



Sea of Faith NETWORK N.Z.

NEWSletter

Conference Final Details

Conference planning is largely in place; a month out from the Conference registration we already had over one hundred registrations and there is still plenty of room for more. The sooner you get yours in, the easier it is for us to do our job here.

There are several special highlights this year: One is the field trips. These are all looking very promising indeed. I've talked with the hosts at each location to be visited, and each has an exciting offering. Another is this year's book stall: we've engaged Scorpio Books to provide this resource, and it will feature quite a few books by people attending or making presentations at the Conference. A third is our after dinner speaker: I got to know Apirana Taylor well during his two years in Christchurch. He has great presence, and a real ability to entertain and inform, make you laugh and make you reflect — all at the same time.

We haven't made any special arrangements for getting people from the airport to St Andrews, but there are plenty of airport shuttles, and it's only a 15 minute run.

Dawn Tilly is handling accommodation, and notes that there are quite a few motels nearby. While we hope that most people will stay on-campus, we acknowledge that a few might like motel accomodation. Here are some nearby motels:

Elms The Hotel 456 Papanui Rd —about 1.5k North. Very pleasant impression on entering — quiet and with ambience — nice. Tariff: \$110 per night double. Phone 03-355-3577

Tall Trees Motel 454 Papanui Rd. Pleasant, 'run of the mill' motel units. Studio unit for two people, \$84 per night Phone: 0800 948 444

Diplomat Motel 127 Papanui Rd: just South of Merivale Mall. Unit for 2 people (1 or 2) \$99 per night - \$15 extra for a third. pr, \$159 for two bedroom unit for up to 4 people. Phone: 0800 109 699

See you at Conference!

Ian Crumpton

Arrangements Committee Chairperson 2005
Emergency Phone 021-776-649



Newsletter 63

September 2005

- 1. Arrangements Committee**
Its Chairperson Invites you to register for the Conference
- 2-3 The Annual General Meeting ...**
... of SoF(NZ) takes place at the Conference
- 3. A Newsletter of a Decade Ago**
and The Buddha puts in a plug for experience being a good teacher
- 4. Local Groups**
Waikato, Napier and Nelson tell us what they're doing
- 5. A Letter to the Editor**
and a response to it
- 6. Faith in Cyberspace**
The World Wide Web of interesting information
- 6. Dennis Potter and God**
"Religion has always been the wound and not the bandage"
- 7-9. Books:**
Environmentalism, and other New Foundations for Faith
- 9. SoFWord N° 4**
- 10. Last Word**
From the Chairperson, who salutes three retiring Steering Committee members and one who isn't.

The Annual General Meeting

of the Sea of Faith Network (NZ)

will take place at 4:30pm on Saturday September 24, 2005

at the site of the Annual Conference, St Andrew's College, Christchurch

Remits

In the name of Mary Boekman

Amendments to the Rules of the Sea Of Faith Network, NZ.

To formalise the election of Life Members, clarify membership, the rights of members and the voting procedures at General Meetings of the Network, the following amendments and additions to the Rules will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting in Christchurch, September 2005.

Remit 1:

That a new subclause 'g.' be added to Clause 4. MEMBERSHIP, consisting of the words:

g. "In this document, the term 'members' refers to those who are on the register of the Society, and who may or may not have paid their current annual subscription. The term 'financial members' refers only to those whose membership subscription is not in arrears"

Remit 2:

That a new subclause 'h.' be added to Clause 4. MEMBERSHIP, consisting of the words:

h. "Life members

Life Membership of the Society may be conferred by the Annual General Meeting upon those members of the Society who are both long-standing and are deemed worthy by their contribution towards the objects of the Society. Nominations can be made by any of the general membership in confidence to the Steering Committee or by the Steering Committee itself. The final decision will be made by the Steering Committee and the names of new Life

Members will be announced at the Annual General Meeting. Life Members will not pay subscriptions, and all reference to 'financial members' in this document shall include Life Members."

Remit 3:

That the two sub-clauses of clause 14. 'VOTING' be rescinded and replaced with three subclauses:

a. "At any General Meeting of the Society both members and non-members are entitled to speak. However only members who are financial at the time of that General Meeting shall be entitled to move a resolution, vote and/or stand for office."

b. "At any General Meeting, financial members shall have one vote each and no more upon every question, provided however that in the case of equality of votes the chairperson of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote. Voting shall be on the voices in the first instance, provided however that the chairperson on his own volition may, and on the application of three (3) financial members shall, call for a show of hands.

c. "For issues deemed by the Steering Committee to be of sufficient importance, the Committee may at its discretion, arrange for proxy voting or postal voting. Only those who are financial members at the time of voting shall be entitled to vote."

... continued

Note: if any member intends to make any significant challenge to any of these proposed amendments, I would appreciate early notice because, while we have a tradition of completing the AGM in under an hour, democracy must be served.

Thanks, Noel Cheer

Remit 4:

That as a consequence of the previous remits, and errors of spelling appearing in the Rules of the Society, the following changes be made to clauses of the Rules:

Clause 10: "...appointed by the members"
be changed to:
"...appointed by the financial members".

Clause 11: "...shall be given to each member fourteen (14) clear days ..."
be changed to:
"...shall be given to each financial member fourteen (14) clear days..."

Clause 12: "...20 members"
be changed to:
"...20 financial members".
"macking" be corrected to "making".
"...given to each member fourteen (14) clear days .."
be changed to:
"...given to each financial member fourteen (14) clear days..."

Clause 13 a: ".....any member may without notice ask any question, or move any resolution...."
be changed to:
".....any member may without notice ask any question, and any financial member may move any resolution...."

Clause 13 b: "Any member intending to move a resolution...."
be changed to
"Any financial member intending to move resolution...."
"...shall be forwarded to each member...."
be changed to:
"...shall be forwarded to each financial member...."

Clause 15: "The quorum for all General Meetings of the Society shall be 20 members or 10 percent of the members whichever shall be the less"
be changed to:
"The quorum for all General Meetings of the Society shall be 20 financial members or 10 percent of the financial members whichever shall be the less"

Clause 16 d: "active member" be changed to "financial member".

Clause 17: ".....shall be available to every member of the Society on demand"
be changed to:
".....shall be available to every financial member of the Society on demand"

Clause 23 a: "The members in General Meeting..."
be changed to:
"The financial members in General Meeting.."

Clause 25: "...a majority of the members..."
be changed to
": ...a majority of the financial members.."

Clause 26: "tile" be corrected to "the".

If these amendments are approved, the amended Rules will be forwarded to the Registrar of Incorporated Societies.

A Decade Ago

from Newsletter Number 13, October 1995

"The third annual conference of the Sea of Faith Network ... attracted 232 people to the Central Institute of Technology in Upper Hutt from the evening of Friday, August 25 to the afternoon of Sunday, August 27.

Judging by the positive comments, those present particularly appreciated the stimulating lectures, variety of workshops, closing celebration and the chance to meet like-minded people from Kaikohe to Invercargill. They did not appreciate two frosty nights, compounded by the failure, despite all assurances by the CIT, of the heating system in the gymnasium where the main sessions were held."

A quote from Don Cupitt's *Taking Leave of God*:

"The Buddha put spirituality above theology by exalting the Dharma [personal righteousness] above the Gods. The Way comes first, get the Way right and talk of the Gods can be allowed to make its own kind of sense as best it can."

"Do not be satisfied

with hearsay or with tradition or with legendary lore or with what has come down in scriptures or with conjecture, or with logical inference, or with weighing evidence, or with liking for a view after pondering over it, or with someone else's ability, or with the thought 'the monk is our teacher'.

When you know in yourselves 'These things are unwholesome' then you should abandon them.

When you know in yourselves, 'These things are wholesome, blameless, commended by the wise, and being adopted and put into effect they lead to welfare and happiness,' then you should practice and abide in them."



*The Buddha,
from the Kalama Sutta*



Local Groups

Look on the website at www.sof.org.nz for the complete list

Waikato

Fred Marshall reported: "The second combined session of the year was held on June 17; it was organised by Jock and Lee Crawford; there was some discussion on the formation of the new house groups of which we now have four.

Then a talk on "The Rise of Christian Fundamentalism", was given by Paul Louw and illustrated with two video clips from local current affairs programmes. The first featured the Destiny Church in NZ, and the second was a report on Christian fundamentalism in the mid-West and its effect on the present American administration. The topic was the consequence of a visit by some of our members to the Auckland seminar on the subject.

Paul Louw was born in Johannesburg, S.A. and trained for the Anglican ministry in the UK. He is now an agnostic."

Contact:

Fred Marshall frch0060@waikato.ac.nz

Napier

Louise Elvey wrote: "When the Peak Perspectives lecture took place on July 20, Napier Sea of Faith joined the organisers in presenting this year's speaker, Dr. Jim Veitch, who spoke on **The Interaction of Religion and Violence in Christianity and Islam**. The large numbers attending demonstrated the wish to hear whatever facts are available. The venue at St. Columba's in Havelock North was full, as a tribute to Jim's knowledge of Islam and his standing as a recognised authority on international affairs.

Visual aids showed portions of the world where Islam predominates. It was sobering to hear that the present 25% Islam compared to 35% Christian world population is on track to reverse in a few years.

Most interesting to begin with, the coming and present oil shortages. Oil! The big problem! The overhead projector showed an impressive list of oil-producing countries where peak production was reached some time ago. There is clearly a need for action; and also for alternatives to oil.

One questioner represented many who worry about the implications of the Qu'ran. Those writings must be put in the context of their time, just as with the Holy Bible. We should look for

reliable background. A worthwhile piece of advice: read all you can find about that part of the world. Some aspects need to be better understood.

Can the churches help? Maybe, once. Much of their credibility was lost some four or five decades ago.

Changes in our world, in our lifestyles, are now evident. The world for our grandchildren will be very different.

For all who attended, it was a significant meeting. We are grateful particularly to Jim Veitch for a memorable address; and also to SoF, Napier; and to Peak Perspectives of Havelock North."

Contact: Alan Goss (06)835-9594

Nelson

"Dr John Hinchcliff provided a thoughtful and stimulating presentation on theology, politics, democracy and spirituality. He [grew up] at a time when politicians were considered to be gentlemen. He contrasted this with a series of quotations attributed to leading US politicians and military leaders, their simplistic view of the world, and their belief that they were carrying out God's work by invading Iraq. Although the US Constitution had enshrined the separation of church and state, the current political leadership were promoting a fundamental view of Christianity that was increasingly less tolerant of dissent.

He talked about the challenges facing liberal Christians in politics, the need to find a balance (whaka tauiti), and the importance of a framework of values to assist decision-making. He also spoke about the differences between a society that focused on maximising the potential of individuals and a caring community where people treated each other with respect.

He shared his concerns at the posturing of politicians for the media, the use of spin doctors by political parties, the way the media frequently misquoted or misrepresented politicians and sensationalised trivia.

He looked ahead with considerable pessimism at the challenges facing humankind in allocation of scarce resources such as oil and water, and the looming threat from bio-terrorism arising from new developments in technology.

Contact: Lindsay Vaughan (03) 548-4778

Letter to the Editor

In the last Newsletter, in your **Last Word**, you stated:

Our religious faith is above even our critical or rational faculties. It informs our aesthetic life. It gives conscience to our law-making. It lifts us from being clever, cooperative simians into 'humanness'.

At a meeting of ten past and present members of the network in New Plymouth on Sunday last, we discussed your statement and found that by and large we disagreed.

Some suggested that “values” made us human; others “the memory of experiences of love”; and still others “our symbolic thought”. None of us had any time for your statement that it is “our religious faith” that makes the difference.

And we query what you mean by “our religious faith”. If we use such a term at all, we mean different things by it.

This was in the context of a discussion about Patti Whaley’s four categories of members of SoF (Newsletter No 58). We all agreed that we do not fall easily into any of her groups, but agree with some of each at different times and different circumstances. Some of us feel that Patti’s categories are all too conservative.

Whatever our views on Patti’s categories, we all feel that your Last Word places the Sea of Faith too close to traditional church and theological orthodoxy.

We may have an interest in thinking about spiritual experiences, discussing them, remembering them, enjoying them, but we do not necessarily think of that part of human life as the most important.

*Barry and Mary Boekman,
Margaret and Frank Gaze*

The Response

How refreshing to get a Letter to the Editor — I wish there were many more because one of the reasons for having a Newsletter is to air different points of view of NZ members.

Given the origin and ongoing nature of the Sea of Faith movement, different points of view are welcome and healthy.

My response starts with an apparent slip in logic in the Letter. The writers disagree with the statement that I made to the effect that “our religious faith” makes a difference, but then they go on to confess, admittedly only implicitly, that they don't know what I mean by the term. They added, quite helpfully, that people who use the term are likely to mean different things by it.

Of all areas of knowledge that deal with human activity surely it is in theology that there is the greatest muddlement in the lexicon. It would take an article on its own (perhaps even another “Last Word”) to tease out that assertion, but let us stick with three words: 'faith'; 'spirituality'; and 'religion' along with their derivatives.

'Faith' and 'belief' are often reduced (in newspaper-speak) to 'provisional knowledge' as in “I believe that it will rain tomorrow.” But, in matters associated with religion, it is an existential matter. Would you would invest your very selfhood in whatever you are being invited to? What is it that “holds your conscience captive”? [from the recent movie *Luther*]. You seek, like a swimmer, to be able to put your feet down and feel solid ground. 'Faith' and 'belief in' questions are questions of trustworthiness and value.

To me, 'spirituality' is all of the above and additionally (if other people become involved) the answer to “who is my neighbor?”

'Religion' is the systematised, formalised, often standardised reflection and response to the felt requirements of attempting to live a life which is informed by spiritual values, for example, 'mercy, pity, peace and love'.

All of which can, and does, operate far from altar, pulpit and pew. Don Cupitt's definition that 'God' is “the religious concern reified” is spot on — the concern come first, the terms in which we express it are sought anywhere — in our faith community, in our secular ethos, or our personal experience.

That we are happy heretics enables and encourages us to do so.

Noel Cheer

Faith in Cyberspace



The Future of Futurechurch

Look on their website www.futurechurch.org.nz to see what they plan now that the Methodist Church has withdrawn funding support.

One activity will be a conference with the title:

Prodigal Journeys: weaving the threads of futurechurch which will be held from Wednesday October 12 to Saturday October 15, 2005 at the Community of St Luke in Auckland. Rather than speakers there will be "animators" including: Steve Taylor (BCNZ and Opawa), Brenda Rockell (Cityside), Glynn Cardy (St Matthews-in-the-City), Kevin Ward (School of Ministry Dunedin), Margaret Mayman (St Andrews on the Terrace), Rosemary Neave (initiator of futurechurchNZ), Susan Jones (Opoho Presbyterian).

The Westar Institute ...

... home of The Jesus Seminar, has a website. One link from it :

www.westarinstitute.org/Periodicals/4R_Articles/4r_articles.html (one continuous word)

contains papers of interest to radical Christians and post-Christians. For example:

- David Friedrich Strauss: Miracle and Myth, by Marcus Borg
- Me and Jesus, an odyssey by Marcus Borg
- Almost the Whole Truth, an odyssey by John Dominic Crossan
- The Coming Radical Reformation, Robert W. Funk
- How Did Jesus Become God and Why, Lloyd Geering
- Is Christianity Going Anywhere?, Lloyd Geering
- Who Owns the Holy Land? Lloyd Geering
- How the Canon Was Formed, Roy W. Hoover
- Tradition and Faith in a New Era, Roy W. Hoover
- The Significance of the Work of the Jesus Seminar for Judaism, Sanford Lowe
- The Search for the Historical Jesus, Lane C. McGaughey
- Did Jesus Fulfill Prophecy?, Robert J. Miller
- The Da Vinci Fraud, Robert M. Price
- Jesus in Tibet, Robert M. Price
- Braveheart Does the Stations of the Cross, Daryl Schmidt
- Fundamentally Pluralistic, an odyssey by Daryl Schmidt

Dennis Potter & God

In his celebrated final interview with Melvyn Bragg in April 1994, with his cancer visibly gnawing away at him, and knowing that he only had a matter of weeks to live, the British playwright Dennis Potter spoke—with characteristic bluntness, irony and eloquence—of his God, his sense of God:

"The kind of Christianity, or indeed any other religion, that is a religion because of fear of death, or hope that there is something beyond death, does not interest me. What kind of cruel old bugger is God if it's terror that is the ruling edifice, the structure of religion?"



And too often, for too many people, it is. Now that to me isn't religion.

"Religion has always been—I've said it before and it doesn't matter if I repeat myself, I won't get many more chances to repeat myself, thank God—but religion to me has always been the wound, not the bandage. I don't see the point of not acknowledging the pain and the misery and the grief of the world, and if you say 'Ah, but God understands' or 'Through that you come to a greater appreciation', I then think 'Well, you nasty old sod, if that's God'. That's not God, that's not my God, that's not how I see God.

"I see God in us, or with us—if I see at all—as some shreds and particles and rumours, some knowledge that we have, some feeling why we sing and dance and act, why we paint, why we love, why we make art. All the things that separate us from the purely animal in us are palpably there; and you can call them what you like, and you can theologise about them and you can build great structures of belief about them—the fact is they are there and I have no means of knowing whether that 'thereness' in some sense doesn't cling to what I call me."



Book Review

Environmentalism

A Living, Evolving Religion

Faith in Nature: Environmentalism as a Religious Quest, by Thomas R. Dunlap, University of Washington Press, 2004.

THIS BOOK IS A FASCINATING AND VERY READABLE JOURNEY through the environmental movement in America, tracing its growth and evolution as America has grown and evolved. Thomas Dunlap is a History Professor at Texas A & M University. He relates the environmental movement to the intellectual background of the Enlightenment, and to political economic and cultural developments in the emergent United States of America. Dunlap understands environmentalism as a living, evolving religion.

This theme runs right through his book, from the first quote from William James – “At bottom, the whole concern of religion is with the manner of our acceptance of the universe” – to his comment near the end –

“Environmentalism addresses the alienation in modern society in a modern context, finding the sacred in a material world, and a way of personal engagement with the world on the basis of objective knowledge. Grounded in science but also in romanticism, refusing to choose between intellect and emotion, environmentalism moves – more easily than either scientific materialism or established supernatural religions – across the borders between faith and knowledge, ignorance and mystery, offering material explanations, but looking beyond facts towards meaning.” (p.149)

He begins by describing “Newton’s Disciples,” developing a comfortable faith in endless progress through the conquest of nature. He traces the empire’s westward movement, led by the buckskin pioneer, then the railway locomotive. Against this background, he describes the Romanticism of Emerson, Thoreau, and later John Muir, who went on to develop science as a way of understanding nature in the wilder high Sierras. Muir preached the Emersonian Gospel of nature as “ultimate reality, refuge from society, place of pilgrimage”. Then as that wilderness rapidly diminished, environmentalism was to challenge the deeply held faith that economic growth fuelled by

individual free activity brought social prosperity. New forms arose, to challenge destructive activity, and to preserve what was left of the wilderness.

Dunlap explores the many often contradictory meanings of terms like “nature”, and “wilderness”, and the ways people have responded to environmental threat, particularly since Rachel Carson wrote her seminal book *Silent Spring*. Bioregionalism, Green Consumerism, Deep Ecology, and others, often in tension with the society from which they emerge, are described. He has a wonderful turn of phrase:

“Just as the Puritans supposedly spent Sundays contemplating the goodness of God and the damnation of infants, defenders of the status quo gaze in rapture on the goodness of the market and the gross domestic product, which distributes benefits to all who strive – for they are the virtuous. They look on the market as the Hand of God, endless economic growth as the path to earthly Paradise, and the conquest of nature, human destiny.” (p.165)

In forty years environmentalism has changed, but not transformed, American society. Dunlap points out that its established methods can not do much more. A religious impulse is vital to its – and the planet’s – future. In his concluding chapter, he gives some thoughtful pointers to this process, drawing from the tactics of established religions over the centuries to build new meanings and mythology. He believes the movement must learn to work with those religious groups that are developing an environmental concern.

Much in this book is relevant to the New Zealand situation, with the steadily growing human imprint on its delicate island ecology. An informative and thought provoking read!

Ian Crumpton, Christchurch

[Lloyd Geering's recent series *The Greening of Christianity* addresses this subject. You can buy the book and/ or tape from the St Andrew's Trust – see p10]

New Foundations for Faith

It is an editor's delight to receive two submissions that balance each other as well as do the two on this page.

Of Knowledge and Dialogues

Looking in the Distance, The Human Search for Meaning by Richard Holloway (Canongate 2004)

A book review by Alan Goss, slightly trimmed for reasons of space.

RICHARD HOLLOWAY is the former Bishop of Edinburgh. In this book he suggests a new approach for many people in our secular society who have given up on religion but who are still interested in spirituality. Of these people Holloway says "they have not left the church for the simple reason that were never in it."

The book is on four movements. The first, **Still Looking**, deals with our compulsion to understand how the universe works. The universe is not interested in our individual lives, we live in a permanent state of not knowing, which is very painful; so we look for answers, explanations, solutions.

The second movement is **Speaking**. The Christian story, though today rapidly fading, was dominant in the West until recently. It has been replaced, for all practical purposes, by the great narrative of science.

The third movement is **Listening** and deals with questions of morality. The traditional landmarks have been swept away and we are offered a cafeteria of customs, values and new ethical situations which are strange and bewildering.

The last, **Leaving**, talks of our penchant to erect and maintain bulwarks opposed to change. To love well we have to learn when its time to let go. This requires a lightness of feel and touch so that when change is called for it will be accomplished "elegantly rather than awkwardly". This leads to the question of death and dying ... give it heaps until the final whistle. Then go with grace.

The book is a good read and his arguments are supported with numerous quotes from poets which are relevant and often moving. He is always refreshing and invariably right on cue.

Alan Goss, Napier



☞ he even looks like Alan! - ed

Cosmic Modesty

This material is taken from the June issue of "Softies Newsletter" of the Auckland Group.

DR BILL COOKE argued for a series of ethical maxims, each of which is informed by one of the sciences and each of which follows from the previous maxim in order to build a coherent world view.

Cosmic modesty. The core finding of the scientific revolution of the past four centuries is the rejection of the presumption that humans have some unique claim to the bounty of the universe. This is the chief lesson of physics and mathematics.

Biophilia. Like all living beings, we have but one life to lead and we have the duty to cherish every species' right to exist. This is the chief lesson of biology.

Integration of our personality. Our rational faculties help us avoid the pitfalls of credulity and fanaticism and our non-rational faculties help develop our capacity for compassion and exuberance. This is the chief lesson of psychology.

Agathonism. This means living well and helping others live well. This is the chief lesson of evolutionary psychology.

Toleration. Because we have rejected supernaturalist absolutes, it is beholden on atheists and humanists to exercise toleration toward those we disagree with. This is the chief lesson of social anthropology.

Placing a high value on learning. Having rejected the absolutes and commandments of supernaturalism, we are free to learn how the world actually works. This is the chief lesson of philosophy.

Accepting the tragic dimension of life. So much of what happens to people is unfair, and not some cosmic aberration to be explained away. This is the chief lesson of literature.

Laughter and joy. In the face of the absurdity of existence and the cruelty and stupidity of so much that goes on, humanists are committed to finding the humour in each situation and seeking an excuse to laugh as often as possible. This is best done with one's friends. This is the chief lesson of everyday experience.

Bill Cooke will present a workshop with the title "Towards an Atheist Spirituality" at this year's Conference

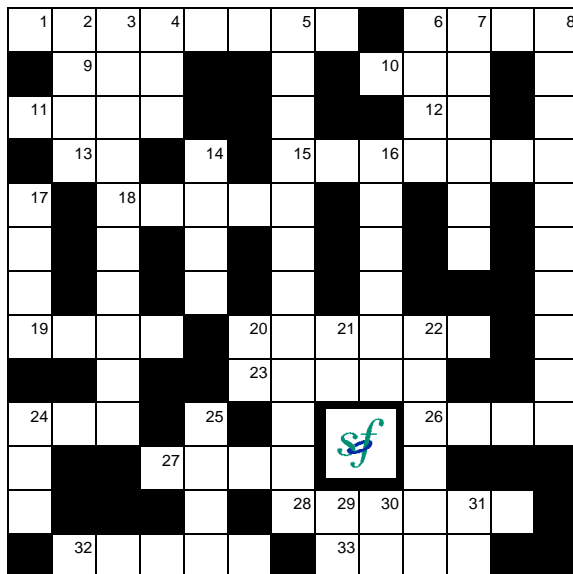
SofWord N° 4

Across

1. He suggested "Gaia"
6. Pea-, wal- or engineering-
9. Annie was told to get her's
10. Atom with out-of-balance electrons
11. Old fashioned copper's greeting
12. Ancient city in modern Iraq
13. Small fixed space
15. Hostility
18. Iconic bird of several nations
19. Japanese earthquake city
20. Preferred over "Kingdom" by Jesus Seminar
23. Piano lying down
24. Charge for services
26. Nickname for the alternative woman?
27. View clouded by speed.
28. The colour of soccer's warning card
32. The Pythons wrote his fictional biography.
33. Left ungathered by a stone in circular motion.

Down

2. Unpleasant way to be looked at
3. In a position of danger
4. English National Opera
5. Of the present time
6. The mind as governor
7. The moment has not yet arrived
8. Rock Around The Calendar?
14. Gobsmacked
16. As spelled: a car. Mis-spelled: a month.
17. When its hard its food; when its sharp it holds.
20. He runs the organisation by the grace of God.
21. She told her that "he's making eyes at me".
22. An envisioned perfection.
24. Over-dressed male.
25. Island unloved by Napoleon
29. Twice 13 across
30. Abbreviation of the already abbreviated 11 across.
31. My clothes report my tubbiness.



Answers to SofWord No.3

ACROSS: 1:APOCALYPSE 9:NIL 10:HUSSY 13:GLINDA
 15:ASIAN 17:SN 18:EITHER 19:KIND 21:AB 22:WICCA
 23:DIGIT 25:FAUN 26:HS 29:SO 30:SCREWTAPE
 35:CRORE 36:PAYRISE 38:RUB 39:ID
 41:METANARRATIVE

DOWN: 2:PNG 3:OILSKIN 4:CLINIC 6:SHAHADA 7:EUEBIUS
 8:SYNOPTIC 11:SIR 12:SA 14:AI 16:ID 20:NC
 24:GNOSIS 26:HER 27:SWEDEN 28:MAPPER 30:SCRIM
 31:CRUDE 32:ROB 33:PA 34:EYE 37:ELSE 40:RT

Books etc

New in the Resource Centre

"**Living The Questions**": a 13 part DVD series dealing with the application of Christianity in a liberal way. Contributors include: Marcus Borg, J.D. Crossan, Lloyd Geering, John Spong.

Resource Centre details are on page 10. A current catalogue appears on the website.

Books by Keynote Speakers:

Richard Hall's *How to Gaze at the Southern Stars* and *Work of The Gods: Taatai Arorangi, Maori Astronomy* are available from Unity Books and also from The Phoenix Astronomical Society, P.O. Box 2217, Wellington.

Rachael Kohn's *The New Believers* is available from many bookshops and will be on sale at the Conference.

Reprint:

Julie Batten's *Celebrating the Southern Seasons: Rituals for Aotearoa* has been out of print for a few years but a revised edition has just been launched.

Recommended by David Patchett, Lower Hutt:

When Jesus Came to Harvard; Making Moral Choices Today by Harvey Cox

"Cox did not intend to ever write such a book. He was asked to teach an undergraduate course at Harvard a number of years ago on the moral teachings of Jesus Christ. The university was concerned that while it was preparing the world's future leaders, it did little to shape moral education and began requiring at least one semester in ethics. The university in its wisdom decided that Jesus should be included as well, which caught many at this bastion of secularity by surprise. It also asked Harvey Cox to be the instructor.

Cox was reluctant, but agreed and it has since become one of the university's most popular classes. This work is basically a summary of the course and the story of the class itself."



All About Us

The Sea of Faith Network (NZ) is an association of people who have a common interest in exploring religious thought and expression from a non-dogmatic and human-oriented standpoint.

The Sea of Faith Network itself has no creed.

We draw our members from people of all faiths and also from those with no attachment to religious institutions.

Our national Steering Committee publishes a regular Newsletter, maintains a website, assists in setting up Local Groups, and organises an annual Conference.

We have two **Life Members**: Lloyd Geering (since 2001) and Don Cupitt (since 2002).

The current **Chairperson** is Noel Cheer, 26 Clipper St, Titahi Bay, phone 04-236-7533

The current **Secretary** is Marion Dodd, 64 Wairiki Road, Mt Eden Auckland.

Membership of the national organisation costs \$15 per household per year (\$22 if outside NZ). Write your cheque to "SoF (NZ)" and mail to **The Membership Secretary**, P.O. Box 35651, Browns Bay, Auckland. (Phone 09-478-2490).

Members may borrow tapes, books etc from the **SoF Resource Centre** at 34 Briarley St, Tauranga. It is maintained by Suzi Thirlwall (07)578-2775

Further details can be found on our website at www.sof.org.nz

To offer a comment on any material appearing in the Newsletter or to submit copy for publication, contact the **Editor**: Noel Cheer, 26 Clipper Street, Titahi Bay, Phone 04-236-7533, Fax 04-236-7534, email: noel@cheer.org.nz

The only copy appearing in this Newsletter that may be construed as reflecting SoF policy is that which is accompanied by a by-line of a member of the Steering Committee.

Optional Extras ...

"SoF" is 28 page A4, 6-times-a-year magazine produced by the UK SoF Network. To start your subscription, send \$53 to the SoF(NZ) Membership Secretary (address above). Renewal rates will be advised from the UK. Note that this is additional to membership of Sea of Faith (NZ).

Many of the study booklets referred to in this Newsletter are available from The St Andrew's Trust for the Study of Religion and Society www.standrews.org.nz/satrs/

Last Word

FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

AS WE MOVE TOWARDS THE CONFERENCE and the AGM that takes place there, I am conscious that three of our Steering Committee members must step down because our Rules say that they must after four years.

I would like to pay special tribute to **Marion Dodd** who was and is (for next couple of weeks), our Secretary. We have a sort of manual of operations in which is described the things which members of the Steering Committee need to do and also the activities of the Conference Arrangements Committee. Earlier this year, Marion successfully undertook a major editing and re-formatting of this manual with the result that we are now much clearer as to who does what and why. We thank her for that and for making sense of our Steering Committee discussions in her writing of the Minutes.

Both **George Dodd** and **Lyle Millar** were members at large on the Steering Committee and freely and helpfully offered the advice and opinions at the nine meetings that the Steering Committee has each year.

Similar scrutiny of our Rules (Constitution) enabled **Mary Boekman** (who *will* be seeking re-election) to refine the definitions of "member" and the fruits of her labours appear on pages 2 and 3 of this Newsletter in the form of remits to the AGM.

We want to keep SoF as inclusive as possible. For example, anyone, whether member or not, is welcome to come to Conference. But we want also to recognise that those who pay the next-to-nothing (\$15) each year to support the national organisation should benefit by being able to vote and to stand for election to the Steering Committee. They also get this Newsletter which is produced five times a year.

If, like us, you think that the Sea of Faith Network in New Zealand has had a good year (and the Conference will be its highlight) then stay with us for an even better 2006 and 2007 – for which planning is already under way.

*Noel Cheer,
Steering Committee Chairperson, 2004-2005*

**Don't Forget to vote in the General Election on 17 September:
Its our country, after all!**