

# Gleanings



Recently I was looking at my bookshelves for a particular book when I found something else. The unexpected find was entitled *God in my Unbelief*, J W Stevenson, Collins, London, 1960. The title brought to mind the recorded incident in Mark 9:14-24. The father of an epileptic boy had watched the unsuccessful attempts of the disciples to heal his son. Then Jesus assured the man that healing depended upon belief. Immediately, the father says, "I believe, help my unbelief." Such an honest response, and yet, isn't there ambiguity in this response?

Belief and unbelief is a common experience although the unbelief component is not often acknowledged. The period of Lent is an appropriate time for thinking and evaluating our faith and practice. One area of belief and unbelief often appears in prayers of intercession. Is it true that we sometimes limit what we seek from God? Do we just pray for what seems reasonable to us to expect?

## Prayer:

Christ, how we defend and conserve what is obscure and obsolete! We evade the point, afraid to ask, afraid to be seen not to know, even when your way ahead is clear but offends common sense.

You can't really mean that any way! - So we say.

Christ, don't be too patient with us, but take us firmly on one side.

Teach us your open secret to welcome you in the child, in the vulnerable,

Whom the world judges of no importance.

Teach us a greatness – out with pride and respectability – to turn our world and ourselves upside down.

And as we see greatness in each one, in your love and affirmation so may we celebrate! Amen.

*(Lent & Easter Readings from Iona, ed Neil Paynter, 2001, p.41)*

- Nan Burgess

## Triennial Conference

1-3 May, Palmerston North.

We celebrate 45 years of APW. We welcome your prayer support for the conference and God's direction as we look ahead.

## Conference Wearable Recycled Art

Hope there will be creations from each region but individuals are encouraged to make their creation and be part of this too.

**APW Website.** Recently access has been improved so do investigate. Go to the internet and find [www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz) click on **Ministries** and scroll down to APW. We are hoping for increased numbers to use this site. –Heather Tate.

## School of Ministry Student Support

**Fund** has now been closed and the surplus handed over to the Rev Dr Graham Redding. We thank Carol Pirie and Elizabeth Peterson for their long and loyal commitment to this task. Now that the Ministry Interns will be attached to parishes all around New Zealand it is hoped that support may continue – perhaps through Presbyteries. APW could still have the opportunity to be involved. Bring any thoughts you have to Conference.

**APW represented at New York.** As the Gleanings is being prepared Mary McIntyre, our United Nations Convener is meeting in New York for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) with Government and Non-government representatives. She will also take part in discussions with the Ecumenical Women – a group from a variety of Christian Churches. We look forward to hearing Mary's experiences on her return.



## News from Turakina:

There have been changes in the College family. Towards the end of the last term of 2008 Dawn Mitai-Pehi tendered her resignation as Principal/CEO Hostel. And started this year as Principal back in her own Alma Mater, Rangatahi College, Murupara. Over the eleven plus years she has been at TMGC Dawn has worked tirelessly to take the College forward scholastically and socially. In this she has been very successful. The College is a very different place to what it was when Dawn came. A poroaki was held near the end of the term, where girls, staff, and members of the Boards and Friends all conveyed their best wishes to Dawn.

This has meant that we have started the year with the Deputy Principal, Kere Mihaere, stepping up to be Acting Principal and the Chaplain, the Rev Heather Mataamua, adding the job of CEO Hostel to her other duties

We are advertising for applicants for the combined position, or if that is unsuccessful, for two separate positions. We would welcome any inquiries.



# Easter meditations

## THE DONKEY'S OWNER

Snaffled my donkey, he did- good luck to him!-  
Rode him astride, feet dangling, near scraping the ground.  
Gave me the laugh of my life when I first see them,  
Remembering yesterday – you know, how Pilate come  
Bouncing along the same road, only that horse of his  
Big as a bloody house and the armour shining  
And half Rome trotting behind. Tight-mouthed he was,  
Looking he owned the world.

Him and my little donkey! Ha –laugh?-  
I thought I'd kill myself when he first started.  
So did the rest of them. Gave him a cheer  
Like he was Caesar himself, only more hearty:  
Tore off some palm-twigs and followed shouting,  
Whacking the donkey's behind... Then suddenly  
We see his face.  
The smile had gone, and somehow the way he sat  
Was different- like he was much older- you know-  
Didn't want to laugh no more.

– Clive Sansom.



## from RESURRECTION

The tomb, the tomb, that  
Was her core and care, her one sore.  
The light had hardly scarleted the dark  
Or the first bird sung when Mary came in sight  
With eager feet. Grief, like last night's frost,  
Whitened her face and tightened all her tears.  
It was there, then, there at the blinding turn  
Of the bare future that she met her past.  
She only heard his angel tell her how  
The holding stone broke open and gave birth  
To her dear Lord, and how his shadow ran  
To meet him like a dog.  
And as the sun  
Burns through the shimmering muslins of the mist  
Slowly his darkened voice, that seemed like doubt,  
Morned into noon; the summering bees  
Mounted and boiled over in the bell-flowers.  
'Come out of your jail, Mary,' he said,  
"the doors are open  
and joy has its ear cocked for your coming.  
Earth now is no place to mope in. So throw away  
Your doubt, cast every clout of care,  
Hang all your hallelujahs out  
This airy day."

-W.R.Rodgers

## SIMON THE CYRENIAN SPEAKS

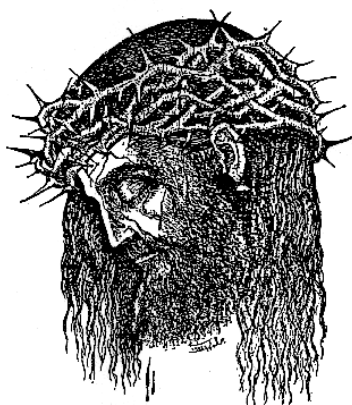
He never spoke a word to me,  
And yet he called my name;  
He never gave a sign to me,  
And yet I knew and came.

At first I said 'I will not bear  
His cross upon my back;  
He only seeks to place it there,  
Because my skin is black.'

But he was dying for a dream,  
And he was very meek,  
And in his eyes there shone a gleam  
Men journey far to seek.

It was Himself my pity bought;  
I did for Christ alone  
What all of Rome could not have wrought  
With bruise of lash or stone.

- Countee Cullen



(These meditations are found in *Let there be God*, an anthology of Religious Poetry, Religious Education Press Ltd, Oxford, 1968)