



## *Advent & Christmas Meditations*

### **Christmas Poor**

Christmas Poor  
You are the caller  
You are the poor  
You are the stranger at my door.

Wanderer  
The unfed  
You are the homeless  
With no bed.

You are the man  
Driven insane  
You are the child crying in pain.  
You are the other who comes to me  
If I open to another you're born in me.

David Adams – *The Edge of Glory*



My life is a gift of  
God,  
Given not in years,

But a day at a time.  
Today is the day that the Lord has  
made.

He planned it to be the most  
important

You are the day of my life.

Yesterday is gone,  
Never to return.

I must not worry about it.  
But leave it in the care of God.  
Tomorrow and all it holds is God's  
secret, and its coming is not  
assured.

Only today is mine  
Each day arranged by God.  
With infinite wisdom and goodness  
Is His gift, His act of love for me.

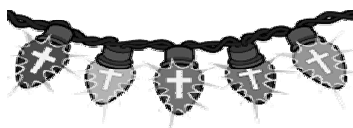
In thanksgiving I will offer Him  
Everyday the gift of myself.  
My prayers, works, joys, sufferings.  
Dear Lord, graciously receive it.

## **The Presence of Mystery**

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 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, yet you draw  
back afraid. What is this experience  
of depth and presence?

Look at your life: see how at the  
heart of the mystery, a personal  
presence greets you and demands  
your response. It is Christ himself  
who reveals.



## **Regional News ....**

- **St. Mark's, Tokoroa** held a Spring Festival in conjunction with the Unity Singers. Songs and poetry about spring, floral displays, embroidery and craft displays filled the afternoon. Ladies from St. Luke's P.I.C. brought quilts and crafts for display as well. A crowd of about 100 enjoyed this very successful event. All hope the event will happen again next year. Watch this space!
- **Presbyterial is alive and well** in Hawkes Bay. Our final meeting for the year was well attended, despite overcast weather. A highlight was the entertainment provided by the singing of a group of Cook Island women from St. Andrew's, Hastings. The tables groaned with food. Funds raised from the offering and the sales table was almost \$200. It was good to have a well-attended ordinary meeting that was extra-ordinary!

## **Messages from N.C.G.**

Warm Christmas greetings to everyone. Please read with us Luke 2:8-12 ... 'and this shall be God's special sign'. A December baby. A child is birth, seeding, potential without guarantee. A child future. God's child-sign is such a Yes sign. Is there a Yes-sign for APW? Pray with us for a resounding Yes. We wish you all special joy at this Christmas season.

Natalie & Mary

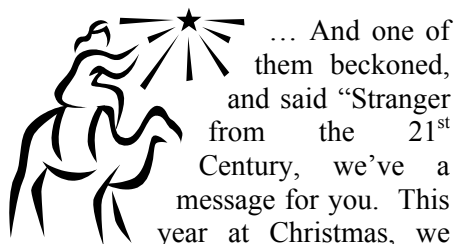
## **URGENT ... URGENT**

Change over time is looming. Names for a new Policy and Administration Group are needed before the end of December. If no names are forthcoming, we are faced with the prospect of the closure of APW. In this event there will be a letter sent out in January for all to discuss and an Extraordinary Business Meeting will be held in March to wind up the Association of Presbyterian Women.

Contact Margaret Clow  
[md.clow@clear.net.nz](mailto:md.clow@clear.net.nz) (07 853.6095)

**Is there only one way to move** in this crisis? We hear the real concern of NCG members who have served faithfully and that is relevant; but is it determinative? What else is there to be heard in this 'crisis'? What would such a 'leap over the cliff' mean in terms of the thousands and thousands of lives touched and enabled by the prayer, study, mission, fellowship and service of APW? Surely our 'crisis' is one calling for imaginative re-organization; but not abandonment of the call of God to vision for our neighbours! What do you think? Views can be expressed through the March issue of Gleanings. We must not push this concern out of mind. -Ed

*Christmas Eve I had a dream ..*  
... and behold in a Baghdad Café,  
the three Wise Men



... And one of them beckoned, and said "Stranger from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we've a message for you. This year at Christmas, we won't be coming. For twenty centuries, we've made our way to Bethlehem. Slogged over mountains, waded through rivers, trudged over deserts, carrying our Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. And all you've done is gone to church in air-conditioned cars, sat on padded seats, made tableaux of the three of us, and sang a few carols. We've had enough. This year the gifts are up to you."

"But I haven't any gifts," I said, "And I can't afford Gold or Frankincense or Myrrh, even if I knew where to buy them." "You have a gift" they told me, "a gift still more precious." "What?" I asked, not believing them for a moment. "The acts of kindness, you'll do for others in the coming year." "The acts of kindness I'll do for others?" "You've got it," they said. "The acts of kindness you'll do for others in the coming year. Please make sure you do them"

### *A Christmas Prayer*

Help us rightly remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the Wise Men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desire and every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessings Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clean hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen. - Robert Louis Stevenson

## Project News .....

- **\$45,294 was raised** last year. Great news! When Natalie and Mary gave a cheque for \$15,098 to Diane Vivian of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust, she was 'blown away' in gratitude.
- **Special Project – East Timor.** If your group has access to power point technology there is a presentation on East Timor, based on the information sheet, available from Christian World Service, P.O. Box 22652, Christchurch 8142.



## Other news .....

- **Bridgebuilders Network** 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration is planned for May 2007. Details were in the October Gleanings. Registration forms are now available from Bridgebuilders Office, St. David's Presbyterian Church, 70 Khyber Pass Road, Grafton, Auckland.
- **Interested in development** and growth in earlier years of the church in Vanuatu? Then *A Voyage of Discovery with Graham Horwell* is the book for you. Cost \$20 plus \$5 postage. Available from Margaret Horwell, 54 West End Rd., Ohope 3121. Ph. 07 312.4465.

## Glossy Mission Issue in March 2007

If you are accompanying articles with photographs, *please email* coloured photographs directly to Hazel O'Brien. Photos should be in JPEG format and not converted to PDF. Alternatively put them on a CD (again in JPEG and not converted to PDF) and post to – 3 Moehau Grove, Trentham. Upper Hutt 5108.  
[hazmic.ob@xtra.co.nz](mailto:hazmic.ob@xtra.co.nz)

*It has been grand to hear of so many activities of APWs in the last six months. Please keep news coming. May the meaningfulness of Christmas offer fresh insight this Christmas.*  
*Greetings from the Editorial team.*

### Gift of God

Gift of God, you sit next to me,  
And pass me Bread and Wine.

You are always there with communion  
In your countenance, reaching,  
ready,  
Aware, accepting, affirming.

Gift of God, you touch this  
maimed me to wholeness.  
Instrument of God, you hear  
alleluias  
Through obscenities, see rainbows  
in the darkest storms, unearth  
flowers in the snow.

Gift of God  
I thank God for you.  
Ann Weems



Pohutukawa tree – N.Z. Christmas tree