice and pragmatism.

Don't fall for it!

Pastors and elders, please don't fall for the objection that *“young people need a style of music that suits them, that they can relate to in order to worship; they need the popular sounds of today.”* This is simply not true. There are many young people singing psalms and hymns to tunes that have stood the test of time for centuries, and they sing them alongside brothers, sisters, mums, dads, grandpas and grandmas. Psalm 148 says, *“Both young men and maidens, old men and children; let them praise the name of the Lord.”*

Travelling with this ministry, I hear more and more elderly people tell me how sad and frustrated they feel because they seem forced into a style of worship that is not inclusive but exclusive. The holiness, simplicity and inclusive (all-age) worship they grew up with has changed. Some stop coming to worship. Others feel intimidated into silence, feeling they can't *“compete with a group of gifted, microphoned vocalists blasting a melody from the stage, especially with an accompanying rock band.”*

So how do we choose appropriate tunes? What words should we sing? Is there a theology behind what we do? Who should sing? I can't sing! Do we need a band? These and other questions are considered in the worship workshops that I conduct at various churches.

After a brief introduction considering the biblical justification and implication of public worship in song - we sing! - together, all ages, young and old, and teenagers! It is a rewarding experience for those who are new to singing in 4-part harmony. For those who were once used to such worship in song, it is a holy breath of fresh air. The aim of the workshops is to encourage reformation in our worship; worship, not according to the fashions of man, but according to the precepts and principles of Holy Scripture.

I am thankful to God, that through the music ministry, I am able to promote and encourage a different approach to worship; a different mindset; a *holy* mindset and a *holy* approach. We once had it. May God again reform our worship to His glory and our good.

Jason Coghill's new album 'Wells of Salvation' and the re-issue of 'Songs of Deliverance' are both available through Small House Records Australia, www.smallhouse-records.com.au and WORD bookstores in all capital cities. Jason and Jane are currently touring most states - for dates & venues visit the Small House Records website. This article originally appeared in 'Trowel & Sword', with whom we have a reciprocal arrangement.

Hymns, form and language

J R Watson

As with all poetry, a hymn does not just say something: it *is* something. It exists as a shape, a form, a holding of experience within an artistic whole. It is not just a statement: it is something more profoundly affecting than a statement, a work of art. And art is more real than life: it removes the random and contingent, presenting us with the thought and emotion shaped, crystallised, unified, and universalised.

An illustration

I begin with the third Lambeth Conference, held in 1888. It is recorded that at the conference service in St Paul's Cathedral, when 'The Church's one foundation' was sung, the effect was 'almost appalling':

Sung by a large congregation, some people say that this hymn was really more than they could bear. 'It made them feel weak at the knees, their legs trembled, and they really felt as though they were going to collapse.' (Wesley Milgate, *Songs of the People of God*, p.154).

The great cathedral must have been packed with a large and distinguished congregation, rich with the sense of a great occasion. What their fear of imminent collapse draws attention to is something that I think is generally overlooked in discussions of hymns, and that is the physical element. Hymns have often been treated as if they are just words on the page accompanied by notes. I want to argue for a different perception of them, as physical things, with a presence and a form that depends in part upon that physicality. When a hymn is announced in a service, the congregation stands up, listens, gives out breath, sound, notes: the hymn becomes something different from the thing on the page. It becomes a performed act, a creation of the body, the lungs and the blood. It gives the congregation a chance to do something, of course; but that something is a self-expression, literally, an expressing of sound, loud or soft.

Mind and body

A hymn tune generally has a shape or form, which we follow when we sing. A tune such as *Richmond*, for example, has an opening arpeggio which is immediately striking, and then a climb in the third line – B,C,D,E – which imposes its own crescendo. Another tune such as *St Magnus*, divides the Common Metre (C.M.) verse into two halves: the first half has its own shape, and then the second half comes along and trumps it with the sudden octave lift on D in the final line. What I am suggesting is that these are felt shapes, lines following other lines, slurs, rests, beats, elements which the

mind *and* body feel as pauses, rises, falls, front vowels, back vowels, rhythms. The 8.6.8.6. beat of Common Metre, which is based on the old 'Fourteener', is a metre which is felt as eight and six, eight and six, yet also (and I think simultaneously) as fourteen and fourteen, which is why C.M. stanzas so frequently get divided into two at the half-way mark.

Every metre is different, and every metre is felt differently, not by the mind alone, but by the singing body, the voice and breath. It is possible to draw on this physical sense to enhance the meaning of a hymn, and I think its interpretation also. Think of the shape of 'Jerusalem the golden', sung to *Ewing*, or 'The church's one foundation' sung to *Aurelia*, in which the notes influence the shape of the words, make us feel the form of the verse almost palpably: 'Jerusalem the golden'; 'The church's one foundation'. You could spoil a verse just by altering its shape and feel: you could ruin *St Clement* by playing it in waltz time, with an emphasis on the first beat of the three-beat bar. If you play it like that, the singer starts to feel it differently in his or her body. In the same way everyone knows that sometimes, just sometimes, a hymn – like any other piece of music – comes just right, words and music exactly paced and brought out fully and properly.

A clear pattern

The singer of a hymn sees verses, spaced on the page, with patterns of thought running through the lines. The lines are individually important, and often very beautiful or arresting, because they fit so perfectly into the metre: 'The spacious firmament on high'; 'When I

survey the wondrous cross'; 'Light's abode, celestial Salem'; 'O thou who camest from above'; 'Day by day we magnify thee'. But those lines connect with the lines that come after, and the art of the hymn, as with any other kind of poetry, is the relationship of the sense to the line, the line ending, and the succeeding line. The break at the end of the line can be managed in any number of ways, but it has a very important function:

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,*

This opens with an adverbial clause of time, leading us to expect at some point a main clause to follow. But first we have a postponement of that main clause. The second line continues the sense of the first line, carrying on the sentence with an adjectival clause within the adverbial one; then, and only then, comes the pause, signified by the all-important comma, which makes the moment at the end of the second line more marked than the one at the end of the first. That comma signals the end of the first half of the verse and the beginning of the main clause:

*My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

There's more to come

I do not want to make hymns just a matter of grammar and parsing, but to point out that the actual structure of the verse carries a particular kind of sentence, one in which the opening 'When' makes the singer expectant for the main verb – an expectation which is only satisfied in line three. The mind takes in the first



line and knows that it is in for a long haul. So it paces itself, allowing the text to unroll from line to line. Physically, the body and lungs take this in too: a singer knows that there is more to come at the end of the first line, and probably takes a breath there. It is quite possible for a good singer – or even a moderate one – to sing the first two lines through without a breath, but it might lead to a big breath at the end of line two, which would be inappropriate. That comma asks for a breath that allows line two to end with a pause but also permits it to connect with line three.

Obviously this does not go through the singer's mind consciously, but it is part of his or her response to the verse that is presented on the page. The result is an awareness, perhaps unconscious, of what is needed to sustain the sound and in sustaining the sound, hold the meaning. 'O thou who camest from above' is very similar in its patterning, leaving the main verb, 'Kindle a flame' to line three, where it is placed at the centre of the verse, looking back to the description of the Holy Spirit and forward to the mean altar of the human heart. It links heaven and earth, past and present; it is poised between the recollection in lines one and two of the miracle of Pentecost and the sense in lines three and four of the here and now, the present of the singing self.

Different patterns

This is quite different from 'Light's abode, celestial Salem'. Here the lines succeed one another and complement one another, add to one another: 1+1+1, with a slight variation in the middle:

*Light's abode, celestial Salem,
Vision dear whence peace doth spring,
Brighter than the heart can fancy,
Mansion of the highest King;*

Line three is floating, a supplement to 'Vision dear' perhaps, but also capable of being applied to any of the other three lines. It varies the pattern slightly, and very well, preventing it from becoming too mechanical. In this case, the mind and body are again waiting for the main verb, which comes in line five: 'O how glorious are the praises' (wonderfully helped by the tune). But before that the mind has gone through many different apprehensions: it has registered 'Light's abode' and then had it defined as 'celestial Salem', then redefined as a 'Vision' and a vision of peace; then that vision is redefined as 'Brighter than the heart can fancy', and then described as a 'Mansion'.

Clearly the mind is presented here with complex allusions, and that is part of the effect of this verse: a good reader will know that Jerusalem signified a 'vision of peace', and

that the word 'mansion' was associated with heaven – 'In my father's house are many mansions'. But such processes are of the educated mind, eager to pick up the references: there is a deeper process that registers the physicality of the verse, its presentation of one image after another to produce a richness. It does so in lines that are incomplete, in that they have no verb, but which are complete units within the rhythm of the verse, except for line three, which depends on what went before or after. The singer can breathe after every line, secure in the knowledge that he has the energy for the next unit.

The hymn book lays it out

The verse is placed in a hymnbook to allow an almost unconscious apprehension of these things. The singer looks at the shape of the verses on the page and responds accordingly; then looks at the shape and feel of the lines within the verses; then looks at the length of the hymn. All of these things are laid out, as if at a table. The singer can see the lines: he can see how they relate to the lines before and after. Then he can see the verse as a unit; then the white spaces between the verse; then the margins – he can see that which denotes the silence, the not-sung, that which marks it out from the sung.

Next, I think, we register the rhythm and metre: iambic, trochaic, anapaestic ('For the might of thine arm we bless thee, our God, our fathers' God'. Then there is rhyme, which is extremely important in the singer's perception:

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

The lines are regular and iambic, but at the end of them comes the ABAB rhyme – cross-died-loss-pride: the pleasure is in the sound, and also in the contrast, or sometimes the similarity, between the repetition of sound and the difference of meaning. And then, in the next verse, the poet obliges and does it again, until he says - 'that is enough':

*Ready for all thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death thy endless mercies seal,
And make my sacrifice complete.*

The completeness in a hymn

Here the rhyme words complement the meaning quite beautifully. The verse begins with an unexpected trochaic foot – 'Ready' – but then becomes regular iambic: the rhyme words 'will' and 'seal' are here subordinate to the second rhyme – repeat/complete. The idea is that if the fire on the altar of the heart has been lit, and continues to blaze – 'with inextinguishable blaze' – then the acts of faith and love will go on and on through life, until the end of it. Repeat the acts, repeat them, repeat them,

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until life – which has itself been a sacrifice – is complete. And the hymn is complete too.

The pleasure of such an art is in the form itself, perfectly used, the idea contained in the pattern of the verse. The words themselves and their meaning become part of the physical activity of the hymn. It is no longer just a matter of the shape on the page, of the length of the line or the importance of the rhyme. The movement of the words themselves creates an awareness that is apprehended in part by the mind but in part by the sense of how it moves, on the page and in our bodies and brains. That awareness is conditioned by many things: tune, rhyme, imagery, metre, line, verse, vocabulary (for example, the use of polysyllables). In the middle of a line there can be a word of greater length and complexity: 'Day by day we magnify thee'; 'Take my life, and let it be/ Consecrated, Lord to thee'; 'They stand, those halls of Zion/ Conjubilant with song'. The compilers of *A&M* resisted 'Conjubilant' for many years, printing 'All jubilant' until 2000 with *Common Praise*. They must have thought them too much of a mouthful for congregations; whereas the point is that encountering this word is a physical pleasure, something denser, more complex. It is not too difficult: it just gives the mind and body something to push against or grap-

ple with. It yields with a bit of pressure, but stiffens the line.

The might of metaphors

The metaphors and similes that I have been using are themselves physical. This is because so much of our mental and spiritual life is only to be described in metaphors. We are cared for, and we are saved; we are borne upwards and we are plunged in the depths; we are weary, we travel through the desert, we are pilgrims, we seek, we miss, we stumble. When we sing 'In his hands he gently bears us' we take up the position of a tiny child, borne in his father's hands. Metaphors and similes such as these are everywhere in the depiction of the spiritual life: the fire of the Holy Spirit, the showers of blessing, the seal of love, the indwelling in the heart, the breath of God, the captivity of sin, the release from chains, the purging of sin, the love and care of the shepherd, the love of God as a father of his children.

Now if we put the physicality of these images into the hymn form, we can see what a potent mixture it is. The act of singing itself is profoundly physical, as the singers in St Paul's in 1888 found out; the form itself is a physical thing, taking religious experience and shaping it; and the words themselves not only have a

shape within the lines and verses but they also carry the metaphors and similes, which take us back into our physical lives to describe our spiritual ones. The combination is extremely powerful, and it works at a level that is hard to explain because it is beyond logic or explanation. Nothing is more infuriating than the person who dismisses a hymn on the grounds that it is not modern in its language, or does not fit some theological criterion, or who dismisses the whole business of hymn-singing itself on the grounds that it is somehow outmoded. The hymn exists in a world that is far more interesting and more profound than that.

This is a shortened version of a paper given to the Guild of Church Musicians at Portsmouth Cathedral, May 2004. J R Watson is Emeritus Professor of English, University of Durham; author of The English Hymn, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997, and editor of An Annotated Anthology of Hymns, Oxford, 2002.

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Is Bono a brother?

Joost Nixon

Normally, it is my policy to allocate as little mental energy to modern celebrities as possible. My interest in tabloids and celebrity mags could only be measured with a dwarf's micrometer. However, my attempts to exclude the front-man for U2 from my brain have been consistently frustrated. Bono, you see, unambiguously allies himself with Christ—and sometimes he does so while in a drunken stupor. This leaves me stumbling about in a state of Vertigo, leaving me resigned to the daisy method—he loves Christ, he loves him not, he loves Christ, he loves him not. But recently a French Journalist and friend of Bono, Michka Assayas, published a book of conversations he had with the rock star. In one oft quoted section, Bono is doing nothing less than presenting a double-barreled version of the gospel to his interviewer—and doing so with a foul mouth. This intrigued me, and I bought the book.

I'm glad I did. It did not remove the contradictions, but rather established them. He gets plastered—but says that's normal for an Irishman. But then he also denounces all substance abuse—and somehow I believe him. He clearly

doesn't like fundamentalists (perhaps he can't be blamed), but then he has his own fundamentals. In the interview—conducted over about two years—he stubbornly returns to the subject of God, mercy, and the power of grace over karma. He clearly loves the Bible, and his conversation drips with Biblical reference and allusions—not just when the conversation is about God, but throughout the book. But while he loves the Bible, it seems that he does not believe it infallible. This is evident in a preface he wrote to the book of Psalms in which he simultaneously honours the Word, but at the same time casts doubt on Davidic authorship. No, don't ask me to explain. Again, on the one hand, he has been married to the same woman for over two decades—this despite the thousands of nymphs who must throw themselves at him. But on the other hand, there is a picture online of him tongue kissing Liam Gallagher, of Oasis. (Presumably it was to retrieve a guitar pick in Gallagher's mouth.) Nevertheless, what was he thinking! Does he understand the cultural impact of that act? He must. But again, Bono doesn't make conclusions at all easy, because he acknowledges his sins with the most transparent sorrow and

A case of vertigo

humility. Overall, Bono seems all too aware of the contradictions. "I wish I could live the life of someone you could describe as pious. I couldn't preach because I couldn't practise. It's plain to see I'm not a good advertisement for God. Artists are selfish people." Another time, he is asked by his interviewer, Who the hell are you then? To which Bono replies,

I'm a scribbling, cigar-smoking, wine-drinking, Bible-reading band man. A show-off (laughs)...who loves to paint pictures of what I can't see. A husband, father, friend of the poor and sometimes the rich. An activist travelling salesman of ideas. Chess-player, part-time rock star, opera singer, in the loudest folk group in the world. How's that?"

Not an empty-head

Just as many of the contradictions were established, so also were many of my assumptions obliterated. One wrong assumption was that Bono was your typical empty-headed rock singer. The fellow is clearly well read, and very much on his game. Evangelicals should buy the book simply to learn strategy from the way he lobbied world governments for debt relief. Another assumption that got buried was that

Bono was a modern Demas who—having loved this present world—had traded Christ for fame. What seemed really to have happened was that he rejected pietism for his calling—and wrestled with this decision throughout the 80's.

Like any Christian on the road to the Celestial City, Bono has travelled some low points, been mugged a few times, deliberately headed off the path on occasion. But the brother's solution puts him right back on the road.

It's clear to me that Karma is at the very heart of the universe. I'm absolutely sure of it. And yet, along comes this idea called Grace to upend all that "as you reap, so will you sow" stuff. Grace defies reason and logic. Love interrupts, if you like, the consequences of your actions, which in my case is very good news indeed, because I've done a lot of stupid stuff.

It seems that not only do I have a case of Vertigo, but Bono does too. He seems genuinely humble and identifies himself as a child of grace, if a bit slow to pick up on God's lessons. What Christian can't relate to that? And there is a lot more for a Christian to relate

to in their 2004 release *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*. Rather than struggling to keep my mind out of the gutter, the lyrics make me reflect on the best things. At times the lyrics are subtle and symbolic, and make me replay them and think. Other times, the faith comes through with bold Trinitarianism—as in the last song on the CD, Yahweh.

The impact of his choice?

Which brings us back to the nagging inconsistency. Why? Perhaps it is because being a rock star does not lend itself to three square spiritual meals. How regular can you be at church if one week you're in Tokyo, and the next Milan? How can you regularly hear the Word, and partake of the sacraments if your work is always taking you away. Granted, no one is forced into a career path as a Rock Star. As with any career, we all have to weigh the impact a choice has on our faith. Doctors are often on call on Sundays. Pro football players rarely make it to church during football season. And Rock stars have their own spiritual occupational hazards—some of them, just given the culture,

are perilous. Life backstage and on the road can take on Caligulan dimensions—who would willingly put themselves in such a place? Is the cost more than the opportunity warrants? Perhaps Bono is coming to these conclusions himself. In track 6 of *How to Dismantle* Bono sings 'I'm at the door of the place I started out from, and I want back inside.' Where did Bono start out from? The first lyric of that song *All Because of You* reads, 'I was born a child of grace.'

And so we see a man who seems to be coming full circle, and having made some spectacular mistakes, is throwing himself again upon the grace of God. And here are you and I, right next to him, clinging to the feet of Christ.

Reprinted by permission of St. Anne's Public House, an audio quarterly on Christianity and culture (www.stannespub.com). Besides being Executive Producer of St. Anne's Pub, Mr. Nixon is married with five children, and enjoys small pickles.

World in focus

Homosexual short story causes stir at St. Andrew's Episcopal High School

Parents and supporters of St. Andrew's Episcopal High School are in an uproar following the inclusion of *Brokeback Mountain*, a homoerotic short story featuring a romance between two cowboys of different backgrounds set in 1961 Montana, in the school's senior English program. The story forms the basis for a movie that will be released in December.

The controversy over the story comes after an earlier row after the school promoted the National Day of Silence, an observance that involves a day of silence to represent the actual silence faced by homosexual, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people due to harassment. Although the school recognized that observance, they did not recognize the National Day of Prayer. One concerned contributor, Carey McNair, son of Bob McNair, the owner of the Houston Texans, met with Lucy Nazro, Headmistress of the school, and threatened to withhold a substantial contribution unless the story was pulled from the English program and expressing concern over the Day of Silence. Nazro stated that the Day of Silence would not be observed again, but defended the use of the story. According to a source contacted by conservative Anglican journalist Dr. David Virtue, the McNairs' contribution amounts to more than US\$3 million.

+ Charles A. Collins, Jr., *Christian Observer Correspondent*, 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445

Persecution of Christians grows in Saudi Arabia

AsiaNews reports that with the death of King Fahd and the arrival of King Abdullah, the persecution of believers of religions other than Islam, especially Christians, is rising.

AsiaNews says that their sources confirmed that the religious police, called the Mauttawa, has raided the homes of foreigners, especially suspect homes such as those where Christians live. "This has forced many groups, who used to meet in the privacy of their home to pray, to stop this activity." Furthermore, fear is such that people have stopped meeting out of fear that the police might link them to one another.

Indians are particularly targeted. In the last few months, nine Indians were arrested for illegal religious activities."

+ ASSIST News Service, PO Box 2126, Garden Grove, CA 92842-2126

40,000 New Testaments sent to Astrodome by Gideons

The Gideons International have distributed 40,000 Personal Witnessing Testaments (New Testament, Psalms, Proverbs) at the Astrodome and other relief centers in Houston. This was done in cooperation with the Salvation Army.

+ Gideons International, 2900 Lebanon Rd., PO Box 140800, Nashville, TN 37214-0800

International church in Vietnam shut down

In Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, a 500-member church has been shut down by local authori-

ties on 27 August. Eight years ago the church tried to obtain a permit. Pastor of the interdenominational New Life Fellowship, Eric Dooley, said District 5 police ordered the church to close because it had no permit—though the government ignored New Life's earlier efforts to obtain permission to worship. Church leaders are hoping that this action does not indicate an effort by the national government to harass the church.

+ Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0314

Much-loved house pastor dies

A much-loved house pastor, Allen Yuan, died on 16 August, 2005, in a Beijing hospital.

In 1946, Yuan began a church in a rented hall in Beijing, and every year between 20 and 50 people gave their lives to Jesus.

In 1949 Mao Tse-Tung came to power and the Communist regime began in China. In 1950, the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) was started and according to the Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) "continues today as a government instrument that seeks to control religious life and inhibit evangelism in China."

According to VOM in 1950 there were 11 preachers who refused to join the TSPM, Allen Yuan being one of them. Beginning in 1955 all 11 preachers were arrested and put in prison. Yuan, 44, was given a life sentence.

Yuan was released in December 1979 after serving 21 years and eight months in prison.

+ Voice of the Martyrs (United States), PO Box 443, Bartlesville, OK 74005 (918) 337-8015

History of Muslim abuse and Christian flight

The western media corps largely ignores Muslim violence against Christians in the Holy Land.

For years, media outlets have largely refused to report one of the most troubling aspects of the Mideast conflict: Muslim intimidation and violence against Christians in Palestinian-controlled areas.

The latest shocking episode again made its way to very few news consumers. Late Saturday night (September 3), hundreds of armed Palestinian Muslims crying 'Allahu Akbar' descended on the West Bank Christian city of Taibe. For the next few hours the mob terrorized the community, setting sixteen homes and multiple businesses on fire, looting valuables from both, and destroying a statue of the Virgin Mary.

Said one eyewitness: 'It was like a war, they arrived in groups, and many of them were holding clubs.'

The mob's 'provocation'? A Muslim woman from their neighboring village had had a relationship with a Christian man from Taibe. The woman was poisoned to death by her own family in an 'honor killing', and soon after, the pogrom against Taibe commenced.

Something tells us this incident would have made international headlines had Jews been responsible for this type of violence.

Incidents such as this, largely ignored by the western media, have been the leading cause of massive Christian flight from the Holy Land over the past few years.

The historical Christian towns of Bethlehem and Nazareth, once home to large Christian populations, have seen that population flee en masse due to Muslim intimidation and violence. As HonestReporting has documented: Over 100 Palestinian terrorists took over the Church of the Nativity in 2002, using it as a fortress from which to fire upon Israeli troops, while holding nuns, priests and monks hostage, and looting or destroying virtually everything of value inside the building.

During 2000-2002, the PA's Tanzim militia chose the Christian town of Beit Jala as a base for unprovoked shooting at Jerusalem. The Tanzim were specifically positioned in or near Christian homes, hotels, churches, and the Greek Orthodox club, knowing fully well that these sites would be hard-hit by Israeli return fire.

In 1995 Bethlehem was 62% Christian, but today it is less than 20% Christian. Before 1995, Bethlehem had a majority-Christian municipal council; but when the Palestinian Authority took over the town, Yassir Arafat replaced the municipal council with a predominately Muslim council, and Christian Arabs fled Bethlehem in droves after a radical Islamic wave began inciting against them.

On February 6, 2002, the *Boston Globe* reported "a rampage of Palestinian Muslims against Christian shops and churches in Ramallah... Police made no attempt to stop the mob, which besieged and damaged a widely respected youth center associated with the Boy Scouts of America after torching the Christian properties..." 'The truth is this is a problem between Christians and Muslims,' said one Christian businessman."

For more on Christian persecution under the PA, see this report from the JCPA, this article by Joseph Farah, and a report from The Prism Group.

One AP dispatch on the Taibe pogrom did make its way to one major paper, the *Los Angeles Times*. But given the degree of destruction and racial violence in question, and given the huge number of reporters that remain in Israel after the Gaza withdrawal, the unfortunate incident merited far greater coverage.

Despite appearances, the Mideast conflict is not only between Jews and Muslims. HonestReporting encourages subscribers to expand awareness of both the alarming incident in Taibe, and the larger problem of Muslim persecution of Christians in the Holy Land, in your local paper and community.

Protestants must flee in Mexico

The Protestant Christians amongst ethnic Huichol in Agua Fria, Jalisco state, western Mexico, are enduring severe persecution. (The Huichol are indigenous Indians descended from the Aztecs). The three Protestant groups affected are the Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, and Apostolics. Compass Direct reported that villagers armed with machetes and clubs drove the believers from their homes, threatening to burn them alive. These threats were taken seriously because traditionalists torched the home of an evangelical in February, who suffered severe burns and is now disabled.

+ ASSIST News Service, PO Box 2126, Garden Grove, CA 92842-2126

The Chronicles of Narnia will be released in December

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe is scheduled to be released on 9 December, 2005, according to the information received by the media.

In anticipation of the films release, the Mission America Coalition is inviting Christian leaders to explore the evangelistic opportunities presented by the film.

Steve Douglass, President of Campus Crusade for Christ, and a member of the Mission America Coalition, says the movie offers an unprecedented evangelistic opportunity because "Lewis' work presents well the good news of Jesus Christ. When the movie comes to the big screen Christians will have a unique opportunity to share their faith."

"Narnia Sneak Peek" events will be held in up to 150 of the top cities in America, reports the Mission America Coalition. These 90-minute, "Sneak-Peek" events will give leaders the opportunity to share information about outreach/evangelism opportunities offered by the film and distribute a number of free materials.

+ Mission America Coalition, PO Box 13930, Palm Desert, CA 92255 (760) 200-2707

New book about India's Dalit's

Dr. Joseph D'souza, President of the All India Christian Council, has written a new book called "Dalit Freedom Now and Forever."

D'souza states that "The Dalit people of India

are victims of centuries-long, socially-sanctioned bigotry. The Dalits, numbering 250-300 million, are those the Hindu caste system designates as "low" or "backward" caste. Because of their low social standing, affluent parts of society deny Dalits basic human rights. As a result of this discrimination, Dalits suffer socially and economically."

D'souza explained that he wrote the book "to inform the world about the plight of the Dalits and to call the global community, especially the global Church, to participate in the socio-spiritual transformation of the Dalits."

"The call is given to be involved in the holistic education of Dalit children, to empower Dalit women, and to transform the whole Dalit community through a Biblical worldview that is transformational in nature."

+ All India Christian Council, 79/B, 1 & 11 Floor, Opp. Vijaya Bank, West Maredpally, Secunderabad, 500 026 India

Vietnamese pastor released from mental hospital

After being diagnosed as "delusional" for believing in God, Rev. Than Van Truong was released on 17 September, 2005, after spending almost a year in a high security section of the Bien Hoa Mental Hospital in Dong Nai Province.

A former officer in the Vietnamese People's Army, Rev. Truong was arrested in May 2003 and imprisoned without charges for nine months. He was again arrested in June 2004, and placed in a mental hospital after authorities were unable to charge him with any crimes.

Truong's problems began several years ago, when he sent Bibles to Vietnam's top officials with the encouragement to consult them for truth and wisdom.

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

Faith in God declining in England

As reported in Christianity Today, less than one-third (52.5 percent) of people in England believe in God and only 16.8 percent attend church even casually. The research was conducted by the University of Manchester. The percentage of people who believe in God declined 5.3 percent in less than ten years.

+ University of Manchester, Oxford Rd., Manchester, M13 9 PL

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faith in
focus

Focus on home

Gleanings from our bulletins...

Andrew Reinders

Avondale

Family prayer & praise items: We congratulate the Thompson family with the birth of a healthy baby boy last Monday [22/08.] Caiden has been welcomed by the family with gratitude to the Lord for the gift of new life.

Bishopdale

Last Thursday the Lord took home to Himself our sister Mieke Cannemeyer, We know that she loved Jesus and we take comfort from this. Our thoughts go out to the extended Canemeyer family. The funeral will be on Monday 29 August and will be conducted by Rev Michael Flinn. There will be a graveside service starting at 11.30 am, at the Waimairi Cemetery on Grahams Rd. This will be followed by a memorial service at the Reformed Church of Bishopdale starting at 1 pm.

Calling. The session is placing a motion before the congregation to call Vicar Robert van Wichen to be our next minister subject to successfully passing his vicariate exams. We have interviewed both Robert and Laurel about the ministry and having a large congregation as their first congregation. We are confident that with careful planning and mentoring that Robert will make an excellent minister for our congregation. Voting for this will take place at a congregational meeting on Sunday 9 October. The notice of this motion will be in the bulletin on Sunday 25 September and 2 October. If you have any comments regarding this please see your elder.

Bucklands Beach

Shared lunch next Sunday morning. It will, God willing, be one of those special days next Sunday. Our guest preacher will be Michael Willemse, our 'country member' who is completing his study at the Reformed Theological College in Geelong this year. We thought it would be suitably tasteful to have an opportunity to say 'Hi! How are you?' over a shared luncheon. Therefore, would you please bring a plate – finger food – so that you, your family, and a few extras, can enjoy it together?

Christchurch

The elders have met with brothers Jason de Vries and Malcolm Gough to discuss with them their desire to publicly profess their faith. We look forward with joy to witnessing their professions. Malcolm hopes to profess his faith next week during the morning service, and Jason is scheduled for profession of faith on the morning of 18 September. Thanks be to our merciful God and Father, who works in the hearts of His chosen ones, and enables them to believe and know fellowship with Him!

Dunedin

Hearty congratulations to Jack and Tina Taal on the celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary this weekend. A warm welcome also to family members and friends of the Taal family worshipping together with us this today. In this morning's service we'll be revisiting the text, Psalm 121, preached on at Jack and Tina's wedding 50 years ago.

Foxton

Church calendar: A Church Calendar has been produced for the next six months, detailing all the known activities and when they are on. This is to aid us all in our planning. There is a copy for each family, on the table in the foyer.

Hastings

Soup and bread meal tonight. After the afternoon service you are all invited to stay and have a meal together. Those who are not bringing soup could you please provide sandwiches or bread rolls etc. to go with the soup. This will be a good time to catch up with many new members and visitors in our church, so please stay and enjoy this time of fellowship.

Mangere

This morning we have, Lord willing, the public profession of faith of Yulia and Evan Whetton. We rejoice that the Lord has brought them to this point in their lives and pray that this good confession they make will be a strength and encouragement to them as they continue on with their Lord and Saviour. Through this we also welcome them into membership of our church.

This morning we have the 90th birthday celebration for Sr Stein van Noordt. We are thankful for God's blessing upon her and welcome her family and friends here. We look forward to enjoying fellowship after church with refreshments provided for this occasion.

Masterton

Singing at Kandahar: There will be singing at Kandahar next week DV at 3.00pm. Please take your hymnals. If there are young people who would like to sing solo/duet or play an instrument, please see you deacon. Refreshments afterwards at the Kloegs.

North Shore

Jeremiah sermons: During this year Rev John Haverland has preached a series of twenty sermons in Pukekohe on the prophecies of Jeremiah. Some of these have been preached in the churches of the Auckland presbytery in pulpit rotations. The written text of the whole series has now been published on the RCNZ website – rcnz.org.nz – and you can read all the sermons there.

Palmerston North

Congratulations to Bill and Lyn, on the celebration of their 55th wedding anniversary during last week. The Lord has been good to you both, and his promise is that he will be with you always., and be gracious to you. Lyn has had an infection and a cough of late, but is recovering from it.

Pukekohe

Last Monday a daughter was born to Kelly and Sarah Bosgra – Sylvi Rose, weighing 7lbs 11ozs. We are thankful to God for the birth of a healthy baby.

Amazing Bench Race: We will be combining with the Buckland's Beach youth club for an amazing bench race this Saturday, 27 August. It involves benches, teams, spotters, dinner, devotion and lots of fun! Meet at the Haverland's house at 3pm for car-pooling and please bring \$5 to put towards dinner and petrol. Any questions see Joanna (again).

Marriage Conference: Family Life present a Weekend To Remember Marriage Conference. A few couples from the church have attended these and found them most worthwhile. They are valuable for all couples – young and old. The next one will be held at Waipuna Hotel, Mt Wellington, Auckland from 11-13 November. Cost: \$110 per person (if booked early). See brochures in the library shelves for further information and registration forms.

Silverstream

We rejoice with Henk and Vida Heersping on the safe arrival of Boaz on Saturday 3 September.

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.

We also rejoice with Daniel and Rona Akkerman on the birth of their son, David John, born last Sunday night. David was born six weeks premature, we thank the Lord for the progress that David has already made. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.

Fellowship Dinner/Fun Evening. The Lord willing, this will be held on Saturday, 24 September at the Pinehaven School Hall. The dinner will start promptly at 6.00pm so please bring the food as hot as possible as there will be limited facilities to heat food up. This will be a shared meal. Could all families please bring their own cutlery and crockery. If you have not handed in

your return slip, but would still like to come, you are still most welcome but please bring your own meal and also a dessert to be shared. We look forward to an evening of fellowship together. Please do not forget that there will be a collection for Rickshaws for India.

Graven on His Palms

Jubilee Celebration of the Reformed Church of Dunedin

John van Dyk

“Six hours! How are they going to fill in six hours?”

We understand that was a common reaction when members received their invitations to our jubilee dinner, which was scheduled to run from 3 to 9 p.m. In the event we could easily have filled eight hours. Such was the enthusiasm for remembering and celebrating the first fifty years of the life of the Reformed Church of Dunedin.

They came from far and near: 4 from Australia, 10 from the North Island, 15 from Christchurch, 20 from Oamaru, and 5 from elsewhere in the South Island. Six others from overseas had also intended to come, but for ill health or other reasons were unable. We offer our sincere thanks to those who made long journeys to be with us. Together with our own congregation, the numbers totalled about 150.

While a number of other churches in the denomination celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2003, we had to wait until 2005 to reach that grand milestone. Of course, when a church is instituted it doesn't just appear out of thin air: there is much groundwork to be laid beforehand. So we, as a church, trace our origins back to a Saturday evening on 30 January 1953, when 12 'protestants' met to discuss the possibility of beginning a distinctively Reformed witness in our fair city.

Of the 40 who later signed the original protocol stating their intention to form a church, 9 were in attendance at the celebrations. They were Arie and Janny Nugteren, Peter and Dini Braam, Leen and Anne DuMez, Henk and Corrie van der Pols, and Netty van der Woude. I'm sure they would say, as Paul did, that they planted the seed, Apollo watered it, but God made it grow.

We gathered in the Green Island Civic Hall and began with afternoon tea. Our sisters from

Oamaru came up trumps for us by turning on an exceptionally lavish spread.

The throng was then neatly divided into 16 teams for a quiz. This served as an ice-breaker, as it brought together guests of different ages and places. A data projector made for a highly visual quiz experience. Most questions involved identifying a person, place or object. Roy Nug-

teren somehow found himself on the winning team, and so wangled one of the key-ring prizes for the synodical archives.

Dinner was a catered three-course affair. Guests seemed to relish the food on offer, especially the hot ham on the bone. The highlight for this dinner was a bowl of exquisite mushroom soup.



In contrast to the satiated writer of Ecclesiastes, who observed there is no remembrance of men of old, we did indeed remember those who were used by the Lord in times past. Our seniors group regaled us in song and verse about His faithful under-shepherds: Revs Boelo Boelens, Richard Venema, Peter Pellicaan, Peter Berghouse, Carl Larsen, Willem Pieters, Hans Vaatstra and others.

We are proud of our youth group here in the south. It was moving to hear them sing "When Peace, Like a River": not so much for the quality of their four-part singing (even though it was superb), but for the simple fact that they gladly make it their practice to sing psalms and hymns whenever they meet.

Peter Schinkelshoek led us in a post-prandial workout cunningly woven around a story of an unfortunate individual called Eugene.

Christoph Willibald von Gluck (the 18th-century opera composer) put in an appearance with his aria, *O del mio dolce ador*, enchantingly sung for us by Vanessa Flinn.

And what more can I say? I do not have time to tell of greetings, speeches, songs, reminiscences, recitations, conversations, of moments that were heart-warming and ones that were heart-stopping. Except to say that this was an occasion during which we were profoundly reminded of the joy and privilege that it is to belong to the communion of the saints.

We do appreciate and are heartened by the many congratulatory messages that we received from individuals and churches, and even from one presbytery.

The next day, Sunday 26 June, fifty years to day since our institution, there was little room

left in our old church building as it resounded to the mighty singing in praise of our heavenly Father who, after all, made this celebration possible.

Our pastor, Hans Vaatstra, based his sermon on Isaiah 49:16, "*See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.*" This was the same text the late Rev. Boelo Boelens preached on, in 1955. We can give thanks that the Lord enabled our founders to establish Reformed congregations in our country. Although likened to "*strangers and aliens on earth*" we are not forsaken, but loved by God for Christ's sake. It is a great comfort indeed to know that our heavenly Father has engraved us, young and old, on the palms of His loving hands.

Family Camp 2004

The annual Reformed Churches family camp was held at Finlay Park from Monday 27th December 2004 until Saturday 1st January 2005.

It was attended by a group of almost 200, with a large number of youth (ages 12-18) making up a third of that number. The studies were led by Paul Archbald (AM) and John Haverland (PM).

Paul's topic 'What does it mean to be Reformed?' was challenging and provoked some good discussion. This helped us to value our Reformed heritage and understand the Biblical principles behind the way we do things as Reformed folk. John complimented this by leading evening devotions on 'The resurrection body of believers', based on 1 Corinthians 15. A great deal of comfort, hope and purpose was given to the listeners, and a sense of oneness in the knowledge of our eternity together.

Derek and Rosalind Cressy led the Children's programme 'Covenant kids' and this theme tied in nicely to the camp programme.

We thoroughly enjoyed our delicious meals provided by our cook, Henk Heersping, and his happy team.

Thanks to all who put in the hard work to make this camp run smoothly.

We would like to encourage any newcomers to come along to this year's camp, (details are in this Faith in Focus later in the year) - the campers are friendly, studies upbuilding, setting beautiful, great food and there is plenty of free time to relax and lots of things to do.

It's always hard getting back into the real world after family camp and on leaving we always feel as though we have experienced just a small taste of heaven!

*In Him
The Committee*





Family Camp 2005/2006

Monday 26 December – Monday 2 January

Devotional Leaders:

Leo de Vos –

“Setting our affections and minds on the things above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God”

Ralph Adams –

“A walk through Philippians”

Come along and revive your body and spirit

Enrolments are available at your Church

Fee re-structure

At the last camp the committee discussed the fairness of the camp fees on all families. It was decided that the way the camp fees were structured was not fair on everyone and, that due to the fact that the three previous camps had run at a loss, also did not meet the true running cost of the camp.

Along with this, Finlay Park has, over the last few years, increased its fees and this has had a big impact on the cost of the camp.

Finlay Park has quoted \$10-11 per person/per night (depending on numbers) this year. This means that each person over 2 will cost \$70-77 just on accommodation, not including food or activities.

The committee has also decided to add a surcharge for cabins. This was done to be fair on those that stayed in a tent, either by choice or because there were no cabins left. The allocation of the cabins is left up to the accommodation person.

The fees for the 2005/2006 family camp are as follows:
With Early bird Discount for registration and deposit before 2 December 2005.

Under 2	Free
3-6	\$ 70.00
7-10	\$ 90.00
11-14	\$110.00
15 +	\$130.00

Without Early bird Discount (registration/deposit after 2 December 2005)

Under 2	Free
3-6	\$ 80.00
7-10	\$100.00
11-14	\$120.00
15 +	\$140.00

A maximum cost of \$800.00 per family applies (a family being those that normally live in the same house) to the above fees but excludes the cabin surcharge.

Surcharge for Cabins

Above Dining Room	\$30.00 for week
Coronation St	\$50.00 for week
Ensuite Cabins	\$75.00 for week
Chapel cabins	\$60.00 for week

While this is a big change in the fee structure it is a better reflection of the true cost and is fairer on everyone. It should also be noted that the youth camp this year is at the same place and their fees are **\$170.00 – \$180.00** per person as are the national cadet camp fees.

A feminine focus

Life doesn't begin when you marry —

LYDIA BROWNBACK'S "FINE CHINA IS FOR SINGLE WOMEN TOO"

Sally Davey

I'm really fond of this little book—for a number of reasons. First of all, it deals with a familiar ache in women's hearts by taking us back to sound, true, profoundly reassuring biblical truths. Secondly, it is written by a single woman in her early forties who has learned the graces of contentment in Christ that she writes about. Thirdly, she is a member of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, the church that greatly helped me when I was a student in that city. She has benefited from its fine preaching ministry—her writing shows it. And finally, it is a most attractively produced book: P&R (Presbyterian and Reformed) has gone to some trouble to package this work in a refined, feminine format that beautifully matches its message.

Being single is difficult

Being single after you turn 25 or 30 when you're a Christian in a church that teaches the Bible faithfully isn't always fun. For a woman, especially, it's an anxious time. You've seen many of your friends fall in love and marry. Some even have several children. You wonder when—and if—it will ever be your turn. Week after week you hear good preaching on marriage, family life, the blessings of husbandly love, and the privilege of raising children in the faith. This, you sigh, doesn't include me. I've been written out of the plot. Good and truthful as this teaching is, we grieve. We look around us at happy couples planning weddings, at contented mothers and doting grandmothers. Lydia Brownback understands all this; she's been there—and, as far as I know, is still single. Why, she asks, do we want so much to be married? Why does being single cause us such grief?

It is a fact: we yearn for the intimate bond established between a man and a woman in marriage. This is because God created marriage, and He intends us to enjoy the togetherness that a man and a woman properly enjoy in marriage. Good, we might say; marriage is God's way for women (and men, of course!). Shouldn't it be for everyone? What is wrong with yearning for it? Often, nothing is wrong with it. But Lydia is brave enough to ask some

more questions, including some questions that probe into the motivations of our hearts and ask us where we are trying to find our sufficiency. For one thing, she has noticed the way our culture tells us we must have a sexual relationship in order to be fulfilled. Do you doubt this? Look at television, women's magazines, popular fiction, and most movies. The reflections of intelligent actors like Colin Firth on the anxieties of the Bridget Joneses of this world reveal that at heart, we all long for a secure and intimate relationship. And Christians are no exception. But because Christians know the desire for sexual intimacy can only be fulfilled in marriage, we long for someone to marry. Sadly, though, many of us also come to the conclusion that without being married we cannot be whole or complete—even in Christ.

Feeling left behind

Another thing that adds to the sense of angst is that we find our friends are settling down—peeling off into marriage. Gradually, or sometimes all of a sudden, panic hits and a young woman fears being left behind, on her own. This is how Lydia Brownback describes it: "The social structure changes. What was once a group of single friends becomes a group of couples, with the remaining one or two single friends feeling they no longer fit in. The mutual confidences and shared experiences diminish, resulting in loss of companionship and social stability for those who remain single. This occurs because when a single woman is called out of singleness into the exclusive intimacy required in marriage, the close friendships she has shared with other single friends become necessarily secondary. It is often true that commonalities make for friendships, so when those commonalities are greatly diminished, the friendship fades away. When a woman experiences the marriage of several close friends over the course of a relatively short number of years, the perpetual search for new friends with common ground can grow wearisome and discouraging." This is quite true. It is no wonder single women often feel lonely, out of place, unloved, sorry for themselves—and even desperate.

But this need not be. In fact, it *should not*

be. God gives us some important reasons why single women should think much differently about their single state, and about the prospect of marriage. Lydia Brownback begins with the most important fact: God is sovereign. The truth that God has ordained every detail of life for us, before we were born even; and that He created us with the chief purpose that we should glorify Him and enjoy Him forever, makes all the difference in the world to how we see our single state—whether it be temporary or permanent. As she writes:

"That is the key—looking beyond what we have or do not have today to see our lives in the light of eternity. The reason this is key is that everything about our lives has been ordained to lead to our eternal happiness—a happiness we begin to enjoy here and now—which is far greater than the fleeting happiness our desires provide. Once we have grasped this aspect of God's sovereignty, and as we are more and more conformed to his purposes for us rather than our own, we will be able to say, as the psalmist did,

*O, Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You maintain my lot.
The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;
Yes, I have a good inheritance.
(Psalm 16:5-6)"*

This truth grasped, and believed, we can be sure that everything is just as it should be. We may have a quiet heart, and contentment with our circumstances. We can begin to look for the opportunities our single situation gives us to serve our Father, knowing that what He has chosen is right for us (at least at the moment), and pleasing to Him.

The different callings

The second thing we need to realise is that we should have an accurate view of reality. This means truthfully assessing the struggles and challenges of the different callings in life God chooses for His people. Lydia illustrates this by telling the story of Tara, one of her friends, who works in the city and lives in a small apartment. Tara had recently come to the decision

that a long-term courtship with Tom was leading nowhere. Tom was a godly and attractive man, but she found she had trouble respecting his views on many things. Tara was aware that if she doubted his judgment now, she would find living with his leadership in marriage a constant challenge. Much as she wanted to be married, she desired even more to reflect the Lord Jesus in every part of her life. The Word of God was her final authority. So, not without sadness, she parted with Tom. But shortly after this, her younger brother married and she found herself envying both him and her sister-in-law. They lived in the suburbs, had a large garden, and her sister-in-law, some time later also a mother, was able to live a life of domesticity—so much easier than earning a living! But one evening, standing out at the barbeque with her brother, Tara had a reality check. She admitted that she envied her brother's life. "That's funny," he said, flipping a burger, "I envy your life! Every waking hour I have is spent taking care of other people. I go to work and please my boss. I come home and tend to the needs of my family and this house. On weekends I have to grab all the time I can with the kids since I get so little time during the week...I have no time to myself except driving to and from work." Tara then thought of her quiet evenings curled up with a good book, her ability to cook what she liked for dinner without considering what anyone else wanted. She could choose spur-of-the-moment outings, or ministry opportunities at church. No, the grass is not always greener over the fence. Each calling in life has its own special struggles with sin—one's own, or the sins of others.

The call to contentment

Then there is the fact that God calls us to contentment. We are not to covet; and we are not to commit idolatry. Both happen when we envy our married friends, and become discontented with the lot God has given us. We are rebelling against Him, robbing ourselves of joy, and spending time and energy that could be used in serving God and others. At times we can even make bad career, study, or relocation choices because we are determined to put ourselves in the way of a man we admire. In doing so, we can put ourselves out of the way of where God wants us to be; and out of the way of greater spiritual blessing. Lydia quotes Jeremiah 17:5-6:

*"Thus says the Lord:
'Cursed is the man who trusts in man
And makes flesh his strength,
Whose heart departs from the Lord.
For he shall be like a shrub in the
desert,
And shall not see when good comes,
But shall inhabit the parched places in
the wilderness,
In a salt land which is not inhabited."*

Contrast the blighted shrub in the desert

with the man who trusts God,

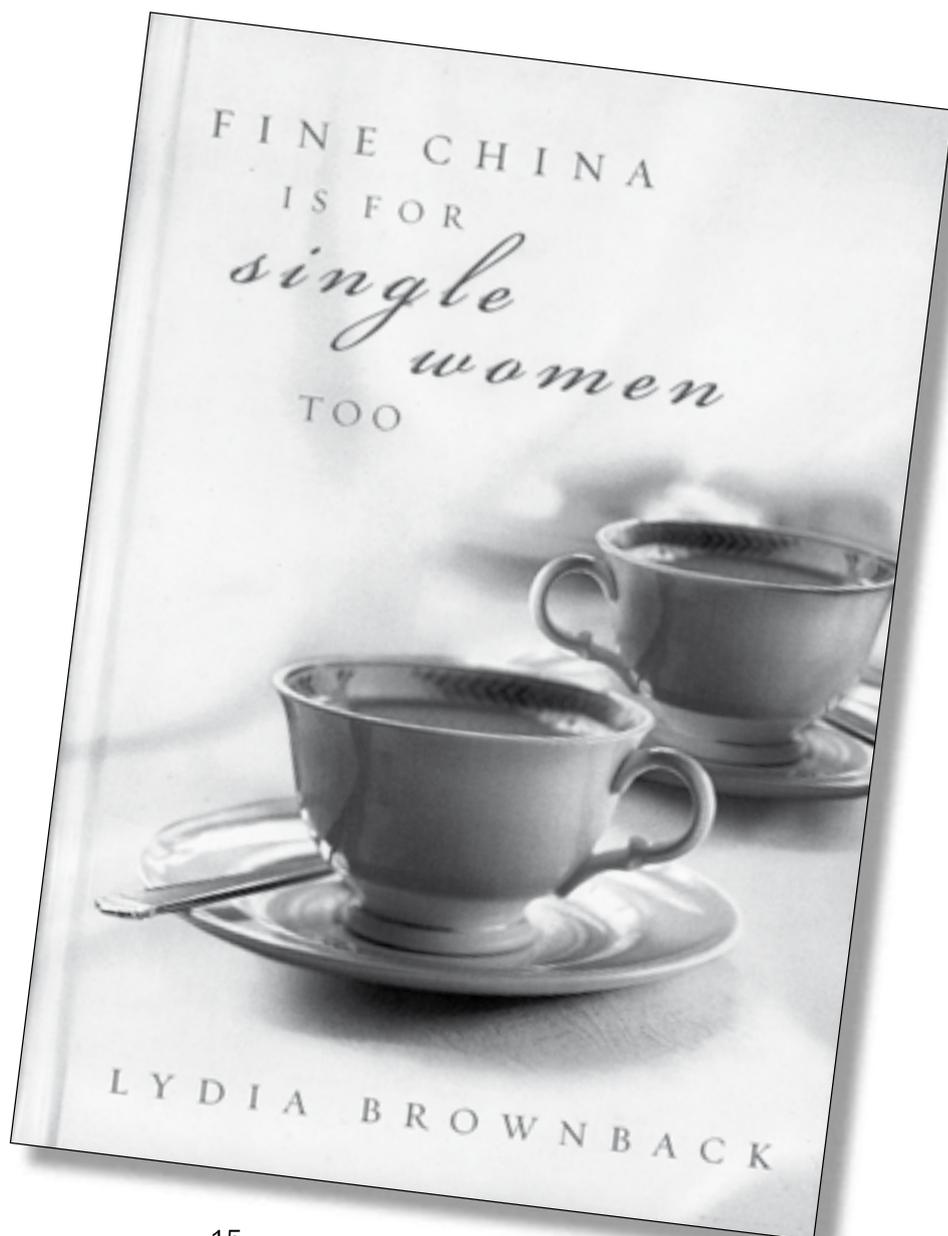
*"And whose hope is the Lord.
For he shall be like a tree planted by
the waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the
river,
And will not fear when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of
drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit."
(Jeremiah 17:7-8)*

Is God your hope, or is your hope centred only on the things you hope He will bring you? When God alone is your hope, and when you are living solely for Him, such faith brings its own rewards, Lydia reminds us. Are we truly thankful for all our Father gives us, and does for us, and *is* for us?

Living one day at a time

There is the further truth that God has called us to live one day at a time; and in that day,

with all our vigour. Sadly, many single women put their lives on hold from fear that investment in education, possessions or career will "lock" them into a single life. Some of Lydia's friends have put off buying furniture, or wait for years paying rent for apartments rather than purchasing a home, thinking that it would be a liability should they meet a man they may hope to marry. Others turn down opportunities for further study, fearing that advanced degrees may make them less attractive to some men. (I personally have heard it suggested that student debt may be bad for young women's marriage prospects.) Many do nothing to set themselves up with any proper kind of household equipment because they are waiting for the wedding gifts. This is sad—but it is also bad stewardship of the opportunities God gives us. Life, Lydia reminds us, "doesn't begin when we meet our man—this *is* our life!" We are accountable for how we spend it. Are we doing all we can, **now**, to equip ourselves for useful service? Are we getting to know God well? "Do we want to look back ten, twenty, or thirty years from



now," Lydia asks, "and realise that we have failed to serve God and have accomplished few of our goals, or worse yet, never set any goals because our only one was meeting the right man? I've known a few women like that [she adds], and they are bitter. They refused to see and lay hold of the happiness God was holding out in his design for them because they were set on only one way to happiness." Of course it is God's design for most women to marry; but we must not fritter away our time until then by wasteful inaction. There are many things we can do. For Lydia, it was writing. She decided to devote a year or two to theological study to prepare herself, and now she works for a Christian organisation producing a bible study programme for radio broadcast, as well as writing books and teaching women's bible studies in her church. She suggests finding opportunities to serve others in your church with whatever talents you have: if you love children, it could be babysitting, Sunday School classes or a children's evangelism programme. Do not become "a wicked and lazy servant"! (Matthew 25:26)

The best treasure

The message Lydia leaves is clear: we live for our Father in heaven, who is all in all to us, and who gives us all we can ever need or ask. Don't wait for wedding gifts or your first family home before you begin to serve Him and others. Be busy and fruitful in His service now! And take steps to prepare yourself for even greater usefulness. These are her parting words:

"We began by thinking about fine china and crystal – traditional bridal treasures. Yet through these seven chapters we have learned that biblical tradition can rule us rather than worldly custom. Therefore, one doesn't need to be a bride to acquire fine dishes for serving guests. Perhaps you already have a china pattern in mind along with plans for collecting place settings sufficient for a dinner party. Yet whether or not you decide to acquire china, you already possess the best treasure for serving guests, and that is Christ himself. Finer than gold-rimmed Limoges is a life committed to Christ and put to use for his glory. Offer your singleness to God. Ask Him to use it in His redemptive plans in the place where he has set you. Allow Him to take your singleness and make it beautiful. Let that be your finest china."

Reprints of articles in Faith in Focus can be obtained by contacting the Editor

Children in focus



Sonshine Korner

A Better Life:

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

After her grandmother's funeral, Leah sat on her bed with a photo album on her lap. Tears blurred her vision as she looked at pictures of a teenage Grandma standing by an automobile. There were more recent pictures of Grandma in her flower garden and dressed in her Sunday best.

Leah heard talking and laughter downstairs. Everyone was having a good time, everyone but her. How can they talk and eat and laugh like nothing's happened? she wondered. Leah thought that, even at the funeral, most people her parents included, did not behave as though they were sorry Grandma had died. I won't be like that, she thought. I loved Grandma too much.

After a while, Leah's mother came looking for her. "Are you all right, honey?" asked Mum. "You've been so quiet today."

Anger bubbled up in Leah. "It sounds like one big party downstairs, I hear you all laughing," she stormed. "It seems like I'm the only one who feels terrible about Grandma's death. Everyone else seems ... seems happy about it."

Her mother sat on the bed beside her. "We'll all miss Grandma very much," she said, "but we've been remembering the good times we had with her." Mum took Leah's hands. "These last few years, Grandma suffered because of her illness, but that's over now. We've talked about

her new life in heaven with no more pain, remember?"

"Well . . . yes, but . . ." Leah wiped her eyes.

"Remember how you missed our dog after we gave him to the Johnson's?" asked Mum. "But he was way too big to be comfortable in our apartment. In fact, he was miserable cooped up here. Would you want to bring him back?"

"No." Leah shook her head. "I still miss him, but I know he's happier on the Johnson's farm with all the room he has to run and play," she admitted. "He has a much better life there than we could give him here."

"It's a little like that for Grandma," said Mum. "She's no longer suffering, and she's with Grandpa and others who went to heaven before her. Best of all, she's with Jesus." Leah nodded and managed to smile a little.

"I'll come downstairs now," she said as she stood up. "I miss her, but I am glad she's living in a better place."

MEMORY VERSE: "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21

HOW ABOUT YOU? Has someone you love died? It's natural to miss that person. It's okay to cry, too. But if your loved one knew Jesus as their Savior then he or she has begun a better life with Jesus in heaven, so don't be too sad. Thank God for the time you had with that person, and for the good memories you can still enjoy.

A Better Life Word Find:

Find the words from the list below hidden in the puzzle. They are in all directions.

Happy hunting! 😊

X H G O O D T I M E F N Q N I A G W K X
 W R O Z S P P T L A E U Z Y M U V T D Y
 I W N M H U E P I V L O L A R E N U F E
 E T D O E A S T A V R I J S H A P P Y N
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 D R L A N R E T E T A H C G I T N S U V
 M E W I X I G N I R E F F U S K Q M R T
 J D A G V R A I B Z F A Q M T B S T D O
 Z E V O C E W P X R Q P W M I N A F E V
 Y F O A T N E D I F N O C O F S D R N U
 Y I A L W O W D E Y O R T S E D S E E S
 K L V N L S F G D U N H A P P Y U I D X
 C W T N E M E G D U J P Y A S H G A N U
 R N R I W P S T A S E I R O M E M R R G
 Y B G F R E T T E B R V O P D Z N Q J L

BETTER
 BLURRED
 BURDENED
 CLOTHED
 CONFIDENT
 CRY
 DEATH
 DESTROYED
 DIE
 EARTHLY TENT

ETERNAL
 FAITH
 FUNERAL
 GAIN
 GOAL
 GOD
 GOODTIME
 GROAN
 HAPPY
 HEAVEN

HOME
 JESUS
 JOY
 JUDGEMENT
 LIFE
 LIVE
 MEMORIES
 MISSING
 MORTAL
 PAIN

PHOTO
 QUIET
 SAD
 SAVIOR
 SICKNESS
 SUFFERING
 SUNDAY
 TEARS
 TERRIBLE
 UNHAPPY

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

The letter to the editor from Brs. Stewart, Snoek & Baird criticizes both the editor and/or Rev. Milne on a number of points: superficiality; a lofty & dismissive tone; redundancy – the “tonic” is applied to the wrong audience; manner of correction – gracelessness & glibness; the idea that doctrine, not Christ, saves; a hasty and unproven charge that the pope leads men away from Christ and needs to be converted.

While I cannot address here all these accusations with the depth I would like, allow me to make a few points. Firstly, I should like to point out that this letter falls into a trap that is not uncommon in our “politically correct” age. The accusation that certain men are superficial, graceless & loveless, glib, writers of nonsense, lacking in charity, is itself lacking in these things. The closest this letter comes to anything positive is the statement that being editor of Faith in Focus must be a demanding and often thankless job!

Secondly, this letter’s response to the point about the Scripture’s negativity argues by exaggeration. The editor surely did not mean that Christians ought to be graceless, unloving and uncaring in dealing with others – be they believers or unbelievers. I believe his point was somewhat tongue-in-cheek: that if the same standards being applied to Rev. Milne’s article by Rev. Zuidema were applied to the Scripture, then the approach of the prophets and apostles could be called into question. This point warrants careful consideration. True, the attacks of the inspired authors of the Bible were carried along by the Holy Spirit in a way we cannot claim today. But they also demonstrate that the Lord does not require His people to preface their warnings, admonitions and condemnations with positive strokes in every case. In fact, if you look at the words the Lord Jesus spoke against the Scribes & Pharisees (as a class), or the apostle Paul against the Judaizers, or against Hymenaeus, Alexander & Philetus, it may be that *nothing* positive is said at all! The apostle certainly commands Timothy to correct gently those who are in opposition (2 Tim. 2:25). But if they persist, “rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning” (1 Tim. 5:20). If this does not bring repentance, they are “handed over to Satan” (1 Tim. 1:20). In 2 Cor. 10, similarly, Paul writes that he does not want to terrify his readers by being too strong. But if they join with the Judaizers in seeking to undermine his ministry, he will have to be strong with them when he comes. He will be ready to punish all disobedience. The point is that in dealing with brethren, we do not want

to *have* to be strong, but if they persist in a way that seriously damages Christ’s church, introducing “gangrene,” we must take up the same kind of approach as the prophets, the apostles, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, there is the claim that Christ, not doctrine, saves. This is a false dichotomy. Christ saves *by means of* His Word and Spirit together. Hence, “the Truth will make you free” (Jn. 8:33). The Word of God, the Truth, is both incarnate and written. Our systematic formulation of the Truth is still, in substance, the Truth that sets men free. Roman Catholicism, and other false systems, mix in significant error with some Truth, and thereby partially obscures the Truth. God may strike straight blows with crooked sticks, leading some to salvation through the element of Truth that errorists preach. But He also allows some to be led to hell through these errors. He therefore warns the church to oppose such errors, and to do so strongly if there is no repentance.

Fourthly, regarding the Roman Catholic Church and the pope. Keep in mind, the last two popes have been “conservatives.” That means they uphold what we uphold on abortion and many other moral issues. It also means they uphold the historical RC doctrines re justification, the role of Mary as a co-Mediatrix alongside Christ, the Mass, prayers to saints, the use of images, and so on. This is rank idolatry. There are, no doubt, some Catholics who reject these idolatries, turn to Christ alone, and are saved. The pope(s), however, defend this idolatrous system. Throughout redemptive history, God has been willing to cast aside those

syncretists who tried to add idolatry to Christ – as with the golden calf, and the Judaizers who added circumcision to Christ as the way of salvation. The Heidelberg Catechism is therefore correct to warn us against the “condemnable idolatry” of the Mass.(LD 30); the Belgic Confession, similarly, against the “damnable inventions” added to the sacraments (Art. 35); and the Westminster Confession, against the “gross idolatries” of the Roman view (chap. 29:6). LD 11, Q/A 30 insists that those who look for their salvation and security in saints or in themselves may boast of being Christ’s but by their deeds deny Him.

Lastly, the letter seems to reflect a hyper-covenantal view, as some call it. This is a big subject that cannot be dealt with adequately here. The idea is that relationship with God is derived primarily from our relationship with the church, entered by baptism. But it is not enough to say that someone is baptized in the Triune Name, and must therefore be treated as a Christian. The Pharisees were circumcised members of the covenant, but their persistence in sin and error caused God to reject them. Hymenaeus & co. were apparently baptized members of the NT church at first, as was Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8. To be sure, if we meet a Roman Catholic we do not need to assume he is an unbeliever. But if, like the present and (most) past popes, he upholds the idolatries of the Roman system, that is a very different matter.

Rev. P.N. Archbald

Mission in focus

Janice Reid

Bringing Hope in South Africa

‘Her hand stretched out to me in desperation. She was 21 years old, but she cried like a small child: “Please don’t go, don’t leave me alone!” My heart was breaking, but I had to go; I had to leave her. But alone? No, she was not alone. Just over a month ago, Siphenthangi came to know our Lord as hers, and confessed Jesus Christ as her Saviour. Praise God for His mercies—for

two days after Siphenthangi cried out to me, she cried out to her Lord for the last time...before she left this earth and went to be with Him: calling out His praises, in His presence, for ever.

‘Anna is still with us—she has not gone home to her Lord, but she is ready to, when He calls. What a change from a year ago! She was brought into the hospice (Holy Cross Home) in a wheelchair, weighing just 42kg: a ruin both physically and spiritually. But today Anna walks strongly, dresses well, and best of all she knows her Saviour. She will have a secure home with Him when her illness finally overtakes her. In the meantime, though, she has regained enough strength that she can leave the hospice and move back to her earthly home, to live with her mother and with Happy, Anna’s 12-year-old son.

‘And what about Bongani? He was in the hospice for only two days—and he died without trusting Christ as his Lord and Saviour (as

far as we know). Where is Bongani now? He is where God is not. How lonely—how lost!’

A ministry to HIV/AIDS

These stories are tragic—even the ones that have happy endings. Each of these three people has suffered from HIV/AIDS. So for Anna, as for Siphentangi and Bongani, the earthly story will have an ending that is all too predictable. But each of these people were ministered to by a Home that offers comfort, and introduces them to God’s grace in their time of suffering...a place where they are introduced to the One who can redeem them from their sins.

King’s Hope is a development organisation started by the Hope Community Church, a Reformed fellowship in Olievenhoutbosch-Centurion, situated between Pretoria and Johannesburg, South Africa. They have three main areas of ministry: food for the poor, career skills for people in an area that has 45% unemployment, and relief for those suffering from HIV/AIDS.

The Holy Cross Home (a.k.a. Place of Grace) is a hospice for HIV/AIDS patients. It aims to use the impact of this devastating disease to bring people to the feet of Jesus. Remember the Gospel story of the paralysed man? His friends carried him, even though he could not come himself. They brought him to Jesus (Luke 5:19,20). In the same way, even as the Holy Cross Home offers physical relief to those who are suffering, its workers also bring patients to the feet of Jesus, introducing them to the One true Healer.

A description

Magdel Williams, the Programme Leader for the Holy Cross Home, describes the ministry:

Q: How did it all start?

A: ‘Three years ago, we started helping HIV+ people. We realised that it was essential to remove some people from their homes in squatter settlements. Some were living in places that had no running water or proper sanitation, and yet they were suffering from symptoms like diarrhoea and vomiting. Their shacks were stifling—they could be 50 degrees C inside, under the tin roof! It was essential to move them to a better environment where they could get proper care. Then, when their condition stabilised, they could return home.

‘As soon as we realised this, we started looking for suitable premises. Before long we located a 5-bedroom house owned by the local government. Negotiations started in November 2002. One year and 8 months later the contract was signed, and we moved in.

‘Now dying people have a better environment, where they can die in dignity, surrounded by loving, caring people. Many of our patients are not Christians when they arrive. The time is often very short before they die. We pray the Lord to open ways for those in our care, that



Clinic from the outside

they will come to know Him as Lord—and many do, quite often just before they die.

‘We have 2 full-time Spiritual Carers taking care of people from the moment they come to us for support. Weekly Bible studies are offered to all registered patients in our Health Care Programme.’

Q: What are your main areas of ministry?

A: ‘Our programme aims to mobilise and involve the local community, especially Christians, to assist with resources and become personally involved in caring for people who suffer from HIV/AIDS. We seek to prevent new infections by reaching out to the community with evangelism, supporting new believers as they join with a local congregation, and teaching people God’s answer to AIDS: abstinence before marriage, and faithfulness within marriage.

‘Our HIV/AIDS ministry provides support on four different levels. First, we give medical support to treat opportunistic infections and to help patients maintain a healthy diet that will slow the progress of such infections. We provide home-based as well as hospice/respite care.

‘Second, we give emotional support to patients, their families and friends. Third is the administrative side, where we help patients to make out their wills. We help to plan funerals, and we try to help orphans find a placement with suitable foster parents—supporting them with grants where needed.

‘Fourth (and most important) is the spiritual support. We help patients as they deal with the pain of rejection by their families and community. We seek to help them reconcile with their families. We share the Gospel with unbelievers,

and we provide weekly Bible studies to encourage and strengthen people’s faith.

Q: What would you like to be doing?

A: ‘We would like to increase the number of monthly food hampers we provide for patients. We also provide fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis, and we’d like to be able to provide more of those.

‘We want to develop a stronger basis of support for vulnerable children and orphans.

‘We’d love to get local pastors more actively involved, and see them providing more support for members of their congregations who have HIV/AIDS. And really, the church’s response to this disease is still minimal, so we’d like to see the whole church more involved in reaching out to HIV/AIDS patients.’

Q: What are some of the obstacles you face?

A: ‘Sometimes our own lack of faith in God and His provision and love causes the biggest stumbling blocks in serving Him. We try so hard to solve problems in our own strength—but then our solutions are typically human-sized! Let me tell you, human-sized solutions do not work for the HIV/AIDS challenge!

‘It is heart-breaking and spiritually draining to “work in death”—seeing so many people infected, suffering and eventually dying. Numbers of children without parents are growing. Workers suffer from burnout and there is no one to stand in for them. And as a result, the quality and effectiveness of our service are affected.

‘Even though people are seeing AIDS in reality, many still continue to be put their own and others’ lives at risk by high-risk behaviour. Many, and I do mean many, still do not know



Magdel and staff

God and His answer to AIDS—honouring marriage and being faithful.

‘Then He said to them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth labourers into His harvest.’ Luke 10:2 (Modern King James Version). The labourers to share the Gospel, the Good News, are truly few!

‘Insufficient funding sometimes makes it difficult to render a high quality service, but the Lord has always been our Provider and though we need to work carefully with what He provides, we have never been unable to help. We need finance for cleaning materials, food, special dietary needs for our patients, and money to pay electricity bills, maintenance and staff. Also, a suitable vehicle to transport patients to the clinic and hospital is a huge immediate need.

‘People are needed to run a 24-hour caring service. We need doctors, registered nurses, and care givers who can take care of our patients. The pressure on health care services in South Africa is large and people with applicable training and experience are sometimes almost impossible to find.’

Q: Do you have the support of other churches in South Africa?

A: ‘It is a privilege to have many partners. We are able to offer to Christians an opportunity to practically love and serve the Lord’s children. We invite them to become obedient to Jesus’ call to serve and finish the work He gave us (John 17:4)

‘We have close links with the local Reformed Church (Hope Community Church). Rev. France Mookisi from HCC is the chairman of

the Board of Directors of King’s Hope. Many other Reformed congregations are supporting us as well. We even have support from USA, England and the Netherlands.

‘We encourage new converts to add themselves to the Body of Christ for discipling and growth in their faith. HCC takes responsibility for this.’

Q: How can we share in this ministry even though we are far away?

A: ‘We are praying for people to come and work with us, saying “We want to share in your destiny, because we have heard that God is with you” Zechariah 8:23 (Good News Bible). The destiny we are sharing is really something people long for—eternal life!

‘Please write to me if you would like to get more information. It is so easy to contact me at magdel@kingshope.co.za or visit our website at <http://www.kingshope.co.za>

King’s greetings, and may our Giver of Hope bless you abundantly!

Magdel Williams
Programme Leader

News from the Wingards

Brian and Dorothy Wingard from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (USA) are still awaiting visas to re-enter Eritrea so they can continue their ministry there. They write: We are praising God for the increase in the number of people coming to worship in Asmara, for reconciliation among members of the Ghinda congregation,

and for zeal among the worshipers in Minahe, near Adi Keih. The graduates of the theological college, Mikias, Amanuel, and Solomon G., in turn, have continued to teach a Sunday morning adult class on the Westminster Shorter Catechism with understanding and skillfulness in teaching. Recently the Saturday School teachers prepared a special time of Bible knowledge competition and food; the fifty-three children who attended were delighted! At this time we have permission to start a new class at the theological college, which should begin mid-September. Applications have been reviewed, and now students need to be interviewed and selected. Their “opening” convocation and the formal graduation of the previous class is scheduled for October 8. Please continue to pray that visas will soon be issued for the Wingards and for Jonathan and Margaret Falk so that they can return to their work with Meherete Yesus Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the theological college.

MIF prayer notes

1) Jared Berends asks us to pray that he and his team-mate would have wisdom as they seek to lead a leaders’ meeting. Lord willing, they plan to meet once a week with potential leaders to provide teaching, so that these people can in turn be sent out in the future to witness to those in remote areas.

2) Heidi Posthuma is delighted that a local friend of hers is willing to meet her for weekly Bible studies. Heidi asks us to pray that she would have other opportunities to share with people she knows. Please also pray that a permanent team-mate will be found to help her with her teaching next semester: the co-worker she has at the moment is a temporary one.

3) Wally and Jeannette Hagoort ask us to pray for them as they continue to minister in Papua New Guinea. Pray for Jeannette’s work at Mapang Guest House. And pray especially for plans for the construction of the Leadership Training Centre on the new 14 mile property.

4) Janice Reid is on deputation in New Zealand at this time, and at the time of writing it seems likely that she is still working through the application process for joining HCJB World Radio. There will be more on her future assignment as details become known. Pray for safe travel within New Zealand, for clear communication as she speaks at different churches, and for the Lord’s direction for future service.