

Jubilee Grapevine

Summer 2003

Image not available

Prayer

Contents

Prayer: Personal Developmental Stages <i>Barrie Baker</i>	3
Journalling: An Alternative Form of Prayer <i>Ruth Dunnicliff-Hagan</i>	4
Prayer: Movement, Words and Silence <i>Chris Albone</i>	7
Universal Day of Prayer for Students 2003 A Prayerful Response to Lent <i>Natalie Sims</i>	10 11
Book review: <i>An Evil Cradling</i> by Brian Keenan <i>Tiffany Winn</i>	15
ASCM National Conference 2002: Sustainability: living within means <i>Bronwyn Hatwell</i>	16
ACT SCM in Semester Two 2002 <i>Ruth Dunnicliff-Hagan</i>	19
Vic SCM <i>Don McArthur & David Wolstencroft</i>	20
WA SCM in 2002 <i>Trudi Bennett</i>	21
WA SCM in the Coming Year <i>Bronwyn Hatwell</i>	22
The Dunnicliff-Hagan Wedding	23
Cover: ASCM logo	

Jubilee Grapevine is a publication of the Australian Student Christian Movement.

www.ascm.org.au

This issue of JG was edited by Narelle McAuliffe.

jg@ascm.org.au

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views of the editor or the ASCM as a whole.

As requested by the Council of Christians and Jews, JG uses the terms Hebrew and Greek Scriptures instead of Old and New Testaments.

This issue has been printed on 100% recycled paper.

RIP

Ruth Weeks

10 Dec 1911 – 14 Jan 2003

To The Editor,

Congratulations on putting together a fantastic edition of JG [Spring 2002]. Through my involvement in SCM I have heard much talk about sustainability and living simply. However, I find that the discussions often stay in the realm of debate, rather than motivating changes in behaviour. I found it very useful to see many of the topics bandied about set out in well written and thoughtfully argued articles. I was encouraged to think more carefully about how sustainable my lifestyle is – and I'm even trying out vegetarianism!

Thanks again, Rachael Palmer.

Ed. note: The Spring 2002 JG and other back issues can be read at www.ascm.org.au.

The next issue is due out towards the end of Semester One. A theme has not yet been chosen but submissions on any topic and in any form are always welcome. Send them to the editor at jg@ascm.org.au.

Prayer: Personal Developmental Stages

I owe a great debt to those who taught me to pray. They did so, not by means of any form of structured teaching, but by praying around me and including me with them. In Sunday school, at home, in church services, I was swept along by and with others, and gradually moved to an autonomous experience by the time I was sixteen.

What did they actually pass on to me?

Most importantly, I caught an awareness that I was not alone in this existence: that if I were up against loneliness, death, bewilderment, or confusion, there was a harmony that I could relate to and communicate with, and that was always available. This harmony I came to know as God, but only after much instruction and life experience. Before that realisation I knew it as personal and holy love.

So I was able to pray before I had faith, just as a baby knows a mother's love before he or she has an awareness of the personality of the mother.

I started to experiment with prayer, looking for attractive and meaningful arrangements of words that were able to catch hold of my attention. I found wonderful combinations of words that swept me along. I could remember them and use them as a focus. But these forms could gradually lose their magic; catch and hold my attention less and less. If I had strong emotions or concerns that did not relate to these words then the harmony was replaced by pain. I wanted to throw these words out: they hurt me.

I next looked for all the principal concerns in my (and that of others) world and built them into a list. I would focus on the members of that list and seek to look through them to God behind, hoping that God, the objects of my concern, and I could be harmonised. But, like all lists, it needed maintaining and had a structure that was coming from me and not from God.



Later, knowing that God can and does change people's lives and behaviours, I sought to use prayer as a means of changing my behaviour to be closer to that of God's desire (that is, to make my behaviour less sinful). However, I was never really sure exactly how my behaviours affected people, so I had problems praying about relationships whose natures I did not fully understand. It could have been prayer wide of the mark.

Each of these developmental stages has left a useful residue for my prayer life. Words, lists and self-analysis are still part of my prayer. But behind these means is an awareness that my relationship with God is healthiest if God puts the structure in. I put in the time, reflect on where I am in God's world, and wait. Sometimes God gives me an insight, renewed confidence, or a command.

Sometimes, but not always, a miracle occurs whereby the God of my prayer changes me according to His dearest wish, and sometimes I know this.

What a precious gift!

Barrie Baker
WA SCM Senior Friend

Journalling – An Alternative Form of Prayer

Prayer is one of those words that can have a variety of different meanings for different people. As a young child I understood it mainly as speaking to God. Private prayer was something one said at bedtime and usually involved thanking

God for things and asking God for various things - and making sure there was an appropriate balance between the two! If one wasn't feeling inspired, there were always the set prayers to recite. But as I grew older, this business of praying seemed to be rather pointless. If you didn't get what you wanted, I was told, you probably had prayed for something that you wanted but didn't need. And prayer was also meant to be about listening to God – but how on earth did one 'hear' God? Keeping up personal prayer became something that I did out of a sense of duty rather than because it meant much to me.

Part of the breakthrough for me came with the discovery that we can encounter God/the Divine by getting in touch with the deepest part of ourselves, with the 'inner core of our being'. Some people would call this the soul or a person's spirit, although it is not a remote part of one's being but integrally connected with the person/individual that one is.

Embarking on a journey of self-discovery is essentially embarking on a deeper spiritual journey than, say, involvement with church generally allows. If one is committed to this kind of encounter with God, one's understanding of prayer changes and encompasses activities that one would not previously have thought of as prayer.

When I was first introduced to journalling as a form of prayer (through

a young adults' 'faith group') I was surprised by how easy and simple it was.

Journalling could be defined as the process of keeping a journal in which one records one's deepest thoughts, fears, hopes, desires, and dreams. As I understand it, journalling is a way of responding to God's invitation to share the deepest parts of one's self with *God's* self. In a couple of short journalling courses I attended we were encouraged to try not to control too much of what we put down on paper (in our journal) but to allow a free flow of thoughts. Essentially it is pouring out whatever is happening to/with me in that moment (or that day) as one might do with a close friend. Too often I had found prayer and faith to be an intellectual experience, not something that involved the whole of me or who I am/was as a person. Journalling encourages me to 'get out of my head', to stop relying solely on rational thinking, and to get in touch with my 'heart' (and my 'gut'). That doesn't mean that our rational mind is left out altogether – more that it is put in its place and not allowed to dominate. It is the 'heart voice' within us that too often gets drowned out or ignored in ordinary life – it needs time and space to be heard.

Journalling for me has often involved writing. Sometimes that has been in the form of free-flowing prose, even a letter to God. Other times it's involved a simple kind of poetry. In more recent years I've tried to use coloured pencils or watercolour paints to depict 'where I'm at' in simple drawings. I can't draw, but the aim is not 'good art'; it is to delve more deeply into my inner self, my

inner being. The drawing of a mandala has been a useful way of journalling as well. Recording and reflecting on one's dreams from the previous night, especially recurring dreams, can also be a helpful aspect of journalling. Sometimes, through particular use of my imagination, I have found writing a dialogue between God and myself to be very helpful. This was especially so when I imaged God as 'Unconditional Love', rather than a judging old man in the sky. Indeed, the cultivation of the imagination is essential to journalling – hence the emphasis on creative expression.

Psychologists would probably say that journalling is really about getting in touch with the subconscious. This need not negate an interpretation of the process of journalling as a means of encounter with God. Indeed Jung was very strong on the importance of dreams as a link to the unconscious and the soul.

Many deeply spiritual people and teachers, from a variety of religious traditions, would agree that the deepest desire of God (however God is named) is that each of us would become more fully the persons we were created to be. The spiritual or faith journey is about becoming more fully human and more whole. Journalling as a form of prayer offers the opportunity for healing, and for facing those parts of ourselves with which we are uncomfortable. Journalling also offers opportunities to discern the directions in our lives, to assess where we are heading and to examine new possibilities that God may be inviting us to take up. By journalling over a period

of time and having the opportunity, through our journal, to reflect back we can sometimes see patterns or recognise recurring expressed needs or desires. Furthermore, it even becomes possible to recognise that supposed chance events actually led us down particular life paths. However dimly then, we may begin to perceive the hand of a deeply loving God at work in our lives. My experience of prayer through journalling has also challenged me to reassess some of my beliefs.

Journalling can include reflection on parts of scripture, or gospel stories. An insight gained through reflection on a passage from scripture may be helpful in understanding an event in one's own life, and vice versa. Yet journalling also acknowledges that God reveals God's self through the patterns and the events of our own lives – not 'just' through the Bible. When I first began using journalling as prayer I found I had to suspend some of my disbelief, to stop listening to my rational mind that said that 'this was all silly'. Imagination definitely needs to be cultivated in journalling if we are to begin to see life differently and a little more as God sees it. The Celtic Christians believed in the power of the 'inner eye', the 'eye' that sees beyond the surface appearance of things. And seeing life or an event in a whole new way is at the heart of prayer and, I would contend, the touchstone of an encounter with God/the Divine.

Ruth Dunnicliff-Hagan

The Deer's Cry

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven
Light of sun
Radiance of moon
Splendour of fire
Speed of lightning
Swiftiness of wind
Depth of the sea
Stability of earth
Firmness of rock

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me
God's eye to look before me
God's wisdom to guide me
God's way to lie before me
God's shield to protect me

From all who wish me ill
Afar and anear
Alone and in a multitude
Against every cruel
Merciless power
That may oppose my body and soul

Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ in me

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I sit down, Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I arise, Christ to shield me

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me

I arise today

This is an old Celtic favourite (also known as St Patrick's Breastplate). It was set to music a few years ago (a beautiful song) and was used as the theme for a BBC-TV World In Action programme on the Birmingham Six (six men falsely accused, framed, and imprisoned for more than ten years, for an IRA bombing).

Submitted by Ruth Dunnicliff-Hagan

Prayer: Movement, Words and Silence

Prayer seemed almost magical when I was a young Catholic. I was taught to kneel - either in church, or near my bed. To make the sign of the cross - holding my left hand over my heart, whilst my right wandered from forehead, to belly, to left shoulder, to right, finally meeting its sibling in front of me. We would hold our hands together, heads bowed, and announce the words that we were taught for First Communion.

Mass was more interesting still. We would walk quietly (not so quietly in my case) to a pew (never too close to the front of the church - we never felt proud enough to go closer), genuflect - ensuring that one's knee made it all the way to the ground (unlike the half-hearted bop that came into fashion years later) and shuffle in. We would kneel, make the sign of the cross and offer intercessory prayers, sign again and sit up. The Mass was a whole world of movement - we stood, we sat, we stood again for the Gospel (making small crosses over our head, lips and heart during the greeting of the Gospel). I always found this part of the Mass boring and would make up songs and sing quietly to myself.

The Mass proper started with yet more movement - the bread and wine would be taken up to the altar and the ritual would begin. We knelt while the priest offered the many and various prayers - his hands perpetually in motion - lifting the elements in order, covering them and lifting them again during the consecration, signing over himself and over us - and most beautiful of all, being held out and open as if he were embracing God and us. At the appropriate time, we would humbly file up to the altar, kneel at the rail and receive communion, then quickly file back to our seats, kneel, and pray quietly. Normally I'd ignore the words - half of them I couldn't understand - but the actions, the

drama would entrance me. The only words I wanted to know - to say myself - were the words that the priest would say quietly to himself.

I think I learned my suspicion of words as a young Catholic - all the prayers we were taught really didn't mean much to me. A rosary - decade after decade of Hail Marys - and what would attract me was the scent of the rosewood, and the feel of the beads as they moved between my fingers. None would or could speak to me - or for me. And in comparison to them, my small prayers for intercession seemed terribly inadequate.

It is my 2nd year at university. I have made contact with the Catholics on campus, but end up being drawn into EU and Student Life. I know few people (not that this particularly worries me). In all of the religious groups we pray. What strikes me is the wordiness of the prayers - the distinct lack of movement.

People assume the position, fall forward slightly and close their eyes, while the leader uses prayer as yet another tool of education. Sometimes we may pray in turn, each with an edifying prayer. I am silent. I cannot muster the words, and aside, prayer is a private thing.

It is enough for me to be present. But for them, everything is words - words that I all too well understand and increasingly cannot assent to. I raise this with some of my friends - "Yes, prayer does involve words - it has to - that is what prayer is - a conversation with God". Conversation? I listen but I cannot hear even a quiet whisper back. The doubts settle in - perhaps I am just not good enough for God to speak to...

It is 1992. I've returned from my first ASCM National Conference. My world has been turned upside down in many ways. Easter approaches. I go to the Good Friday service, and, with everyone else, file out to kiss Jesus' foot on the crucifix. Bronze, polished by years of adoration on dark wood, draped in the dark purple of Lent. It is a touching ceremony - the old women kiss Jesus as tenderly as if he were their own child. When I think about it now, it reminds me of seeing my brother for the last time - and of the tenderness, the sadness and the agony of my mother greeting my brother for the last time.

Easter Sunday comes and goes. The veil of the Temple remains torn.
The Holy of Holies remains empty.

It is 1999. I find a seat in the outermost concentric circle of seats (I am too shy to move in closer). We sit quietly - only the muffled sound of passing traffic, the ticking of a clock and the occasional sigh from a dog lying at the feet of one of the Friends breaks the silence. I have spent a couple of years trying to come to terms with this silence - I am beginning to learn to let the silence embrace me rather than I embrace the silence. This prayer - shared, communal, yet entirely personal - is a tonic in my noisy life. The meeting for worship ends with a handshake that soon infects all of us. The dog moves easily amongst us, greeting each of us in turn. I reflect - these are truly holy and humble people that accept the ministry of an animal with the same ease as the ministry of a person.

It is evening. Most of the church is darkened and only the altar is lit. The air is thick with incense. The priest has had the extra vestments put on, and is now transferring the

host from pix to monstrance. He turns to face us, holding the monstrance high, turning first to his left, then to his right, then back, before placing it back on the altar. Bells ring at each point. This silence I cannot wrestle. This silence blasts through me - empties me. I feel humbled to the point of non-existence - the only adequate response is to lay prostrate, cruciform, before...yes...before what? I don't - instead I slump in my pew and cry silently.

Soon will come a time when words and symbols deny me these moments.

But for now, they are what I live for. In these moments it is not me who prays, rather it is prayer that surrounds me, penetrates me, suffuses me. An uneasy peace is made. Healing begins. We each forgive in turn, in our silent conversation.

Today. I read that scientists have discovered a centre in the brain that is activated when someone prays. They only tell us what we already know - that we come equipped with an amazing propensity for prayer (even if not all of us engage it). Another experiment has found that prayer seems to have a positive effect on healing (the sceptic in me awaits more double-blind trials to be convinced). Yet again, they tell us what we already know - that prayer is effective. Why else would it be such a universal behaviour?

Prayer means different things to different people. We choose different paths - different words, rituals, symbols. What is it for me? Prayer is that thing that starts as a ripple in my heart and works up to a spontaneous ejaculation of wordless joy and gratitude when I greet a beautiful midwinter's morning. It is the communion I feel with cats - the tears of loss and regret when I think of my brother - the tears of joy when I lay beside my lover - the sense of humility and awe

when I walk beneath the trees on the way to work - the uncontrollable urge to greet all creatures when I meet them - the small silent (but wordy) ritual of cleansing that I perform when I am caressed by the wind - the playfulness I feel when I walk near the lapping waves on a beach.

Prayer does not require a God (or the belief therein) or a religion or a fixed set of rituals. Prayer certainly isn't limited to words or ideas. Rather, prayer is the attitude in which one holds oneself toward the world. It is a

radical openness - the desire to form some sort of communion with all that surrounds me. It is the willingness to love - the response to the challenge to step beyond the borders and fears that constrain me. Prayer is without limit - it is all-embracing - even if for the time being there are times when I do not pray. It is synonymous with love. It is synonymous with life.

Peace
Chris Albone

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the watching shepherds to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

A traditional prayer/blessing that I particularly like from the Celtic tradition of Christianity (which is one of the reasons I like the prayer!).

Submitted by Shawn Whelan

Prayer for Exams

I surrender to You my striving,
I let go all need to effort or struggle.
I relax deeply into things exactly as they are.
I accept life, that it might move through me with grace.
Amen

Submitted by Trudi Bennett

Universal Day of Prayer for Students 2003



Prayers for Peace

*World Student Christian Federation
Fédération Universelle des Associations Chrésiennes des Etudiants
Federación Universal de Movimientos Estudiantiles Cristianos*

The practice of annual days of prayer for students dates back just over a hundred years. The Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS) was first celebrated on Sunday 13 February 1898 at the second meeting of what was then known by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) as the General Committee.

The participants of the Federation's then ten member countries believed that intercessory prayer should be a vital ingredient in the life of a worldwide body of Christian students. As a result, the early leaders of the WSCF called on Christian students around the world to join together on the second Sunday in February each year for observance of the UDPS. This later changed to the third Sunday in February, a practice that continues to this day.

Over the past hundred years, students involved with the WSCF – which today comprises more than a hundred member movements and contact groups worldwide – have observed this day of prayer as a way to express our common commitment as witnesses of our faith in God and in each other, to the world both inside and outside our academic communities.

This year's liturgy has been prepared by JoAnne Lam and staff members of the Regional Offices and the Inter-Regional Office. JoAnne is from The United Church of Canada, currently serving as an intern at the WSCF Inter-Regional Office. She originates from Hong Kong and is a Canadian citizen. On the same note, the contributions from the Regional Offices were greatly appreciated.

From the foreword: *Since the events in New York City and following incidents associated with terrorism, our worlds have been filled with violence, turmoil, and unrest. These conditions have always been encircling our lives, even as early as the Biblical times when Moses was called to guide the Israelites out of slavery and Egypt. In the midst of these continual struggles, ultimately humankind is seeking justice and peace. Can peace be achieved by non-violent means? If so, why do so many world leaders ignore this concept? As this year's UDPS is looking towards peace and our prayers for peace, keep in mind the strength in prayers and the global perspectives of our daily actions, because one small pebble into the still waters will make ripples disturbing the farthest reaches of the sea [...] May the love of our God the Creator, Jesus our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit our Protector, be with us always, now and until the end of time.*

Taken from the Universal Day of Prayer for Students 2003 service booklet produced by the World Student Christian Federation. For a copy of the booklet contact Sophia Wooldridge, the ASCM WSCF Liaison Officer, at wscf@ascm.org.au.

A Prayerful Response to Lent

One of the ancient traditions of Christianity is the practice of fasting during Lent. While I've never done it the proper Catholic way (the rule of eating meat only once a day doesn't make sense when I rarely eat meat), it's a tradition that I've always liked. I'm not sure why it appeals to me. Perhaps it's because it helps me to understand what it means to 'do without'. Maybe it's because I like to see how I could live my life in a more simple way. Maybe I like the constant reminder of God's presence when I notice that something else is absent. Maybe it's the connection with generations of Christians who have followed this spiritual discipline. Ultimately though, as a person who tries to live by placing my hope in God, rather than in my possessions, it's because a Lenten fast makes me aware of my material dependencies, and helps me to test the waters of living free from that dependence.

In 2000, I decided to gain some understanding of economics, and read a book called *Capitalism for Beginners*. You know the sort of thing, a simple historical overview made easy with lots of nifty cartoons. I was well aware that some Transnational Corporations¹ were bad (like many others, I participated in the boycotts of Shell, Nike and Nestlé), but I had not realised that Transnationals continue to dominate because their evolution is designed to exploit the inequalities of the nations; e.g. cheap labour where there are no unions, and cheap oil where there is no "ownership" of land². I also thought about my connection to these companies, knowing full well that my monetary cost of living was lower because of the exploitation of others through these corporations. Would it be possible to live a life independent of Transnationals?

In 2001, rather than giving up chocolate, caffeine or fried food, I decided to abstain from the Top 20 Transnational Corporations. I also dragged Shawn Whelan (husband and supportive ally) along for the ride. It has been one of the most challenging Lenten fasts we have carried out, and has had long-term effects on our lifestyle choices.

My choice of the Top 20 was arbitrary: I looked up the "Global 500" listed by *Fortune* magazine³; and selected those companies with the highest revenue for the previous year (see next page for current list).

¹ I've chosen to use the term 'Transnational' rather than 'Multinational' because it seems to more accurately reflect the way these companies exploit national boundaries.

² Lekachman, Robert and Borin Van Loon (1981) *Capitalism for Beginners*, New York: Pantheon Books.

³ <http://www.fortune.com/fortune/global500>

The Top 20 for Lent of 2003

Rank	Company	some brands/products	revenue (US billions)
1	Wal-Mart Stores	not trading in Australia	219.8
2	Exxon Mobil	Mobil, Esso	191.6
3	General Motors	Holden, Fiat, Subaru	177.3
4	BP Amoco	BP	174.2
5	Ford Motor	Ford, Mazda, Hertz, Volvo	162.4
6	Enron	defunct	138.7
7	DaimlerChrysler	Mercedes, Jeep, Airbus	136.9
8	Royal Dutch/Shell	Shell, United Energy	135.2
9	General Electric	appliances, finance, war aircraft	125.9
10	Toyota Motor	auto, finance, communication	120.8
11	Citigroup	finance, Diner's Club	112.0
12	Mitsubishi	auto, trains, appliances	105.8
13	Mitsui	iron, coal, steel, gas, auto	101.2
14	ChevronTexaco	Caltex, Ampol	99.7
15	Total Fina Elf	oil, chemicals, auto	94.3
16	Nippon Telegraph & T'phone (lots, but not fully researched)		93.4
17	Itochu	auto, aerospace, gas, coal	91.2
18	Allianz	investment, insurance	85.9
19	IBM	computers	85.9
20	ING Group	investment, insurance	83.0

Our first lesson was that the Top 20 did not include the companies we expected: Coca-Cola, Nike, Nestlé and McDonald's. The Top 20 is dominated by companies known for transportation (cars and oil) and for financial management (investment and insurance). In retrospect, this is not so surprising: even Nike depends on transportation networks and investments. And, unfortunately, big revenue equals bad practices. For every corporation in the Top 20, I've found listed human rights violations, labour law violations, wilful environmental damage, or charges of corruption. As I investigated the Top 20 Transnationals, I learned about the intricate webs of corporate ownership, and just how many products and companies are, in turn, owned by larger companies. I was overwhelmed, and realised that abstaining fully from the Transnationals, or even only the Top 20, would be impossible.

In Lent 2001, we decided to focus on our consumption of transportation. As we thought about our dependence on petrochemical-based transportation we realised that it was not only our personal travel, but the transport of every product that comes into our home that make us consumers of fuel. The first Lenten resolutions:

1. No use of our car. No bus or diesel-fuelled train travel.
2. No imported products (in an attempt to reduce 'secondary' transportation costs).
3. When buying an Australian product, choose the most local option.

Not using our car wasn't difficult. We live in the inner city. I walk to work, and Shawn catches the (electric) tram. But our awareness of how car-dependent Melbourne is was heightened. The imported-product ban really challenged us. It now seems strange that we would choose to buy coffee that has been grown in South or Central America (for low wages), transported to Italy for roasting and packaging, and then transported to Australia to sell. It also seems silly that we would think pasta made by Italians in Italy would taste better than pasta made by Italians in Melbourne. We made some great discoveries, and developed habits that we've continued, like cycling to our local organic farming co-operative, so we can buy fruits and vegetables directly from a community farm; drinking Australian-grown coffee; enjoying pasta manufactured a few streets away; and growing our own tomatoes. But of course, it's good at the end of Lent to be able to purchase coconut milk, sweet chilli sauce, maple syrup and East Timorese coffee again! We continue to think of imported goods as 'luxury items' – they're expensive for the world, even if they're relatively cheap for us.

This is a journey that continues. After the first year, I aimed to do more research. On finding that Shell owns some Australian gas and electricity companies, I learned about how the gas and electricity markets work, and discovered that 40% of the gas and 30% of the electricity that comes into Australian homes is distributed by Shell. When I looked up my superannuation, I learned that I (without any choice) have investments in many of the Top 20 Transnationals. In Lent of 2002 we added resolutions that related to these discoveries (reducing our gas consumption by 40%, switching to Green Power and investigating alternatives to my superannuation fund – sadly, there are none yet!). As I look forward to Lent of 2003, I wonder what it will be like and think about what I've learned so far. Have I become less dependent on the Transnationals? I believe so, but I've also learned just how dependent I am; and as I switch off my computer, turn off my office light and walk home, I pray that I will consume less, learn more, and maybe inspire others to give it a go in Lent of 2003.

Natalie Sims

Lord

There are so many things to do that I am not sure of priorities in the use of time.
I know that our chief end is to worship you and enjoy you forever.
But the demands of work are endless;
The sensuous pleasures are enticing – and enlivening;
There is little time for reflection.

Yet I know that with reflection comes peace;
That the sensuous pleasures are a part of life to be affirmed and enjoyed;
That limits to work must be set, so that there is time for relaxation and wholeness.

Lord

I want to make praise of you – Spirit of love, truth and justice –
the central purpose of my life
And to express that through effective service of others,
and enjoyment of life in all its fullness – family, friends, nature, the arts – and work.

Lord, I will serve you.

Amen

Submitted by John Langmore



Book review:
An Evil Cradling by Brian Keenan

An Evil Cradling would have to be among the top two or three books I've ever read. It's non-fictional and autobiographical: Irishman Brian Keenan recounts his four and a half years as a hostage of Islamic Jihad, in Lebanon. Keenan was taken hostage after heading to Beirut, Lebanon to work in 1985, as "a change of scene" from his native Belfast.

For part of the time he was held hostage, Keenan was chained to a wall. He underwent months of solitary confinement, and experienced numerous physical beatings, not to mention the mental battle to stay sane, particularly whilst in solitary confinement. Out of that horrific experience Keenan wrote *An Evil Cradling*. What is extraordinary about this book is the wonderful gift that it gives: it is a story of incredible suffering that, despite this, leaves the reader glad to be alive and sensing anew the wonder of life.

An Evil Cradling is a story of truth. It is the story of a man who doesn't have the busyness of everyday life to distract him. He has only his own company and a maggot-infested cell, and he can't run away from himself anymore. It's a story of facing the truth of and about ourselves, God, and life.

An Evil Cradling is a story of faith: "Why me, God?". Keenan describes himself as a person who, prior to being taken hostage, had little interest in God, but who discovers within himself a very deep faith. It's a story about prayer, and about what it means to be part of a religion, particularly in the context of entrenched hatred.

An Evil Cradling is a story of someone who chooses life. It is the story of someone who, despite all that he's been through, chooses to live a life of forgiveness, rather than revenge; of love, rather than hate; of brutal honesty, rather than false platitudes. It's a story that engenders hope.

On a personal level, I found *An Evil Cradling* incredibly humbling. How many of us, after all, let petty grievances get in the way of living a life of faith? Keenan's remarkable story is a wonderful read, both confronting and a blessing. I hope you take the time to have a look at it.

Tiffany Winn

ASCM National Conference 2002

Sustainability: living within means

The 2002 ASCM National Conference was held in July in Bannockburn, Victoria. It was a classic ASCM affair on all accounts – many deep issues discussed late into the night combined with the possible over consumption of port and chocolate. The conference theme of ‘Sustainability: living within means’ ran through many of the activities but the sharing of personal experiences was by far the most impressive part of the four days for me.

A forum on ‘The environmental spirit’ at the Collin’s Street Baptist Church preceded the conference. Presentations were given by Melissa Brickell, from Aboriginal Catholic Ministries; Hal Greenham, a community activist; and Matt Bell, speaking on behalf of Cath James from the justice and international mission unit of the Uniting Church in Australia. This gave a wonderful introduction to the conference, helping us to begin to fit together our spirituality and our environmental beliefs.

To begin the conference sustainably we took the train and bus to Bannockburn via Geelong. The train trip was very romantic, including Harry Potter style train carriages. It also gave us a chance to play get-to-know-you games, which are always good fun, although only if both carriages decide to play, right guys?! Surprisingly enough, the bad ice-breaker games were kept to a minimum with conference participants doing most of the work themselves.



Image not available

Obviously the ice-breakers worked! Many of the participants at the 2002 ASCM National Conference in Victoria.

Then the serious stuff began with a discussion and video led by Father Charles Rue. It was about the way Christianity began the destruction of the environment through a perceived need for dominion over the Earth and how it is now attempting to change people’s views to be more in line with the true teachings of Christ. OK, I might have summed that up in my own way but basically the Church is now giving more vocal support to the environmental movement, particularly through the Earth Charter. (I now expect a nice rebuke from some ASCM Friends who don’t consider this a new phenomenon but it was news to me.)

Other amazing news, though not of the cheerful type, was that given by Trudi Bennett, Cate Clarke, and Claire Vincent who shared their separate experiences of the Philippines over the past two years. Though only a short distance from our shores it quickly became obvious in talking to these guys that we know very little about our neighbours. Just around the corner, forest destruction, land seizure, corporate pollution, government corruption, and every other concept as far removed from living simply as you could imagine, are occurring. These talks were rather depressing but very motivating.

On a similar theme was the role-playing game on global warming led by Peter Raynor. We confirmed that if people only take their personal gains or losses into consideration it has a very large impact on the fate of the environment, especially if you're a notable scientist or politician. Luckily it wasn't my island that was sinking and I wasn't the scientist making the hard decisions, but when the day comes that such decisions have to be made I hope that these people have the strength to make the right ones. In some ways, though, we all make these decisions everyday, which is what the conference was able to teach us I think.

Beate Fagerli's talk on globalisation was incredibly interesting, basically because so many of us knew so little. I, as did Claire, had always liked to think of it as 'globalising love', but the fact is that it's the globalisation of poverty and greed. Yeah America. I think that using the forthcoming list of 'companies to boycott' being compiled by Kate Watts, would be a way that we can all become involved in stopping globalisation from

destroying economically or politically weak countries.

Beate's talk also became something of a pep talk for the ASCM. We learnt a lot about the state of the movement both within our region and internationally. We heard that in most Western countries the movement is small like ours, being more community-focused rather than tackling human rights and social justice issues. And, that it's okay to be small because "small is beautiful".

Image not available

**Well, perhaps not if it's this small! Task:
Build a structure under which three-four
people can fit using only a limited number of
pieces of newspaper and sticky tape...**

Now don't go and think that the only things we did on the conference were so informational and serious. I think the picnic followed by Matt Bell's football coaching clinic will be a very

memorable event for many of us for years to come. As will the bread-making that didn't quite go to plan (lovely worship but interesting bread). And who could forget the 6kg of chocolate that were consumed (I hope I wasn't the only one feeling queasy after that lot...).

will learn this, but as we begin the new millennium in the same way we did the last I don't think this will be very soon.

Image not available

Image not available

Ochlos, the protagonist puppet of the WA SCMer's environment-themed Bible exploration.

Weathering the bread-making liturgy.

Now the session that was the most fun of all had to be the Bible study lead by the WA SCMer's (does being in it make me biased?!). Ochlos, the puppet, depicted the story of humankind's relationship with God and the environment from the beginning of time to the present day. Now as one of the puppeteers I may just have seen it too many times, but it was in some ways a very depressing story. We have been taught a lesson by God so many times, but we still are unable to learn that the Earth is not ours to destroy but rather to care for. I hope one day we

From all this doom and gloom the ASCM formed an Action Plan as to how we were going to support the environment as a movement. I can't remember the details but WA had a lovely tree-planting trip in second semester that was a direct result of the conference. No debates, now, about the actual worth of planting a tree and how it's actually just delaying the inevitable and isn't really helping, because at this stage I think we all need to be doing whatever is within our means to help our world. This is what I learnt at the National Conference.

Bronwyn Hatwell

ACT SCM in Semester Two 2002

For the ACT student members and Friends of the ASCM, the second semester of 2002 included times of action, reflection and relaxation. The two main events of the semester, the annual Day of Prayer for Students service (August 18th) and a weekend retreat, included these elements but also involved a fair bit of planning and creative thinking.

The service to celebrate the 2002 Day of Prayer for Students was rather different to those of past years. Last year the service was held on a Sunday afternoon in a small room at City Uniting Church with a small number of students and Friends in attendance. This year the ACT SCM Area Council decided, on the invitation of the City Uniting congregation for some SCM involvement in a service, to hold it within a regular Sunday morning worship service at the church. The service was led by the ANU Chaplain Arto Avakian, and D'Arcy Woods, a long-time SCM Friend, preached at the service. SCM musicians led the singing, providing something a little different to the usual musical fare at the church. A joint parish/SCM Friends-coordinated morning tea followed. Whilst deemed a success, especially in emphasising the SCM's links with churches, a lot of negotiation and planning was required and we may return to the smaller 'independent' style of service this year.

The second major event was the student weekend retreat entitled 'Engaging with God through the Senses' and held (once again) at Peter Bailey's wonderful coastal retreat. It was a great weekend.

After a relaxing Friday afternoon on the beach and a dinner of fresh South Coast fish 'n' chips, Peter led us through some biblical reflections on the theme. We meditated on the beach on Saturday morning (interrupted briefly by a dolphin that swam in only 15 metres away from us) and then had some individual reflection time, followed by a short time of sharing. After morning tea, Katie, Daniel and Anastasia led us through the bread-making liturgy that they had experienced at the ASCM National



Conference in July. Saturday night involved the adaptation of a McRae-MacMahon agape liturgy for a kind of sabbath-celebration meal. It was beautifully organised and led by Katie and Anastasia with short moments of prayer and/or reflection before and between each of the three courses (of our delicious home-made food). Apart from a couple of interruptions required to urgently repair a dishwasher with masking tape (we were gifted with the presence of some ingenious handymen), it was a special night.

ANU-SCM students also continued correspondence with our asylum-seeker/refugee friend and her family. In December, Katie and Anastasia organised and sent them a Christmas parcel as well as one of warm clothes.

Ruth Dunncliff-Hagan
ACT SCM Development Worker
act@ascm.org.au
(Adaptation of report to the ASCM Executive Meeting - January 2003)

Vic SCM

The past year has seen the growth of a second ASCM branch in Victoria. The new branch is comprised largely of students from the Pacific Islands and has added diversity to both the Victorian University of Technology and the ASCM. Meetings at the new branch have been lively and significant to the extent that one was endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor and led to the cancellation of political science classes so that all students could attend. Many of those who have been most involved in this branch are students in a community development course taught by Helen Hill.

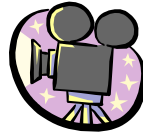
The second semester of 2002 was also a busy one for the University of Melbourne branch, with Matt Bell, the new Staff Worker, coordinating a programme largely dedicated to



ecology and understanding the place of the natural world in Christian thought and action. The branch had an engaging semester with a camp at the Grampians, Bible study classes, and meetings on a wide variety of topics including:

- Sharing Our Faith: Why is talking about our own personal spirituality sometimes hard to do?
- Did God condone genocide? A discussion of the difficulties in reading the Hebrew Scriptures.

- SCM gets a green thumb: Discussion of the proposed environment project.
- Where is God? Pantheism vs Panentheism. Are either of these consistent with a Christian view of God?



- “I saw the Messiah at Hoyts!” An exploration of the Jesus story in pop culture.

Throughout this activity the Victorian SCM has been involved in a discussion about its future. This discussion is ongoing and covers what role the Area Council, branches, future Staff Workers, overseas interns, off and on campus events, and local churches will have in the future. This debate emerges as the movement looks for ways to conduct its mission so as to create increased energy in its members, and to enhance its diversity of skills.

Some planning has been done for branch activities in 2003, and there are currently discussions about an Orientation camp, potentially on the theme of peace. The camp may feature presentations from Friends who have been active in the peace movement in different eras. Hopefully the coming year will be one of change and progress with the continued support of Friends, churches and chaplains.

Don McArthur (Chair, Vic SCM Area Council) and David Wolstencroft
(Adaptation of report to the ASCM Executive Meeting – January 2003)

WA SCM in 2002

In 2002 the SCM in Western Australia decided to change direction. University branches had become harder and harder to build up because students were focusing more on study while at uni and not on social and lifestyle groups. The abolition of a common lunchtime has also made it hard to meet⁴, and our small numbers lack the critical mass to be vibrant and grow.

At the beginning of the year we decided to meet once a month in the evening over a meal with a discussion. This 'Shared Space' has been working really well and people are getting to know each other and becoming a closer community. Students take turns to host and facilitate discussions. Between 7 and 17 young people from different universities and denominations attend each month. Topics have included hope, science and ethics, living simply, refugees, world religions, and ecumenism.

This simpler model of tertiary ministry has freed up time for new projects to develop.

One of these has been the Ecumenical Youth Network. The EYN was initiated to develop a broader catchment for the SCM and to foster understanding and friendship between young people of different denominations. The original coordinating group consisted of a representative from the Uniting, Anglican, and Coptic Orthodox churches and an SCM member. They decided to start a Unity Pilgrimage that would journey to a different denomination each month. So far we have visited the Coptic Orthodox, Anglican, Quaker, Uniting and Catholic churches. All participants have learnt a lot about working together ecumenically. Sarah Mills from the Uniting Church has been enthusiastically helping me coordinate this programme.

The EYN then grew and became involved in an Interfaith Exchange Program initiated by the Ethnic Communities Council. Young Christians, along with Muslim, Buddhist and Jewish young people, toured different places of worship during August and September. At the interfaith workshop on Christianity, each young Christian was responsible for conducting a session on a different part of their faith. This was a fantastic experience for these people to share and explain their faith in an open way, and to try and answer some of the curly questions posed by the students of other faiths.

We also ran two retreats last year, which were great opportunities for community-building and leadership. At the retreats each participant was responsible for organising or leading a part of the programme. Thanks to an SCM Friend we were able to keep these retreats low cost and accessible.

This year has been really positive for the SCM in WA, experimenting with different models of being an ecumenical Christian community. Our membership has grown, and broadened denominationally. The members have been enthusiastic and dedicated to activities. Thank you to the Anglican Parish of Nedlands for their ongoing practical support and many thanks to Trinity Uniting Church who have enabled us to take on these new initiatives through their financial support over the last 18 months.

Trudi Bennett
Former WA SCM
Community Development Worker
(Adaptation of report to WA SCM Area
Council Meeting – November 2002)

⁴ Ed. note: I believe that after much campaigning by the Guild of Students, The University of Western Australia has now allocated a common lunchtime on two days of the week!

WA SCM in the Coming Year

Hello! My name is Bronwyn Hatwell and I am taking this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Staff Worker for the SCM in Western Australia. I have been involved with the SCM for the last 18 months, but due to my parents' strong involvement with the movement have actually been attending events since bump stage! I know the WA SCM community well, having been involved with almost every type of SCM event over the past year. The coming year's programme will be very similar to last year's and build on its successes. Our deepest thanks go to Trudi Bennett who has worked tirelessly for the WA SCM over the past three years.

Shared Space will continue in its current form, which has proved to be very successful. The first three evenings are already planned for 17 March, 10 April and 20 May, with topics to be decided nearer the time.



The tasks of hosting the dinner and leading the discussion have been separated now, though, so people have

the option of volunteering for either, whichever they feel is their talent.

The Ecumenical Youth Network has begun the year well with nine of us enjoying the breeze on the South Perth foreshore for a relaxing BBQ. The fun will really begin, though, with a visit to the Syrian Orthodox Church on Easter Sunday for the Prayers of 10 Virgins.

Campus groups are reforming this year with students wanting a more regular, on-campus meeting. We will be having weekly meetings on both the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University campuses with the format to be very informal.

The WA SCM webpage is now up and running at www.ascm.org.au/wa. Watch out for more photos and all the details of our upcoming events.

So the year ahead is looking positive; well, with a vibrant and enthusiastic community where could we go wrong!!

Bronwyn Hatwell
WA SCM Staff Worker
wa@ascm.org.au

The Dunnicliff-Hagan Wedding

To share with you the recent wedding of Ruth Hagan, ACT SCM Development Worker, and Anthony Dunnicliff in November 2002.

Image not available

Image not available

Ruth and Anthony in the grounds of the Australian National University where they were both once students.

Ruth with Peter Bailey, Chair of the ACT SCM Area Council cum 'chauffeur'.

The following 'Blessing of Community' was part of the final blessing at their wedding. It was also used at the end of the ASCM Executive Meeting held in Canberra this January. Ruth first got it from some Catholic Religious Sisters for whom she works part-time.

Let us face our future with confidence and hope,
Daring to stay open to whatever today may offer,
Daring to go fearlessly into things without knowing how they may turn out,
Daring to keep going.

Let us pray that we may travel into our future caring for each other,
And may the blessing of community arise from within each of us,
Radiate around us,
And remain forever.

Amen

[...] prayer [...] is our most accessible means to inner reconciliation: a natural healing function in response to the pain of the divided self and the divided world.

Michael Leunig

Prayer is the effort that each of us makes to be as honest as possible about life, our own, that of others we know, and of the society in which we live. This is what the Psalmist meant by a clean heart. Prayer that does not strive to be honest is pseudo-prayer and not worth the time spent on it.

Alan Eccleston

Submitted by John Langmore

Prayer on the Web

There's a prayer website put up by the Irish Jesuits and called 'Sacred Space' that I find quite helpful at <http://www.jesuit.ie/prayer>. It's a daily guided meditation, based on a short Bible reading, but with a number of steps that encourage you to centre yourself before reading. I have it set as the home page for my browser, which encourages me to stop for five or ten minutes when I want to go Net-surfing.

Judy Redman

If undeliverable return to:
Australian Student Christian Movement
PO Box 4386
University of Melbourne
PARKVILLE VIC 3052