

# Sea of Faith

Exploring Values, Spirituality and Meaning

[www.sof.org.nz](http://www.sof.org.nz)

A recovered old Newsletter

## SEA OF FAITH NETWORK (NZ)

NEWSLETTER 20

March 1997

### Dirk Poutsma

*Mary Johnson of Kaikohe writes:*

"With sadness we have to advise that the contact person for the Kaikohe SOF group, Dirk Poutsma, died on December 4th. Dirk attended the second and third conferences and was looking forward to renewing contacts in Auckland later this year. Like a lot of us with conventional religious backgrounds, he found it exciting to be with other people who were experiencing doubts, asking the same sort of questions as himself and getting answers that made sense. He is survived by his wife Atie and four children and grandchildren."

### Conference Update from the Steering Committee

Plans are well underway for the Auckland Conference to be held at Kings College from 3-5 October. The Committee has introduced the concept of a theme for the Conference: "**Faith on the Margins**" and all three lectures and the workshops will reflect this theme. Two of the three speakers are already confirmed and we hope that we will be able to announce the third speaker shortly. We look forward to hearing both John Spong and Lloyd Geering this year.

An innovation to this year's Conference will be the Core Groups. Each person will be allocated to a group for the duration of the Conference and these groups will meet for discussion sessions on several occasions. Each group will have a leader to facilitate discussion. You may have already been part of a gathering where such groups have operated. Our experience, and hope for the Sea of Faith Conference, is that they will provide an opportunity for you to get to know a small group of people and to dialogue with them at depth.

In order to maximise our time together at the Conference we are planning to start the Conference on the Friday afternoon. The Arrangements Committee will provide more precise details of this when the Registration Forms are sent out in May.

Our 1997 Conference looks as though it will emulate the high standards of the previous Conferences and therefore I do hope that you have marked the **3-5 October** in your diary.

I look forward to seeing you at Kings College.

Jane Griffith

### Local Groups

#### Kaikohe

*Mary Johnson writes:* "After studying Tomorrow's God our group spent time looking at the Joseph Campbell video tapes on mythology. [The Power of Myth -- available from the Resource Centre, see p8].

In February we start the year looking at Lloyd Geering's God and the New Physics."

#### Auckland

*The Auckland Central group meets at St. Lukes, 130 Remuera Road at 7pm on the third Sunday in each month. The North Shore group meets on the first Saturday of each month. In December a group was formed in South Auckland which meets at Friendship House, Manukau City. See page 8 for contact details.*

Over 50 members of the recently renamed Auckland Central Group were present at the December meeting to hear David Clark, minister of St. Lukes Remuera, speak on "Re-Mythologising Christmas". Stories of the birth of Jesus from the gospels of Matthew and Luke were set side-by-side and were found to be contradictory in every respect, but were said not to invalidate the essential Christian message. Afterwards they sat down to a splendid Christmas dinner of New Zealand, rather than English, fare which had been organised by Barbara Miller and Cora Leenman.

The new chairperson of the Auckland Central group, Graham Shearer, sets out their 1997 programme in his February Newsletter:

**February 16:** Susan Adams and John Salmon, who have released their new book The Mouth of The Dragon will talk on the subject of Language and Meaning in Theology. [*The book is reviewed elsewhere in this Newsletter -- ed*]

**March 16** John and Susan will lead a second session.

Proposed (but not confirmed sessions) include:

**April 20:** Gordon Hambly has offered to talk about a series of books which are available worldwide, in several languages, over a million copies sold, covering A Course in Miracles. Groups meet, like the SOF, to study these books. Their basis is Christian, but with significant variation.

**May 18:** A BBC Everyman video by Richard Dawkins entitled Climbing Mount Improbable [*there is a book too -- ed*], which gives a counter to Creationism. George Dodd would introduce the study.

**June 15** and **July 20** could be given to a second look at Lloyd Geering's God and The New Physics and Ian Harris' Creating God.

## Looking for a Logo

We're looking for a logo to give the SOF NZ a "visual identity" or "branding image" (don't knock it: advertisers and PR merchants as early as the apostle Paul knew how to do it! -- ed). Below is a crude representation of what they do in the UK. The NZ Steering Committee has been considering the possibility of "NewZealandising" this logo so as to tie-in with what might be an emerging logo style for a global set of Sea of Faith Networks. Do you have any opinions?



Sea of Faith Network

'Exploring and Promoting Religious Faith  
as a Human Creation'

### Dunedin

Excerpts from a note prepared by Ian Cairns and which missed the last Newsletter by one day:

"The main dish of the evening [of the July meeting] was served by Yvonne Wilkie: 'Sexual Morality'. As a lesbian, Yvonne challenged us to full inclusiveness:

(a) to give due emphasis to 'movement': our own personal growth-movement, and the changing perceptions of a changing society;

(b) to resist categorising others and ourselves by traditional preconceptions;

(c) to celebrate the full humanity of ourselves and others as we are, and to help create the climate in which all may realise their potential.

A lively discussion ensued.

September's meeting was an informal sharing of Conference impressions, followed by pooling of suggestions for ongoing programmes locally. We decided to replace our hitherto *ad hoc* procedure with a steering committee -- four members, led by Andrew Meek.

A Book Night featured in October -- six-minute reviews which attracted a range of comment-discussion:

Pale Blue Dot by Carl Sagan -- "Earth is on minuscule dot on an infinite cosmic canvas. Does it make sense that this infinitesimal dot was singled out for 'divine visitation'?"

Love Despite Hate by Sarah Moskovitz. Child survivors of the Holocaust, reared in an institution and interviewed later as adults. Did they bear trauma scars? Very few did: the no-nonsense love experienced in the institution worked healing.

When All You Ever Wanted Is Not Enough by Harold Kushner. The presenter brought a deeply personal reflection on her life's journey, which evoked similar personal comment.

Presentations on Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice and Theodore Zeldin's Intimate History of Humanity further widened the spectrum.

November began with a 'Garden Tour' -- and both month and year will end with a session on Ian Stubb's questionnaire: 'How Do You See Faith And Religion?'

*Ian Cairns sent an update:*

"Three meetings have so far been planned for 1997.

In February we hope to have a session on several types of Meditation: Brahma Kumaris (Indian), Buddhist and Christian. Ten-minute presentations will be followed in each case by hands-on meditation experience.

For March, two speakers will introduce "The Spirituality of Books", from the differing perspectives of a writer and of a bookseller.

We turn to the visual arts in April: Dr. Albert Moore will select from his extensive collection of slides, and hopefully spark our imaginations and stimulate discussion.

## .... and the Tee-Shirt!

A recent newspaper article (The Dominion, Wellington 17 February 1997 page 8) reported that 100,000 members of the UK United Reform Church are being asked whether the Christian symbol of the cross should be replaced by, for example, a fish, a candle, flowers or even an egg.

What would you wear on your tee-shirt as the symbol of your faith -- Christian or otherwise? Please send your suggestions (a paragraph saying what and why and who you are) to: SOF Newsletter Editor, 26 Clipper Street, Titahi Bay to arrive by April 15. All responses will be printed in the May Newsletter.

At the 1995 Conference, Lloyd Geering said something to the effect that eating together would probably be the most spiritual thing that we did at the conference. And indeed we have found that the common meal is a powerful integrating factor in our togetherness. We plan to continue in 1997.

### **Mana**

Their first meeting for 1997 will be on March 10th. Jim Veitch, who caused a bit of a stir in the local newspapers with a pre-Christmas lecture (see the next item), will address the meeting. Jim will also speak at the **Joint Regional Seminar** to be held from April 11 to 13 in Lower Hutt. Its a joint effort by the Mana and Wairarapa Groups.

### **And The Others?**

What have other Groups been up to? What do you plan? Let us know, so that we can share it.

### **Contribution**

## **Theological Debate Kiwi-Style**

In November the front page of Wellington's Evening Post ran a story headed

### **Son of God 'created' by Church**

A lecture on "Jesus For Christmas 2000" was to be given the following day. The story began:

**Jesus was not the Son of God. That's the view of Dr. James Veitch, senior religious studies lecturer ... He said "As an historical figure he was not divine, but created to be divine by the Church".**

In fact, the lecture [given in a packed-out St. Andrews on the Terrace, Wellington -- ed] was not about "Son of God" as the headline proclaimed, and did not mention the words "Son of God". Rather, it discussed the New Testament stories of the birth of Jesus, noting how for forty years the early church worked out who Jesus was without reference to his birth: those stories developed only after about 70AD, and the celebration of Christmas centuries later. This was a lively restatement of familiar ground. The historicity of the "Virgin Birth" has been questioned for over 100 years; many respected scholars openly reject it.

The question of the Virgin Birth is quite separate from that of whether (and in what sense) Jesus was "Son of God". However, they are often confused -- as happened in the original newspaper story, and in the lively correspondence which followed.

There were many (mostly outraged) Letters to Editor. A leading editorial was devoted to the issue, and a full page gave solid responses from four church leaders. But it did little to engender

confidence in the level of theological debate in Kiwi-land.

1. The promotional article was confusing and misleading.
2. Most contributors reacted to the original story rather than to the lecture itself.
3. This was hardly surprising, because the paper never properly reported the actual lecture.
4. Most correspondents expressed outrage and considered that Veitch should be sacked for denying a fundamental doctrine. Only one expressed satisfaction.
5. None of the four church commentators -- including and Archbishop and a Professor of New Testament -- welcomed the lecture, and all were critical of Veitch. Some commented only on the basis of the brief and confusing pre-lecture notice. Others defended the Virgin Birth.
6. The editorial, while welcoming Veitch's questioning of faith statements, accepted the correspondents' belief that the Virgin Birth is a central tenet of the Christian faith. Questioners don't belong in the Church -- at least in New Zealand.
7. The Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Church said that "the Church has room for Dr. Veitch and for those who disagree with him. Presbyterians were not afraid of questions in searching for the truth about Jesus." This lone piece of sanity was buried in a short article giving a number of views, but headlined

### **Lecturer's view on Jesus spurs sacking call**

*David Simmers*

## **Jung, Campbell, Hollywood**

*Readers who found Joseph Campbell's **The Power of Myth** interesting may wish to follow some of the ideas into the twentieth century.*

*This excerpt is from pages 96 and 97 of Essential Places by David Dale. Its a Picador paperback.*

"One of Disney's script assessors, Christopher Vogler, wrote a memo to his bosses outlining what he perceived to be the essential ingredients in any successful movie. Drawing on the theories of the psychoanalyst Carl Jung and the mythologist Joseph Campbell, he spun a plausible yarn about the human need for heroes and journeys and challenges. .... [Later] he expanded the original seven-page memo to a book of 315 pages, called The Writer's Journey. He argues that deep in our unconscious minds there's a need for stories and characters that follow a particular pattern. The pattern goes through 12 stages.



1. **We find the hero in the Ordinary World.**
2. **He or she receives a Call To Adventure, to seek something or someone,**
3. **but he/she refuses.**
4. **Then a wise old Mentor offers help**
5. **and the hero crosses The First Threshold.**
6. **On the journey, the hero encounters Tests, Allies and Enemies and is allowed to have a bit of fun with Tricksters, Shapeshifters and Wise Fools.**
7. **But soon he or she must make the Approach to the Inmost Cave via assorted Threshold Guardians**
8. **and face the Supreme Ordeal.**
9. **The hero obtains The Reward,**
10. **starts on the Road Back,**
11. **has another ordeal which leads to a form of Resurrection**
12. **and finally makes a triumphant Return With The Elixir."**

Incidentally, Essential Places also deals with **The Jerusalem Syndrome**, the name given in 1982 to the phenomenon of visitors to Jerusalem coming under the conviction that "they are Jesus Christ, or the Virgin Mary or King David or even Satan". We wish Lloyd and Elaine Geering a safe trip to Jerusalem in May, one free of identity confusions!

Noel Cheer

## Was Jesus a Christian? (I doubt it)

By Rowland Croucher, Director of John Mark Ministries, Melbourne, Phone 00-61-613-9729-2517  
email: rowlandc@werple.mira.net.au  
(reprinted with his permission)

Christians come in about 13 varieties. These varieties (or mindsets) can be found in all religions. You mustn't judge any religion simply on its caricatures. My theses:

- Each mind-set makes **part** of Christianity the **whole** of it.
- There's nothing wrong with the parts. But like a car, if you've only got parts lying around you're not going anywhere.
- Jesus rejected all these mindsets (but not the essential concerns of each of them).

For convenience I'll use terms from early Christianity, and for the sake of brevity I'll oversimplify each mindset:

1. **Sadducees** are rationalists. If your *reason* can't comprehend something (miracles, resurrection, angels) you don't have to believe it. Their God is very reasonable; their theology is 'liberal'; they inhabit mainline church seminaries.
2. **Zealots** are passionate about *justice*. Justice is all about fairness, the relationship of the strong to the

weak, the right use of power. Their God sanctions terrorism; their theology is 'liberationist'; today they're priests and others who advocate the violent overthrow of oppressive Latin American regimes.

3. **Herodians** love *power*. They climb to the top of religious institutions. Their God bestows favours on the 'haves' who are 'born to rule'. They do not realize that love of power is inimical to a devout spirituality.

4. **Scribes**, elders, teachers-of-the-law regard *tradition* as master, rather than servant. Their religious way of life is ruled by precedent, what has been. 'Come weal, come woe, their status is the quo'. If it's new, it's suspect. Their God is unchanging, not merely in faithfulness, but operationally.

5. **Essenes** are liturgists. 'If only we get our *worship* right, the Messiah will come.' Their God is 'wholly other'. Their liturgies are exact, their worship-forms utterly predictable.

6. **Mystics** major on *experience*. They are right-brain, rejecting rationalism, cerebralism, dogmatism. For them prayer (perhaps divorced from labour) is the essence of the spiritual life. They sometimes form monastic orders.

## What happens this year? **Sea of Faith Network Annual Conference**

Where?  
**King's College,  
Otahuhu, Auckland**

When?  
**October 3, 4 and 5**

The Theme?  
**"Faith On  
The Margins"**

Who Will Be There?  
**Everyone including  
John Spong,  
Lloyd Geering  
.... and you!**

Full Details  
**In the May Newsletter**

7. **Gnostics** are syncretists. They believe there's truth in every religion. They invite us to make up our own identikit picture of God. They're at home somewhere in the New Age Movement; they develop conspiracy theories from the Dead Sea Scrolls; they love the Gospel of Thomas.

8. **Sophists** or sages place a high premium on knowledge or wisdom (they're not the same). They develop beautiful theories about redaction criticism, whether the four gospels are 'reliable' when they describe what Jesus said and did. They write learned papers, which like those of their predecessors, will be seen in future academic circles to be largely nonsense.

9. **Sign-seekers** love miracles. With Herod (in Jesus Christ Superstar) they'd love Jesus to 'walk across their swimming-pool.' Their God wants everyone to be healthy, wealthy (but not necessarily wise: academia is suspect). Anything can be cured, instantly, given enough faith.

10. **Materialists** measure everything, not just money. The bigger, faster, more brilliant, the better. Bigger churches are better than smaller churches; brilliant preachers than ordinary ones. Success, fame, ambition, optimism, 'imaging' are their watch-words. They attend Amway conventions.

11. **Do-gooders** are given to paternalism. They do works of mercy for their own benefit, not just for the sake of the one done good to/against. Thoreau said of them, 'If you see someone coming towards you with the object of doing you good, run for your life.' These 'people-helpers' don't realize they're in it to solve their own problems: pure altruism is very very rare.

12. **Antinomians** despise holiness - at least for themselves in private. As the term implies, they're 'against law' and misuse grace. 'God loves to forgive, it's his business' - so they give God every opportunity to do just that.

13. Finally, **Pharisees** are preoccupied with two things - law and doctrine. So they become legalists and dogmatists. They talk a lot about 'truth' and 'error'. Their God is unambiguous, reducible to creeds and doctrinal statements. Their 'gospel': repentance precedes acceptance (with Jesus it was the other way around). The acid test: their non-concern for social justice and mercy and true faith (Matthew 23:23, Luke 11:42, cf. Micah 6:8). They're fundamentalists, and proud of it.

All the entities emphasized are O.K. as part of a religious system, but are deadly if divorced from any/all of the others. Jesus did not align himself with any of the above groups: go and do likewise!

---

#### Book Review

### Reformation

*Reformation* by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto and Derek Wilson (Bantam Press, 1966, \$89.95) reviewed by Lloyd Geering

A Roman Catholic historian has joined with an evangelical Anglican historian to show that religious reformation is not confined to the

sixteenth century Reformation sparked by Luther, but has been much in evidence in both Protestantism and Catholicism for five hundred years.

This is not a chronological history of the theme of reformation, let alone a history of the Catholic-Protestant divide, but a vast collection of historical snippets, arranged according to selected themes. Much interesting and often little known information has been assembled to challenge both Catholic and Protestant readers to broaden their perceptions of each other in today's ecumenical climate. For this purpose the book could be read with great profit from within the churches.

But the book was also intended for those outside the churches. Although the authors acknowledge the fact of modern secularisation they have failed to understand how much the Western world has changed during this century. The Catholic-Protestant rift which divided it for four hundred years has today become irrelevant, not so much because of growing ecumenism but because Christian orthodoxy itself has become irrelevant.

The authors assert "The death of God has been prematurely reported" and that "today, secularism is on the defensive", while "religions are back reshaping a spiritually charged world". This can only be judged pious wishful thinking rather than informed comment and there is little in the book to support such claims.

This book contains much historical information, which deals with what "divided Christian from Christian" and it encourages Christian unity, but it fails to deal at all adequately with what now has "divided the Church from the world". Written in 1896 it could have won much praise for its broad Christian sympathies and ecumenical spirit. Published in 1996 it appears to be narrowly parochial in today's multi-cultural, religiously pluralistic and increasingly secularised global village.

Lloyd Geering

---

#### Book Review

### The Mouth Of The Dragon

*The Mouth of the Dragon* by Susan Adams and John Salmon (Women's Resource Centre, 1996, Box 11-903, Ellerslie, Auckland. \$29.95) reviewed by Owen Lewis, Auckland.

This comprehensive book arises from an exploration of contemporary questions of theology by an Auckland group in 1994. The core material from these sessions has been expanded and enlarged and related to current thinking. The writers have consulted a wide variety of sources in modern theology, and have appended a generous bibliography which would serve as a good starting point for any SOFN group.

The book explores the history of our ideas of God and the nature of reality. The method used is first to deconstruct accepted ideas, to strip away the accretions of time and an authoritarian church, and the confusions of metaphor and reality. This is then followed by a thorough attempt at reconstruction, building up again the vital elements of a socially responsible position tenable by anyone, male or female, Maori or pakeha, who wants to think out a theology relevant for today.

The "dragon" of the title refers to those things we may have cause to fear, and those that are life-giving and liberating. This represents the position many Christians find themselves in, poised between the traditional world of the Church and a feeling that they are missing something vital. The exposition is clear and orderly and the terms carefully explained.

While some of this material will be familiar to SOFNers, there is much here that will be valuable. The authors are at their best in the discussion of the way language shapes our understanding and action. They challenge the assumptions that see truth as defined by what is divinely revealed.

**"Revelation is neither necessary nor desirable. It is not necessary because the constructionist approach we are taking builds theology on human experience, language and imagination. It is not desirable: it is a dominating concept by virtue of being closed to any investigation."**

A feminist insight particularly informs the chapters on Jesus and the Church. This enables the authors to show how women's creativity and emphasis on relationship have not been well served by images of dominance and hierarchy. New ways of thought are clearly needed.

Since the authors have started from a defined position within the existing church, it is understandable that they have allowed their church mindset to define the questions to be pursued, e.g.: the significance of the Trinity; the nature of ministry; the future of the Church. These may be helpful topics for some to consider; those on the creative fringe may well have a more informal agenda.

Owen Lewis

#### Book Review

### Evolution

*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Michael Denton, Adler & Adler, reviewed by Lloyd Geering

The reading of this book reminded me of an incident from my student days in the thirties at the University of Otago. The Science Students' Debating Society challenged the Evangelical Union to a debate on evolution. They planned it as a bit of fun to show up the ignorance of conservative Christians. They were quite taken aback when they lost the debate on the decision of a neutral judge. They had not even read Darwin's *Origin of Species*. To their surprise their opponents had not only read it but knew enough

to point out the many weak links in Darwin's reasoning and the many suppositions he had had to make.

This book, by an Australian medical doctor and scientist, does something similar but with considerably more scientific skill and in the light of the knowledge of molecular biology which has been gained since that time. It is a salutary reminder that no scientific conclusion should ever be allowed to drift into being an unexamined dogma. To be truly scientific one must always be reviewing the evidence in the light of fuller evidence and experience. Science, even at its best, never reaches finality simply because it is a human enterprise and its conclusions are always subject to continual review.

Some of the new evidence in this book, particularly in the area of molecular biology, is of a technical nature whose validity I am not in a position to judge. But there is quite sufficient in plain language to cause the average lay person to pause and think again about the Darwinian theory of origins.

There are places where Denton goes too far. It is not true to say that for Darwin "chance ruled supreme", or that Darwin saw evolution as "an entirely random process". On the contrary, living as he did in the aftermath of Newton's view of the world as a mechanical universe operating according to its own internal laws, Darwin believed he had discovered one of those laws -- "the law of evolution of species by natural selection". In other words "natural selection", far from being a random process, was for Darwin a mechanism built into the natural processes. It involved chance but what occurred was, he believed, not wholly the result of chance. What Darwin believed was that evolution was the result of both "chance and necessity", to use the words of Democritus, revived by molecular biologist Jacques Monod in his book of that name.

It is unfair to describe Darwin, before joining the Beagle, as a "Bible-quoting fundamentalist". Indeed it is anachronistic to say "nineteenth-century England was steeped in biblical fundamentalism". Fundamentalism is a 20th century phenomenon and refers to the blind commitment to the literal understanding of the bible in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. In the early 19th century there was little cause to doubt the Bible at face value and Darwin simply shared beliefs which were universally accepted. The fact that his views changed as he accumulated his evidence shows he was far from being "a fundamentalist"; and the fact that his views were so quickly accepted, along with much other new evidence then challenging the traditional understanding of the Bible, showed that many people were reasonably open-minded.

Denton rightly points out that Darwin presented "two related but quite distinct theories". The first (the "special theory") is more restricted in scope, simply proposing that new species can arise by natural selection. The second theory of Darwin (the "general theory") claims that the "special theory" can be extended universally to explain the tremendous variety of all forms of earthly life.

Denton is not himself a "creationist", anxious to defend the biblical story of origins. He is a scientist wishing to warn that the Darwinian theory of the origins of species is far from providing an adequate explanation. He concedes, in his first five chapters, that "Darwin's special theory was largely correct...there can be no question that new species do originate in nature...The validation of Darwin's special theory...has been one of the major achievements of twentieth-century biology".

The very success of the special theory, however, has had the effect of enhancing the general theory of evolution to which Darwin proceeded on the basis of it. But arguments from the known nature of small-scale evolutionary change do not necessarily prove long-term evolutionary processes. As Denton pertinently points out, there is "obviously an enormous difference between the evolution of a colour change in a moth's wing [something which has been observed] and the evolution of an organ like the human brain".

By resort to much technical data Denton sets out to show that the differences between some genera is so great that they defy any explanation by gradual processes. This raises the question of whether there has been sufficient earthly time available for the evolution of all known species to have taken place by gradualism. This is a return of the problem first faced by the theory of evolution, which had surfaced quite some time before Darwin. It was only after geologists had shown that the earth was much older than previously thought that Darwin was provided with a time-span necessary for his theory to be convincing. Now there is some doubt as to whether even three to four billion years, enormous though that is, is long enough for all known species of life to have slowly evolved from the simplest living cell. As Denton again notes, "the complexity of the human brain would require eternity for its assembly in terms of our current engineering capabilities".

But just as Denton rightly argues that Darwin was not justified in jumping from his special theory to his general theory, so Denton himself is guilty of a similar jump. Showing to his satisfaction that Darwin's theory of natural selection is not an adequate explanation of evolution he believes he has undermined the theory of evolution itself, arguing for what he

calls "an anti-evolutionary thesis", by which the variety of species has occurred by a fundamentally discontinuous process. But he has not clearly presented any such alternative. The theory of evolution may still leave us with many problems but this does not justify saying that it is a "theory in crisis".

The very fact that we do not yet know just how the evolution of species has occurred does not in itself disprove the idea of evolution. The reason why a geneticist such as Dobzhansky can say, "Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution" is that in the light of all current knowledge the slow evolution of all forms of life on this planet is not only more convincing than the traditional "creationist" theory, which it replaced, but it will only be superseded when a new and more convincing theory has been put forward. Denton has not produced this.

On the definition of "myth" as a controlling image or story one can say that the evolutionary theory is now an internationally held myth, which has largely displaced the Judeo-Christian "creationist" myth and it will remain a universal myth of the origins of life until a more convincing myth displaces it.

**Lloyd Geering**

## Next Newsletter

May 1997: Copy deadline is **April 15th**.

To offer a contribution, send a floppy disk (3.5", IBM compatible, most WP programs are readable) or hard copy to Noel Cheer, 26 Clipper St, Titahi Bay or e-mail to cheer@vnet.ibm.com

### Postscript

## After Christianity

Maxine Green from SOF UK gives us a brief preview of Daphne Hampson's new book After Christianity published by SCM at a price of 14 pounds 95. It:

- Shows that Christianity is neither true nor ethical and engages critics of her previous work
- Demonstrates that feminists have a different understanding of the self-in-relation from that built into Western thought
- Gives a 'reading' from this feminist perspective of the major paradigms of the Christian tradition: transcendent monotheism; covenant; sacrifice and incarnation; God as Trinity.
- Suggest that the male construct of 'woman' may be the *raison d'être* of the whole -- and inimical to the interests of women.
- Explores how we may conceptualize that dimension of reality which is God in a way which allows the fulfilment of personhood.
- Considers the ethical context of a life in which such a spirituality may flourish.



# The Sea of Faith Network (NZ)

## Group Contacts

P.O. Box 345, Kaitake  
Phone/Fax (09) 401-0412

### Warkworth

Anne Todd,  
Old School House  
154 Kaipara Flats Rd. RD1

Phone (09) 425-9746

### North Shore

Kelvin Grant,  
1 King Edward Parade,  
Devonport.  
Phone (09) 445-3075

### Auckland Central

Graham Shearer,  
22 Corinth St.,  
Remuera 5.  
Phone (09) 520-2091

### South Auckland

Elsie Montgomery  
62a Station Road  
Papatotote  
Phone (09) 287-5517

### Rotorua

Lindsay Vaughan,  
16 Windsor St. Rotorua.  
Phone (07) 348-8666

### Hamilton

Peter Timmins  
Pencarrow Road RD3  
Hamilton.  
Phone (07) 856-8170

### Te Kuiti

John Earwaker,  
2 Ngatai St, Te Kuiti.  
Phone (07) 878-8062

### Whangamata

Val Bailey,  
207 Bellona Rd,  
Whangamata.  
Phone (07) 865-7232

### Katikati

Kath Kenyon,  
21 Francis Drive, Katikati  
Phone (07) 549-0586

### Tauranga

Howard Zingel,  
275 Minden Road, R.D.6.  
Tauranga.  
Phone (07) 552-5320

### Te Puke

Ivan Frost,  
23 Cameron Road,  
Te Puke.  
Phone (07) 573-8164

### Gisborne

Jean & Robin Bennett,  
P.O. Box 1229, Gisborne.  
Phone (06) 867-2383  
(evenings)

### Napier

Alan Goss,  
4 McDonald St., Napier  
Phone (06) 835-9594

### New Plymouth

John Eaddy,  
58 Liardet St.,

Tony Gordon  
16 Argyle St, Wanganui  
Phone (06) 343-1219

### Palmerston North

c/o Peter Donovan,  
Massey University.  
Phone (06) 356-9099

### Wairarapa

Kate & Barrie Allom,  
41B Cole St., Masterton.  
Phone (06) 377-5777

### Kapiti (Ephesus)

Wendy Williams,  
25 Clunie Avenue,  
Raumati Beach.  
Phone (04) 298-6666

### Mana

Irvine Roxburgh,  
3 Picket Boat Lane,  
Whitby.  
Phone (04) 234-8613

### Hutt Valley

Jenny & Gavin Watson,  
12 Volkner Grove,  
Lower Hutt.  
Phone (04) 569-5013

### Wellington (Ephesus)

Ian Harris,  
9a Tui Road, Days Bay  
Phone (04) 562-7726

### Wellington (SOF)

Barbara Millar,  
22 Fiona Grove, Karori.  
Phone (04) 476-3858

### Golden Bay

Areta & Graham Milne,  
P.O. Box 164, Tahiahu,  
Golden Bay  
Phone (03) 525-8349

### Blenheim

John Craighead,  
7 Leirim St., Blenheim.  
Phone (03) 578-7359

### Christchurch

John Goffin,  
76A Puriri St., Riccarton,  
Christchurch.  
Phone (03) 348-3479

### Timaru (Ephesus)

John Meredith,  
49 Broadway Av., Timaru.  
Phone (03) 686-1932

### Timaru

Bob Hayward,  
9 Waipori Place, Timaru.

### Dunedin

Mae Cairns  
51 Garfield Av., Dunedin  
Phone (03) 467-5085

### Invercargill

Cliff Broad,  
73 Russell St., Invercargill.

Phone (03) 218-8629

## Steering Committee

### Chairperson

Jane Griffith  
82 Kinghorne St.  
Strathmore Park, Wellington  
Phone 04-388-1885

### Secretary

Yvonne Chisholm  
67b Horokiwi Road West  
Newlands, Wellington  
Phone 04-478-6086

### Newsletter Editor

Noel Cheer  
26 Clipper Street  
Titahi Bay  
Phone 04-236-7533

### Treasurer

Roy Griffith  
82 Kinghorne St.  
Strathmore Park, Wellington  
Phone 04-388-1885

### Membership Secretary

Lloyd Geering, Elaine Geering,  
Roy Griffith, Janet Lambie, Liz  
Robinson, David Simmers, Janet  
Davidson

## The Resource Centre

The Sea of Faith Network in New Zealand maintains a Resource Centre of audio tapes, video tapes, books and copies of papers. This material is made available to financial members for study purposes. For a catalogue, contact Suzi Thirlwall, 34 Briarley St, Tauranga, phone 07-578-2775.

## The Sea of Faith Network

**AFFIRMS** the continuing importance of religious thought and practice as a vehicle for awe and wonder and for the celebration of key social and spiritual values;

**DRAWS** freely upon our spiritual heritage without being bound by it;

**PROMOTES** the quest for meaning and fulfilment as a human activity;

**PROVIDES** encouragement, stimulation and support in fellowship with others engaged in the quest.

## You Can Join ...

... the Sea of Faith Network (NZ) by paying an annual subscription of \$10 per household if within New Zealand or \$15 if out of New Zealand. Send your subscription to the Membership Secretary (address above). You will receive about five newsletters each year.



# Sea of Faith Network (NZ) Audio/Visual Resource List Current at March 1997

## AUDIO TAPES

(There is no loan facility for audio tapes — you should send a 90 minute audio tape and you will receive a copy of the requested tape — full details below.)

- A.1 **Thirty Years of Honesty:**  
(i) Eric James, "The Flowering of Honesty"  
(ii) Ruth Robinson, "Life Was Never The Same"
- A.2 **Thirty Years of Honesty:**  
(iii) John Bowden, "The Loss of Nerve"  
(iv) Ruth Etchells, "The Awful Truth"
- A.3 **Thirty Years of Honesty:**  
(v) Alan Race, "Truth is Many-Eyed" plus selections on religion from BBC4
- A.4 **Faith All At Sea:** Don Cupitt and Keith Ward in dialogue on talkback radio BBC4, 1984
- A.5 **The Heart Of The Matter:** Extracts from BBC news and programmes discussing the programme which was made on The Sea Of Faith in 1992.
- A.6 **UK Sea of Faith Conference 1988:** BBC interview with Don Cupitt plus Kaleidoscope, BBC 1984
- A.7(a) **Rethinking Religion. Don Cupitt: Connexions 1991.**  
1. "Religion is Human" (intro by Lloyd Geering)  
2. "Whatever Happened to Morality?"
- A.7(b) **Rethinking Religion:**  
3. "Restoring The Body"  
4. "Mysticism and Transcendence"
- A.8 **God In Us:** Collection of news items from the BBC concerning Anthony Freeman's publication God In Us.

- A.9 **UK Sea of Faith Conference 1993:**  
(i) address by Karen Armstrong  
(ii) address by Hugh Dawes
- A.10 **UK Sea of Faith Conference 1993:**  
(i) address by Don Cupitt  
(ii) the discussion which followed
- A.11 **UK Sea of Faith Conference 1993:**  
Address by Kulananda
- A.12 **Secular Ceremonies:** Discussion on secular ceremonies, BBC 4, 1991
- A.13 **Secular Ceremonies:**  
(i) "The Funeral", (ii) "The Wedding"
- A.14 **Lost For Love:**  
(i) Don Cupitt on Stanley Spencer  
(ii) Ronald Eyre examines the debate on the Gnostic Gospels BBC 1991.
- A.15 **Jesus Was A Jew:** Lecture by a Liberal Jewish rabbi in St. Andrew's, Wellington.
- A.16 **Life After Death:** Panel discussion chaired by Sir John Marshall which includes Lloyd Geering and others.
- A.17 **Christianity and Credibility:** A discussion chaired by Lloyd Geering with Wilf Malcom, John Murray, Jack Shallcross and others.
- A.18 **Mystery:** A discussion chaired by Sir John Marshall, with Lloyd Geering, John Coleman and Peter Reid (?)
- A.19 **An Age of Radical Change:**  
Jan Schwass for Radio NZ interviews Lloyd Geering at the 1983 international conference on Religious Studies
- A.20 **Thos. Berry Tapes:** "The Human Presence Within The Earth Community." (there are five tapes in the series: a, b, c, d, e).

- A.21 **The Faith of A Radical Christian: Connexions 1991:**  
Don Cupitt and Neville Glasgow
- A.22 **The Dalai Lama:** 1992 visit and 1996 visit
- A.23 **The Sea of Faith in New Zealand: Connexions 6/10/96**
- A.24 **The Nature and Role of Dissent In The Christian Church: Connexions:**  
Don Cupitt, John Spong, Lloyd Geering
- A.25 **Tomorrow's Spirituality:** Lloyd Geering
- A.26 **Tomorrow's Spirituality:** Dr Susan Adams
- A.27 **Tomorrow's Spirituality:** Neville Glasgow
- A.28 **Conundrum:** (each pair of items is on a separate tape)  
(a) Euthanasia, Censorship  
(b): Protest, Religious Diversity  
(c): Who Owns a Child, The Eight Day of Creation (may we modify humans?)  
(d): Self Defense, Poverty  
(e): The Current State of Sexual Morality
- A.29 [unassigned]
- A.30 **The Persistence of Faith:** 1990 BBC Reith Lectures by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, 6 parts, 3 tapes
- A.31 **Unitarians / Krishnamurti**
- A.32 **God and The New Physics:** Lloyd Geering at St Andrew's 1995, 4 parts, 2 tapes
- A.33 **Speaking of God:** Keith Ward and Stephen May

- A.34 **SOFN NZ 1995 Conference:**  
"Buddhist and Christian Faiths in Dialogue": Lloyd Geering and Abbot Bhikkhu Vajiro
- A.35 **SOFN NZ 1995 Conference:**  
"Passing It On: Transmitting Values Between Generations": Dr Val Grant
- A.36 **SOFN NZ 1995 Conference:** "Faith Journeys": Peter Donovan, Jean Holm, Ian Harris, Barbara Calvert.
- A.37 **SOFN NZ 1995 Conference:**  
"Perspectives On The Future": Lloyd Geering

## PAPERS

(The Resource Centre holds back-numbers of SOFN papers. You can request copies at \$2 each to cover photocopying and postage — full details below.)

- P.1 **Perspectives on the Future:** Lloyd Geering SOFN NZ 1995
- P.2 **Our Dual Agenda:** Don Cupitt, SOFN UK 1995
- P.3 **Passing It On:** Val Grant, SOFN NZ, 1995
- P.4 **Islamization, A Progress Report:** William Shepherd
- P.5 **Diving Deep and Surfacing:** Penny Jamieson SOFN NZ Conf. 1996
- P.6 **From Dover Beach to Karitane Postcards: Shifting Horizons in a Sea of Faith:** Clive Pearson SOFN NZ Conference 1996
- P.7 **Asking The Right Questions About God:** Charles Birch SOFN NZ Conf. 1996

- P.8 Taking Down Fences Joy Cowley  
SOFN NZ Conf. 1996
- P.9 Cosmic Celebration as used at the  
1996 Conference in Dunedin

## BOOKS

(Available on loan — single copies only —  
full details below)

- B.1 Images Of The City\*, Lloyd Geering
- B.2 Jesus Reconsidered\*, Lloyd Geering
- B.3 The World Of Religion\*, Lloyd Geering  
— An Introduction to Martin Buber's  
Land Thou
- B.4 Creating The New Ethic\*, Lloyd  
Geering
- B.5 Religious Trailblazers\*, Lloyd Geering
- B.6 Frontiers Of Faith, Lloyd Geering, Don  
Cupitt, John Spang with Neville  
Glasgow.
- B.7 Machines, Computers and People\*,  
Lloyd Geering
- B.8 Encounter With Evil\*, Lloyd Geering
- B.9 Crisis In The Christian Way\*, Lloyd  
Geering
- B.10 Human Destiny\*, Lloyd Geering
- B.11 On Becoming Human\*, Lloyd Geering
- B.12 About Time\*, Lloyd Geering
- B.13 Science, Religion and Technology\*,  
Lloyd Geering
- B.14 Sacrifice In A Secular World\*, Lloyd  
Geering
- B.15 A Single New Humanity\*, Canon Paul  
Oestreicher

- B.16 The Double Cross\*, Canon Paul  
Oestreicher
- B.17 Creating God\*, Ian Harris
- B.18 Rethinking Religion\*, Don Cupitt
- If you want to **buy** any of those marked  
with an asterisk then contact **St Andrews  
Trust For The Study Of Religion And  
Society P.O. Box 5203 Wellington**. There  
are discounts for multiple copies. The  
usual price is \$10, with older books at \$5.

## VIDEO TAPES

(available **only** on loan — one tape (or set)  
at a time — full details below)

- V.1 NZ Sea Of Faith Conference 1995:  
Address by Lloyd Geering
- V.2 NZ Sea Of Faith Conference 1995:  
Val Grant: Passing It On
- V.3 The 1995 UK Conference
- V.4 Christianity In Change, BBC 1994,  
response to SOF Series The Heart Of  
The Matter SOF BBC
- V.5 Did You See? Wisdom of the  
Dream, Thinking Aloud, Fighting  
Talk.
- V.6 Anthony Freeman's Dismissal BBC  
1994.
- V.7 God: For And Against (Karen  
Armstrong is one speaker)  
also Landscape and Memory
- V.8 The Sea Of Faith: Don Cupitt's  
seminal series (Two tapes: a: Parts 1  
to 3 b: Parts 4 to 6)
- V.9 Art Meets Science and Spirituality:  
Panel discussions and interviews,

includes the Dalai Lama, David Bohm,  
Huston Smith, Lawrence Weiner  
Rupert Sheldrake, Fritjof Capra,  
Raimon Panikkar.  
Two tapes — a: Parts 1 to 3, b: Parts 4  
and 5

- V.10 The Power Of Myth: Interviews with  
Joseph Campbell.  
Two tapes — a: Parts 1 to 3  
b: Parts 4 to 6
- V.11 The Big Questions: A series of  
interviews of Paul Davies by Phillip  
Adams. Two of the series of six are  
missing.
- V.12 Jesus, The Evidence:  
Three-part series.
- V.13 Three Aspects Of Dying (one tape):  
i) Death On Request — the Dutch  
documentary on euthanasia  
ii) Kill Or Cure — a programme on  
euthanasia from the BBC  
"Hypotheticals" series.  
iii) The last interview with the British  
playwright, Dennis Potter
- V.14 Two People Who Shaped Western  
Thought (one tape):  
i) A Matter Of Heart — Carl Jung  
ii) Roger Bacon
- V.15 SOF Conference 1996, Dunedin:  
Clive Pearson Shifting Horizons in a  
Sea of Faith
- V.16 SOF Conference 1996, Dunedin:  
Penny Jamieson Diving Deep and  
Surfacing
- V.17 SOF Conference 1996, Dunedin:  
Charles Birch Asking The Right  
Questions About God
- V.18 SOF Conference 1996, Dunedin:  
Joy Cowley Taking Down Fences

- V.19 SOF Conference 1996, Dunedin:  
Conference Overview (20 mins) —  
scenes and snippets

## HOW TO GET BOOKS AND TAPES

The Sea of Faith Resource Centre is  
managed by Suzi Thirlwall. Her postal  
address is **34 Briarley St, Tauranga**  
and her phone number is **07-578-2775**.

**Tapes and Books are available on  
these terms:**

- **Audio tapes:** There is no loan  
facility. Send a 90 minute audio tape  
and return postage to Suzi Thirlwall  
and you will receive a copy of the  
requested tape.
- **Video tapes** are available **only** on  
loan. One tape (or set) at a time. If  
your preferred tape is already out on  
loan then you will be put on the  
reserved list (unless you ask  
otherwise). Please enclose postage  
stamps to cover mailing costs: North  
Island \$2.80, South Island \$4.00.
- **Books** are available **only** on loan.  
There is no postage fee but stamp  
donations are always welcome. If  
you want to **buy** any of those  
marked with an asterisk then contact  
**St Andrews Trust For The Study  
Of Religion And Society P.O. Box  
5203 Wellington**. The usual price  
is \$10, with older books at \$5. There  
are discounts for multiple copies.