



MEDITATION September brings the delight of spring. Gardens are ablaze with colour and the mystery of God's presence. From the darkness and dampness of winter emerge the beauty of golden daffodils, multi-coloured ranunculus, polyanthus, hyacinths, violets and how different they are in shape, scent and stance. Recently I lingered before a magnolia tree. The soft, grey, furry buds are sedate in their uprightness, and almost secretly they open their beautiful petals to the world. And we admire even as we wonder.

Leslie Francis writes of *The Presence of Mystery* in an anthology entitled, 'A Feast of Words' –
Look at your life: see how it is full of mystery and awe.

Everyday experiences and the hum-drum world around you are charged with a mysterious depth and presence.
Look at your life: see how it is full of mystery and awe.

Unexpected happenings, puzzling occurrences, old things seen in a new way:

mystery lies at the heart of your life. It beckons you closer ... See how, at the heart of the mystery, a personal presence greets you and demands your response

It is the mystery of God's love towards which you are irresistibly attracted and yet before which you tremble in awe.

SNIPPETS

- Surprisingly, Mt. Albert Church, Auckland has two continuing APW groups – a Guild and a Missionary Union group. Some of the membership are, of course, in their nineties, and eighties but they continue with interest and great generosity. A suggestion a few years ago was to have the occasional 'Mission Moment' in a morning worship service when the children are still present. This is about three minutes of current news about mission beyond the parish. It may be overseas with news from the Global Mission Gazette, or Friends of Jagadhri newsletter of Christian World Service, or some source of news of mission in the community, or other parts of New Zealand. We would like to recommend the idea be picked up more widely.
Margaret Martin

- St Paul's, Timaru** have donated 39 cot blankets, 2 small blankets, 7 jerseys, 12 hats, a cardigan, three pair of bootees, a matinee jacket and a donation of \$50 to Operation Cover-up this year. They are also donating \$100 from their funds towards the cost of shipping.
Alison Linscott

There is a wonderful law of
nature that the three things
we crave most in life,
happiness, freedom and peace
of mind, are always attained by
giving them to someone else.

- Anon

- Can you help?** Central Otago APW are struggling to find a suitable 'special' resource for Christmas Devotions. They are looking for something which does not involve too much learning and which would involve a number of people. If you can help please contact Gaye Stevens gestevens@xtra.co.nz

A Pacific Prayer

Compassionate God,
United as a family of your Pacific people
We pray for all humanity yearning for
peace

in our hearts
in our minds
and for the world

We pray for those who have no peace-
for the anxious and frightened
for the ignored and despairing
for those who are ravaged by war
for those whose way of life has been
wrecked by disaster,
prey to disease, hunger and death.

And we pray for those deprived of home,
livelihood and decent health because of
the insensitive brutality of others.

We ask that peace reigns through the
storms of life

Make us your messengers of truth.
Make us loving and forgiving of each
other;
Gentle and generous to all we meet,
Following the example of Christ
Who in the face of hatred
Persisted in love.

Opening the way for all humanity
From despair to hope
From death to life. Amen.

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Seeking a Healthy Future in the Pacific

The Churches' Agency on International Issues is contracted to Christian World Service and offers this insight on the health in Pacific nations published in July, 2007.

Pacific nations face huge health challenges. Endemic diseases like malaria are getting worse rather than better, and tuberculosis still kills 2,700 people in Papua New Guinea in one year alone. Now, HIV and AIDS, already of epidemic proportions in Papua New Guinea, are threatening to spread through the rest of the Pacific "like a dangerously powerful storm that has come from offshore."

For small nations like Tuvalu and Kiribati there is a potential time bomb because most of their young men who are recruited to work on overseas ships are travelling the world and visiting places where HIV is prevalent. They return home where there are no adequate testing facilities for HIV let alone drugs to cope with the disease they might have picked up while away.

But it is not only the communicable diseases like malaria, TB and HIV that are the problem. There is a growing threat from non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cancer, cardio-vascular disease and obesity placing a huge pressure on a very fragile health system. If there is not adequate funding for the treatment of these diseases then the situation will escalate. Ending poverty begins with health. "It has been well established that better health reduces poverty and reduced poverty improves health". *NZAID Policy Document*

What are the Pacific Churches Saying?

A consultation in Nadi, Fiji organized by Pacific member churches of the World Council of Churches brought together 36 church people from throughout the Pacific to work out a Pacific response to the HIV and AIDS. At the end of their consultation the participants put together a statement which has become known as the 'Nadi Declaration'.

"We believe that the Church as the body of Christ comprises family, youth, women, men and children. Each complements the other; united in solidarity with positive people.* As the Church we have an unique role to love all, to be a caring and healing community and to stop stigmatizing and discriminating against positive people. So we, the Churches, are encouraged to seek forgiveness from God and from positive people for not doing what we ought to have done, and for contributing to their pain and suffering. This will enable us to heal our communities and liberate us to be a healing and reconciling community."

* The name given by Pacific people to those who are HIV positive.

(This is a good document for group discussion. To download a copy refer to: www.wcc-coe/resources/documents)

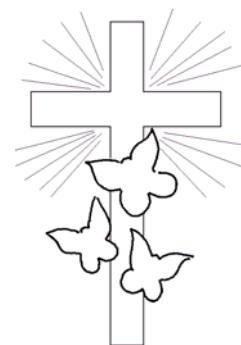
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Sincere Thanks

In July the new Policy and Administration Group had the opportunity to present Book Vouchers on behalf of APW to Natalie, Mary and Margaret for their willing leadership, management and inspiration of the P & A Group over the last three years. Natalie and Mary were then presented with the quilt made at the National APW meeting in May, 2007 as part of the study on Tabitha, 'Clothing the World with Love' prepared by our Moderator. We are indebted to Pamela for stitching the quilt in readiness for presentation.

Mary North and Natalie Watkin show the APW special quilt presented to them.



National Co-ordinating Group News:

Are you travelling this year? ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking) New Zealand has set up a hot line for travellers to report any instances of child sex abuse. In some countries children are targeted by foreign paedophiles and sex tourists and from time to time travellers might become aware of such crimes taking place. If so, you are urged to make use of this hot line and send whatever information you have. Send messages to: www.reportchildsex.com email: office@ecpat.org.nz or P.O. Box 41264, St. Luke's, Auckland.

ECPAT International has offices in 72 countries so information can quickly be communicated to appropriate people.

For the last ten years money from our Mission Birthday Gift and Stamps has been allocated to ECPAT.

Alison Linscott.

The United Nations Secretary General's Study of Violence against Women:

Thank you to all groups and individuals who responded to the UN Secretary General's Study of Violence against Women Questionnaire. I collated the responses and sent them on to the United Nations for inclusion in the information inputted to

the Study. The Study was presented to the General Assembly in October, 2006 and was included in the programme of the Commission on the Status of Women in February/March 2007.

The Study aims to:

- highlight the persistence and unacceptability of all forms of violence against women around the world
- strengthen the political commitment and joint efforts of all stakeholders to prevent and eliminate violence against women
- identify ways to ensure more sustained and effective implementation of countries' obligations to address violence against women and to increase accountability

The document is available on the internet: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/SGstudyvaw.htm>

I realize that some folk do not have access to the internet, and I would be very happy to send a copy of the Executive Summary of the Study to anyone who would like one. The opportunity to input to this Study was a direct result of the Consultative Status of APW, and an example of how we as members of APW can contribute to the work of the UN Division for the Advancement of Women.

Mary McIntyre

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What more can the Church Do?

In 2006 the Christian Conference of Asia called on its member churches to mobilize in a creative response to HIV and AIDS.

It said the Church is called to:

- promote a theology of life, reaffirming that AIDS is neither a sin nor a punishment from God.
- break the culture of silence, ignorance and denial in the face of human suffering
- challenge the health policies of governments to pursue people-centered and life-centered development
- encourage Church leaders to gain scientific knowledge and capacity skills to combat the disease
- join hands with other people-organizations, including associating with people who live with HIV and AIDS
- be visible in the suffering and struggle of the people

An international alliance of churches (including the WCC) in a publication in 2006 set out five goals for churches.

- fight stigma and discrimination
- promote prevention
- mobilize resources
- get access to treatment
- promote accountability

A New APW Study Grant:

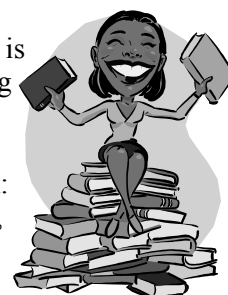
The Association of Presbyterian Women is pleased to offer a grant to women seeking Christian Training to help with Course Costs.

Application forms may be obtained from:
Mrs. Jill Little, APW National Secretary,
P.O. Box 489, Feilding.

Phone 06 323.8218

email jlittleapw@orcon.net.nz

Applications close on 30 September 2007



Regional News

Manawatu Presbyterial were treated to an enlightening address by the Rev. Jim Symons from Pasadena, USA who is interim minister at St. David's, Palmerston North. He told us of his church's involvement in the American Civil Rights Movement, of providing a safe place for the refugees from Mexico and of the struggle of the Indians of North West USA with the authorities who were denying them their natural fishing grounds. It was so good to hear these justice stories first hand.

Marjorie Empson

St. Margaret's, Wakatipu Parish conducted their Church service on a very frosty morning of July. 'Our theme was East Timor, to inform our part of the parish about our Overseas Mission for 2007. We had prayers, hymns and stories with this in mind. Six ladies took part, and we were privileged to have Sister Maryanna Baird, a Dominican Sister to speak about her experiences when visiting their Convent School in East Timor. It seems the whole service touched everyone as the retiring offering was very generously supported. A rewarding experience for us, and we now know more about Timor Leste.

Margaret Livingstone



Bridgebuilders' Fifth International Conference, Taiwan – 28 May – 3 June 2008

This occasion will provide an unique opportunity to meet Asian Christian Women. To be eligible all you need to do is to subscribe to Bridgebuilders' Trust NZ by sending \$20 with your name and mail/email/fax addresses to Bridgebuilders Trust Office, 70 Khyber Pass Road, Grafton, Auckland. The theme of the Conference is 'The Role of Women in Upholding the Dignity and Integrity of all God's Creation'. We are sure that Asian hospitality will be second to none and that the conference will be a very enriching experience. Do seriously consider joining us.

Lynne Milne.