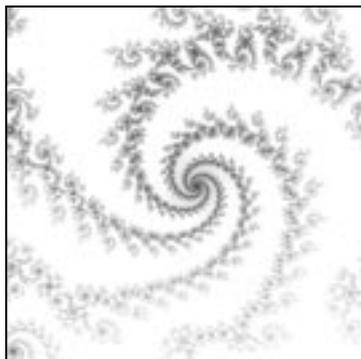


# PRISM



*August 2005*  
*Issue 1*

passion energy  
**zeal**  
fervour desire



# Editorial

by Ben Hoyt

HERE IT IS AT LAST: the first issue. All twenty wonderful pages in full colo... uh, full black-and-white.

Putting together a magazine is a new adventure for me, and it's been a huge learning curve. Back and forth with contributors, pretending I know how to write. Playing with the computer, trying to make it think I'm a graphic artist. And finally, one fine morning, off to the printers.

But it's been lots of fun, and we hope you enjoy it.

## What we're about

*Prism* is put together by a small bunch of New Zealanders with a big-hearted Christian vision and a good dose of enthusiasm. Our aim is to encourage quality, creativity, and localness.

People have more than enough to read, but so much of it's junky, irrelevant, or just plain boring. We wanted a magazine that meant something to us, with articles by people we knew. So we had to start one.

*Prism* is not a Church or a youth group magazine; it's simply a magazine put together by Christians. We're keen to publish articles about almost anything in our lives. We want to encourage each other to think and act Christianly about all of life, not just Church.

We know we haven't exactly achieved all this in the first issue. But it's a start, and aiming high is a good thing.

## www.PrismMagazine.co.nz

If you haven't been to our website yet, do check it out. We've set up an online discussion forum where you can talk about any of the articles, or any other *Prism*-related issue. Just go to the home page and click "Discussion."

The forum doesn't completely replace letters to the editor or future articles, of course, so if you've got something you want printed in the next issue, just send it to me.

## Subscribe or support

If you like what we do, feel free to subscribe (for only NZ\$20 a year—that's three or four issues). We're not a business, but we print with real paper and ink, so if you want to help *Prism* look nice, please think seriously about giving a donation.

We're also really keen to get our readers and friends to write articles for us. We'd love to have you read quality stuff written by people you know, or write quality stuff for your friends to read.

For more information about any of these things, please browse the website or contact me. ♦

## What's in This Issue

- 3 There's Gotta be More to Life by Bryan Hoyt
- 6 Nature to Our Rescue by Lynton Baird
- 7 A Journey in Sudanese Cooking by Franci Hoyt
- 8 Mothering Solo with a Masterton Mum
- 9 Opposing Zeals by Genevieve Smith
- 10 With a Capital L by Matthew Bartlett
- 10 Dead Poetesses Society by Ben Hoyt
- 11 A Guide to *The Guide* by Paul Archbald
- 12 Singled Out by God by Esther Zorn
- 14 Political Zeal by Aaron Stewart
- 15 Dunne Talking with Peter Dunne
- 16 Go and Make More by Andrea Munroe
- 17 Exit Sandman by Joel Rademaker
- 18 No Shortcuts with Mark Munroe
- 19 Sporting Zeal by Tim Sterne



### Ben Hoyt, Editor

editor@prismmagazine.co.nz  
<http://www.prismmagazine.co.nz/>  
20 Fergusson St, Masterton, New Zealand

### Credits, A–Z

Paul Archbald  
Lynton Baird  
Anna Bartlett  
Kathy Bartlett  
Matthew Bartlett  
Anonymous Doners  
Ed & Liana Havelaar  
Berwyn & Ver Hoyt  
Bryan Hoyt  
Franci Hoyt  
Arjan Karels  
Jonathan Marinus  
Anna Mulholland  
Andrea Munroe  
Mark Munroe  
Joel Rademaker  
Genevieve Smith  
Hans Snoek  
Tim Sterne  
Aaron Stewart  
Esther Zorn

# There's Gotta be More to Life

by Bryan Hoyt

LIFE DRAGS THE CHAIN a bit sometimes.

If you've been going to church for a while, you might have found yourself at a point where it's just not very interesting any more. And the worst part of it is, many people keep assuming you'd be glad to do all sorts of "good Christian service." And if you're not, they say, you should be.

Something's wrong here. You'd think just being alive should be really enjoyable. But it's usually pretty rough. With life to battle with, it would be nice if being a Christian on top of that didn't completely drain all your spirit.

Have a look at what Heman the Ezrahite says in Psalm 88. It's a bit long, so I won't quote it here. But it looks like even the men who wrote the Bible had times when they couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. There's no happy ending to this Psalm, either. Heman was really at the end of his tether.

We'd all like to be passionate about our lives. We'd love to be burning with the desire to do things for God, but we don't really feel like it right now.

THERE ARE SOME major things that can get in our way. Physical or emotional pain can be a real destroyer. But even more common, and more deadly, is an enemy so uninteresting that we usually forget to think about it when it's gone: plain old boredom.

Sometimes it's your job. Flipping burgers, sweeping floors, sitting behind a computer—you know how it goes. And boredom really kicks in on those long afternoons at school. Or uni. Weekends—we all live for them—watch a movie, hang out with your friends, sleep in a bit longer. Wow.

On Sunday, you go to church, and if it's not the sermon, then it's the music, or the people. Being really honest here, how long has it been since you were excited about being alive? Excited about being a Christian?

Check out what David says in Psalm 22, especially the last half, starting around verse 22. I'll quote a bit of the chapter for you:

I will declare your name to my countrymen!  
In the middle of the assembly I will praise you!  
You loyal followers of the LORD, praise him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, worship him!

For he did not despise or shun the humble  
condition of the oppressed;  
He did not ignore him;  
When he cried out to him, he responded.  
You are the reason I offer praise in the  
great assembly;  
I will fulfil my promises before the LORD's  
loyal followers.

Let the oppressed eat and be filled!  
Let those who seek his help praise the LORD!  
May you experience lasting encouragement!

That's not quite life as we know it, is it? Imagine if you were as devoted to God as David was. Imagine if you actually cared enough about it all to say what he says.

John Eldredge, in a very cool book called *The Journey of Desire*, says about David,

Ask yourself, could this person be promoted to a position of leadership in my church? Heavens, no. He is far too unstable, too passionate, too desirous. It's all about pleasure and desire and thirst. And David was called by God a man after his own heart.

Maybe we should rethink what it means to be a Christian.

Sometimes just growing up can be pretty boring. Not so long ago, we were young and cute enough that people would complement us on every minor accomplishment. That's not the case any longer. More and more as you get older, you've got to go long distances on very little encouragement.

It would be very good, right now, to give some serious thought to whatever it is that's giving you pain, or making life boring. Don't take it lightly! It's not just "another part of life." It's something that's standing between you and your love of life. Standing between you and your God.

WE ALL HAVE WAYS of dealing with pain and boredom. Some of them are good, some of them are not. Others, while maybe good for a time, don't really fix the problem.

It can be good to get away from a problem for a while, to give you a chance to recover, and see things with a different

mind-set. You might go to another country for a year. You might read a book, or have a few drinks with your mates. Sometimes it helps to watch a movie, or play fun games with five-year-old kids who don't yet know the meaning of heartache or world-weariness.

But the problem is still there when you get back. It doesn't go away when you close your eyes. That can be hard to accept, but you know it's true.

There are things you can do about it, however. The first one is your friends. Community is one of the most important things God gave humankind. When you've lost sight of what drives you, a lot of the time the biggest problem is that you need someone to talk to about stuff.

## Don't stop now

It's around this point that most people give up. Just before the hard work begins. I'm sorry, but I really don't have an easy way for you to get past this point. Sometimes I look at myself, and I think, "I'm still at this point myself. I'm still bumming around on the dull grey side of the fence."

But go on we must.

When you practice some sports, especially something like distance running, you learn that you won't pull through if you let pain slow you down. Our bodies—physically, emotionally, spiritually—can achieve an incredible amount more than we normally imagine. It's hard to keep from thinking, when pain or tiredness comes on, "That's it. I'm finished. I've gotta stop now."

But actually, you're not nearly as drained of energy as you think. It just feels like it. Heaps. Yet you probably know from experience that you could run another mile, if you had to. You could climb another mountain.

Very often, life's like that. You've had a long week. A long year. It's been miserable. You've stressed out and worked hard for something, and you got nowhere. You've used all your chances, you've had your second wind, and to be perfectly honest, you've got nothing more to give.

**NOTHING.**

When you get to this point, trying to get rid of the pain is not going to happen. You've run the marathon, and you're being asked to run another one. It's now when you've got to say, "OK. I'm in the pits. Even if people care about

me, this is going to be one blinding red wall of pain. But I will take every step anyway, right to the end, even if it takes ten years."

Marathon runners have it easy. But with the sort of pain that life sometimes puts on us, we're not going to be able to pull through on our own. You may be able to ignore the pain. You may be able to force yourself to go on in spite of the pain. That's awesome, because you're not going to pull through if you can't.

But you'd be a strong person if you could do it on your own, week in, week out. You're going to need God. You're going to need your friends. Never forget that.

I mentioned God. God is a friend—a very powerful friend. But He would be a pathetic friend if you couldn't talk to him.

We know this—but sometimes we treat God like an ancient Sith Lord or something. When we talk to him, we switch to a bland, holy-sounding tone of voice, and we say all the right things, and step carefully around any sensitive points, and hide our personal problems from him.

David understood very well what it meant to talk to God. Here's an example of how he prayed, in Psalm 55:

God, listen to my prayer!  
Do not ignore my appeal for mercy!

Pay attention to me and answer me!  
I am so upset and distressed,  
I am beside myself, because of what the enemy says,  
And because of how the wicked ... angrily attack me.

Or the sons of Korah, in Psalm 42:

I say to God my rock,  
"Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I walk around  
mourning because my enemies  
oppress me?"

Try praying like that sometime. It's not wrong to ask God questions. It's not wrong to tell God that your life is in the ditch. Don't try and use language that sounds like it comes from the Bible; use your own words. You'll feel like you've actually done some good, not just wasted half an hour talking to the sky. In fact, a huge amount will have been accomplished.



## The fun begins

All this is only half the story. It's nice to have mastered the pain and boredom in our lives, but if we don't have something to live for, to devote ourselves to, the pain and boredom will come crashing right back.

We all know about having goals to work towards. But in general they just sort of hang there, frustrating us because we never get anywhere with them.

Sometimes that's because we're so busy. But if boredom is your problem, it's more likely to be because you're so lazy. No offence, but that's the honest truth. Any motivational speaker will tell you that the first step towards a life of passion is to Get Up Right Now, Go And Accomplish Something Towards Your Goal.

Do it, and you'll feel great about it. I don't know what you aim for in life, but if you don't have dreams, get some. Dream big or little dreams, and then go and live them.

Everyone's dreams are different, but there's one dream that Christians all over the world have. Or should have. It's the ambition to work for God. It's not a dream we each have, one of our own private goals. It's a dream we have together.

If you've ever been to a rock concert, or maybe watched a movie like *The Matrix Reloaded*, or seen a peasant uprising, or been to a rugby game, you'll know the feeling of being among hundreds of people, all wanting the same thing, all working for the same goal, all cheering for the same team. It can be an awesome feeling. The band plays their biggest hit, the peasants burn down the lord's castle, the Crusaders score a try. And the atmosphere is so powerful you could swim in it.

That's something you could really be passionate about. And it's exactly what Christianity is. Only it's not just a few hundred rugby fans. It's a few hundred million people all over the world, for the last six thousand years, all serving the same God, all fighting for the same country.

You wouldn't think it, looking at the mess Christianity is today, but isn't that a goal you could make your biggest dream? Christians need leaders to unite us. Leading is a calling that we should give a lot more time to—it's quite likely that you'll be called to lead a part of God's people at some point in your life. But it's almost certain that you'll be called on to help others become leaders.

Being a leader isn't about being aggressive and strong-willed and assertive. Sometimes, yes, but not always. It's not always about being a pastor or an elder, either. Some of the best leaders have been the ones you hardly noticed: leaders who inspired people by listening to them, rather than filling them with propaganda.

I read a book once, called *Momo*. It was about a little girl who lived just outside a village. All the villagers came to her when they had a problem, and told her all about it. She would listen very carefully, and the villagers came away full of good ideas and self-respect and love for others. She never said a whole lot to them. She was only a little girl and she wasn't any brighter than anyone else her age. But she listened in such a way that made people know that they really mattered to the world. And the villagers were very united and they loved their work and their lives. They had someone strong to guide them.

Momo was similar in some ways to our leader, Jesus, who is the model for human leaders. You probably know people like this who would make great leaders. Encourage them. Push them a little bit—because the best leaders hardly ever put themselves forward without a nudge.

## Sit back and relax

Being a Christian isn't about sitting on your bum taking it easy. It never was. And that didn't change when you were born, either.

Nevertheless, one of the most important parts of being a Christian is resting. All the stuff I've just been talking about is a lot of hard work. No matter how much enthusiasm you've got, if you keep it up 24/7, it'll drain you completely.

We forget about resting too often, which is surprising, considering how lazy we humans can be. But we hardly ever take rest seriously. God gave us a day every week to rest on. And that's a pattern we should follow during the week too—work a hard day's work, spend the evening with your mates, or with your family, or just reading a book.

Work hard, play hard. Rest hard. Your soul needs refreshing.

One Sabbath, Jesus was going for a walk with his followers. They weren't being quite holy enough for the Good Little Pharisees, who complained to Jesus about it. He said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

God made the Sabbath for people to rest. *Not* because man is so weak that God thought, "Oh, those poor humans, they might not like to work all the time, I'll give them a bit of time off." No, resting is a part of how we are made. It's built into our bones. We rest because we are made in the image of God—because after God created the world, He rested.

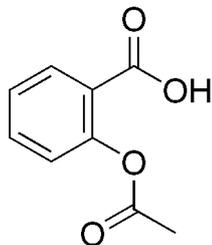
GET SERIOUS about it. Do something about your life and the lives of others around you. It's time to revive your spirit. ♦

# Nature to Our Rescue

by Lynton Baird

FOR MILLENNIA people have relied on natural remedies for relief from the diseases or illnesses they suffered. These concoctions were prepared by the druids, witch-doctors, priests or any other physicians of the day, to be consumed or applied to wounds. With the great advances of medicine over the past two centuries (for example, the discovery of antibiotics and vaccines), it appears that we have moved on a long way from these archaic practices. Now drugs are generally prescribed and dispensed to us as white tablets housed in a simple sterile container.

However, we are still heavily dependent upon nature to provide us with new families of drugs to combat our ever-worsening ailments. Aspirin is the classic example of a drug developed from a natural product (*Figure 1*), which in this case was found in willow tree bark. According to a recent survey<sup>1</sup> by the National Cancer Institute, 61% of the 877 small-molecule chemicals introduced worldwide as drugs during 1981–2002 can be traced to or were inspired by natural products. This highlights the significance of natural product chemistry.



*Figure 1*  
The chemical structure of aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) and a bottle of aspirin from 1899.



After deciding to continue to study chemistry, I wanted to research an area that might have some practical use and could especially benefit people. I was given the opportunity to research the making, or synthesis, of a bioactive natural product named Aigialomycin D. Bioactive natural products (bioactives) are compounds removed from living things that exhibit biological activity, including anti-inflammatory, antiviral and anti-cancer activity. These characteristics mean that bioactives can often be turned into useful drugs. In the real world, however, most useful natural products are

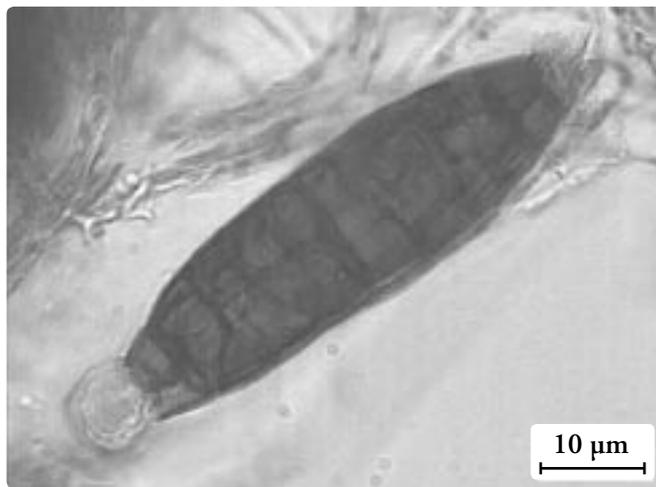
found in very low concentrations. They need to be made in the lab before they can be fully studied or produced for use in medical drugs.

Aigialomycin D gets its name from the mangrove fungus *Aigialus parvus* from which it was taken (*Figure 2*). Initial studies of this natural product found it to be toxic towards the cancer cells in skin, breast and kidney cancers. It was also found to be moderately active against malaria. Aigialomycin D has a relatively simple structure compared with many anti-cancer agents derived from natural products. This means chemists should be able to make it much more easily than complex products.

By itself, Aigialomycin D does not show enough anti-cancer activity to make it worthy for drug trials. What I hope to do is make changes to the natural product to improve its anti-cancer ability. To achieve this, I'll need to understand how it acts in killing the cancer cells. I plan to use biological tests to identify the part of the cell it targets in order to kill them. Once I know that, I hope to use computer programs to model the interaction between the product and its target. This modelling may help to predict changes I'll need to make to increase this interaction and therefore increase the activity of the product.

Once I have designed a modified version of the natural product, I should be able to adapt the methods used to make the natural product for making these new analogues. Biological studies of the new products will show whether the changes improve or lower the compound's activity.

It's unlikely that my research will lead directly to an anti-cancer drug. But I do hope the information I find about the importance of certain pieces of the compound will help to develop other potential drug candidates. ♦



*Figure 2* An *Aigialus parvus* spore.

<sup>1</sup> David J. Newman, Gordon M. Cragg, and Kenneth M. Snader. *Journal of Natural Products*, vol 66 (2003), p 1022.

# A Journey in Sudanese Cooking

by Franci Hoyt

FOOD IS AN ESSENTIAL PART of our day and one of the few things we *need* to survive. It ranks among the ancient greats of Air, Clothing and Shelter. These things don't have to be bare essentials—they can be *enjoyed*. In this column, I won't delve into fashion or architecture; I'll delve into food. And I'll endeavour to steer clear of extravagance, or suggest (like your typical column in a glossy magazine) that you use ingredients only found in France or Morocco.

I love food and I love cooking, but more than that, I love what comes with it: the art of hospitality. With each issue, I'll give you a taste of how a different culture enjoys food and hospitality, and I'll include some recipes to try at home. My mother always used to say, "Anyone who can read can cook." That goes for guys too!

HAVING RECENTLY been to Sudan, it would only be appropriate to share a recipe from that part of the world. Communal eating in Sudan is the done thing. Food is usually served on a big, round tray with many separate



## Gorraasa be Dama (Meat Sauce)

6 onions	3 tomatoes
4 tbsp tomato paste	half a green pepper
¼ cup oil	1 tsp salt
3 cloves crushed garlic	1 tsp cardamom
250 g beef steak	1 tsp cinnamon
2 cups water	

Chop onions, put in pot and fry in oil at medium heat. Keep covered, stirring occasionally. Add water and cover. Leave on medium heat for 5–10 minutes until water is almost evaporated. Lightly blend onions and return to pot, then add chopped tomatoes.

Chop steak into small pieces and add to pot. Add chopped pepper, salt, cardamom and cinnamon. Cover and leave for 3 minutes. Add tomato paste and stir, adding water until smooth. Cover and leave to simmer for 10 minutes, adding more water occasionally. Stir in crushed garlic.

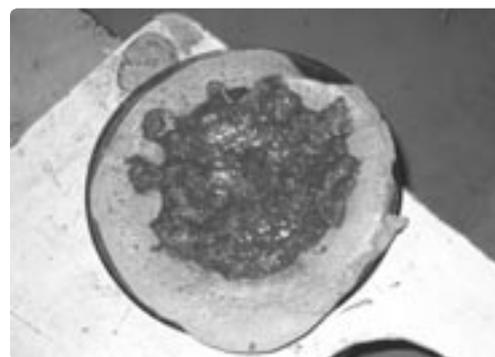
Pour over Gorraasa and serve warm.

## Gorraasa (Bread)

500 g wheat flour  
½ tsp baking powder  
500 ml water  
1 tsp salt

Sift flour into bowl. Add baking powder and salt and stir in water until thick batter forms.

Pour ladle full of batter onto flat, non-stick frying pan and flatten out until evenly spread. Fry at medium heat and flip when golden on one side.



dishes on it. You seldom eat with a knife and fork. Instead, you scoop everything up with an airy round loaf of bread (or, in this case, Gorraasa, a flat bread) which you break into sizeable pieces to handle your food. You can eat a whole meal like this without getting your hands dirty!

I regret never writing down any of the local recipes, but luckily another Kiwi who was there last year did a good job of that. These recipes are courtesy of Mark Tanner, from [www.marktanner.com](http://www.marktanner.com). The site is well worth a visit for more Sudanese recipes.

The recipe above is just one for you to try. It does not, of course, reflect the vast range of Sudanese cooking. Have a go, and eat it with the bread and your fingers—don't be tempted to use a knife and fork! ♦

# Mothering Solo

*with a Masterton Mum*

SOLO MOTHERHOOD is not rare, but it's often hard to discuss. Ben Hoyt talks about some of the issues with a solo mum from Masterton. She has twin girls, aged eight.



I wouldn't do much differently. But I'd never be a solo mum again. I'd stay at home longer, too, till they were at least three or four and going to pre-school.

*When you're going through hard times, who's the most help—family or friends, or some other group of people?*

My kids, actually. They're my focus, they bring me through. Kids are very sensitive to how you're feeling. Mum can be a good help. And then my best friend is really supportive. She's like a godmother to the twins, and her partner's a really good male role model for them.

*What kind of support groups does a town like Masterton have for solo mums?*

I'm not sure they do! I think the government needs to develop that—more local support. Solo mums aren't just because of bad relationships, sometimes the husband dies, so it could happen to anyone. Also, ante-natal classes were good for making friendships.

*Today the government does lots of what the extended family used to do. Do you think this is good for solo mums?*

It's hard to say. There are pros and cons. It does take the pressure off the grandparents. These days it seems like mums are forced to work, and grandparents work, so they can't look after the kids.

*In what areas do you think the government should step back and the local community step up?*

Basically the support groups, to take pressure off single parents. At the moment it's like, "We'll help you—but only up to \$390 a week. The more you work, the more you'll get!" That's not much after you've paid the rent and all the bills.

*What's your religious background, and how has it affected the way you raise the twins?*

I was brought up in the Pentecostal church, and baptised when I was 12. I don't really think it affects the way I raise my kids. I'm not Pentecostal now, but I believe in God, and don't feel I need to go to church. I consider myself to live a fairly Christian lifestyle.

*Most of us at Prism are part of a church. What's your view on how churches could better provide support for solo mums?*

I don't think it's really the church's responsibility, unless they've got a heap of solo mums in the church. I believe it's the government's job to help single parents, but they need to do it better. However, I know the Pentecostal church was a big help for my mum at times. ♦

*BH: Is having twins twice as hard as having one?*

MM: I'm not sure—twins is all I've had. I always thought "double trouble," but my doctor said it was about one and a half times as hard. A lot of the time it's great, because they entertain each other. And I'd prefer two of mine to one of some kids I know!

*How often do little old ladies ask, "How do you do it?"*

All the time, every day. With my job I meet lots of new people, and as soon as they find out I'm on my own and I have twins, it's like, "Wow! How on earth do you do it?"

*Dads are usually seen as the sterner parents. How do you approach discipline as a solo mum?*

Um ... not very well! [laughs] My mum was quite strict, though I guess dad was the disciplinarian. I really see myself as both mum and dad. But I take each day as it comes.

*What do you think about the repeal of Section 59 in the Crimes Act (the no-smacking debate)?*

I agree but I don't agree. It's often blown out of proportion. Smacking didn't do me any long-term damage! [laughs] I think verbal abuse is normally worse. But I would only smack the twins when it's the only way to show I'm serious, and only on the bum—no long-term damage there.

*How long have you been on your own as a parent?*

On and off pretty much for eight years. The father left well before the twins were born. Then I was with another guy for three years, but he didn't really raise the kids.

*Was the pregnancy planned?*

No! I was on the pill, but I guess it got through.

*Did you ever consider an abortion?*

Yes. It was the biggest decision of my life. At the time I was working 13 or 14 hours a day, saving up to go overseas. Should I have the OE or the twins? I knew it had to be twins, because I could always travel when the kids were older.

*If you could do it again, what would you change?*

Not fall pregnant! [laughs] Um, I think I do okay.

# Opposing Zeals

by Genevieve Smith

I ATTENDED the Well Child Expo in Palmerston North today. Organisations such as Public Health, SKIP, the Commission for Children and Plunket had colourful booths at the Expo encouraging parents to feed their children healthy food, not to hit their children, and to brush their children's teeth regularly. The Expo was attended by mums and dads with their young children. The littlies could have their faces painted and were given apples and stickers and balloons by the people running the different booths.

Attending the Expo confirmed something in my mind which has become more and more obvious to me: there are people out there with zeal for my children.

They want my children to be healthy and happy and to have a little sparkle in their eyes!

Last year I attended another function which had all the same organizations at it. This was a conference called, "Stop It, It Hurts Me!" and was put on for midwives, childcarers, teachers, and CYFS workers to attend. It was a conference designed to rev up attendees against those who would spank their children. It was a conference designed to network people together towards repealing Section 59 of the Crimes Act, which states that parents are justified in using reasonable force to correct a child. The people at this conference had a zeal for my children too, but it was a zeal with a very different tone: they are convinced that they know better than the parents what is best for everyone else's children.

Their zeal was not so much motivated by the idea of having healthy, happy little children, but was motivated by hatred against God, against the Christian family, against the Church, against Christianity and against men (strong patriarchal men in particular).

On the surface the people at the Stop It conference just wanted to stop children from being abused (while using double-talk confusing spanking with abuse) but underneath, their agenda is to destroy the traditional family's place as the unchallengeable foundational unit of society.<sup>1</sup>

They have zeal for my children and for yours too. Their desire is to ensure that our children break away from our parental influence. Their desire is to train the children to be willing workers for the Government. Their zeal is encapsulated in their motto, "Get the children away from their parents." As parents you and I won't hear that motto. They phrase it differently to us. What we hear is "free childcare," "free schooling" and "free healthcare for your infants." What they want is to take our children away from us at earlier and earlier ages, or to gain access into our homes in order to monitor what is happening.

Yes, there are people out there with zeal for my children. But I have zeal for my children too. My zeal is motivated by love. It is motivated by a love for God, a love for the family (mine in particular), a love for the Church, for Christ and for patriarchy.

The zeal I have for my children causes me to want to have my children around me all the time. It causes me to want to teach them the things that I know. It causes me to want to explore the world with them. It causes me to want to teach them right from wrong. It causes me to protect them from the influences of the world and to prepare them for doing battle in the world. My zeal motivates me to teach my children to love God too. It causes me to teach them to love the family, to love the Church, to love bearing the name of Christ and to love patriarchy.

So I will care for my children myself. I won't send them to a kindergarten that will train my children that they can do without me.

And I will teach my children myself. I will teach them the things I believe. I won't let them be taught by those haters of God in the state schools who will teach them to be unthinking dependants of the State.

And I will prepare my children to do the same for their children. I will prepare them so that they can stand strong with great zeal when they encounter people with zeal contrary to their own.

Do you have zeal for your children? I hope you do, because other people do too.

Who is going to win their hearts? ♦



<sup>1</sup> For more information, see the (now-retracted!) NZ Herald article of 14 May 2005 by Sandra Paterson, *Feminist Agenda Reaches Fruition*: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c\\_id=466&ObjectID=10125395](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c_id=466&ObjectID=10125395)

## With a Capital L

by Matthew Bartlett

I REMEMBER about eight years ago standing on top of the highest cliff above the river west of Masterton. The water was clear blue at the edges and black and deep beneath me. My friends were watching from below. No one had tried the jump yet. All I had to do was start running and I'd be committed to the dive—and it would have to be a run, to clear those rocks. I remember hesitating minute after minute after minute. It's such a long, long way down. Decisions and revisions. I'm pretty sure I'll make it all right, the hard part is just to start that run. Now I'm going to ... no wait, I better check once more that there's nothing in the way down there. This time! Somehow I'm over the cliff and down and down and wet and my legs are on fire and it's done, and I'm alive, and now I know it.



## Dead Poetesses Society

by Ben Hoyt

IT WAS ONE of those United Video "\$1 Tuesdays," and my wife and I finally settled on *Mona Lisa Smile*. We easily got a dollar's worth out of it, more because it was a great conversation starter than a great film.

In many ways this movie is just a female version of *Dead Poets Society*. (Not surprisingly, a quick Google told me I'm far from first to notice that.) Set in the 1950s. New teacher comes to high-brow conservative school with new methods, new ideas, new vision. Tension. Relationships with parents strained. Teacher warned to tone it down. And the students love it. So far, so same.

But in many ways it's quite different. The main difference is that it's plain not as good. *Mona Lisa Smile* adds another whole theme, perhaps its main theme: the Fifties versus feminism. Except that it's more like stereotyped Fifties versus stereotyped feminism. The movie's a bit too pushy and politically correct to be a film that will last.

That was a peak moment. They're gifts that come along every once in a while. I want to live in the light of those moments. Old people often tell you how short life is, and how precious. I've resolved to take that seriously, to live as if time were short. But it's a battle. There is a crust or a scab that forms, and I settle into the rhythm of my days and ways. A week, two weeks, a month has gone by and I might as well have slept through the lot. My boss tells me that poetry is there to point us at what he calls holy moments, those moments that make life worth getting out of bed for in the morning.

I don't want to give the impression that this pursuit is a feverish thing. It is true that some weeks busyness does push down on me, and the weight of a thousand other jobs keeps me from attending to any one task wholeheartedly. People become irritating interruptions, disrupting my workflow. But that cramming in isn't life with a capital L either. It's something to be resisted.

I want to press my face up to the world and taste what's there to be tasted. I want to look past the social veneer, at least occasionally, and see the people around me for what they really are: infinitely unlikely wonders all swimming in a miracle sea.

Rabbi Simcha Bunam said, "Everyone must have two pockets, so that he can reach into the one or the other, according to his needs. In his right pocket are to be the words: 'For my sake was the world created,' and in his left: 'I am but dust and ashes.'" ♦

The history is a bit time-warped, too. The lead-role teacher (Julia Roberts) lives in the 1950s, but her wardrobe and her feminism, not to mention the Italian teacher who becomes her lover, could almost be from 2003.

THE MOVIE wasn't all bad. Schools and teachers often *do* suffer from lack of vision, and a passionate teacher can work wonders for students. For one fleeting moment during the movie I even wished I was an inspiring lecturer.

And there's a good scene where the head girl (Julia Stiles) states eloquently to the teacher that a wife doesn't mean a dead brain: "I know exactly what I'm doing, and it doesn't make me any less smart ... to you a housewife is someone who has sold her soul ... she has no depth, no intellect, no interests." The teacher almost caves in. Maybe she can tolerate marriage—just this once.

So go ahead: fork out a dollar, watch the movie, and then, if you're a bit weird like me, go have a Big Discussion about feminism, history in film, and agenda pushing. Or just find a copy of *Dead Poets Society*. ♦

# A Guide to *The Guide*

by Paul Archbald

DOUGLAS ADAMS' famous multi-volume (and increasingly inappropriately named) "trilogy," *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, has finally been made into a movie of the same name. The movie takes up mostly the first volume of the series. I personally found it moderately well-acted, moderately amusing, and moderately engaging.

The story tells of the inter-galactic travels of a very ordinary Brit, Arthur Dent. Just before the earth is destroyed to make way for a hyper-spatial express route, Arthur is rescued by his friend, Ford Prefect. Ford is an alien observing earth for the revised edition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, a book providing advice on just what it says. Ford helps Arthur hitch a ride with the Vogon constructor fleet that destroys the earth. Soon the two team up with runaway Galactic President, Zaphod Beeblebrox, earthling Trillian and the manic-depressive robot, Marvin.

Their adventures take them at length to the planet of Magrathea, where planetary designer Slartibartfast explains that the earth was really a giant computer. Another mighty computer, Deep Thought, had been asked the ultimate question of the meaning of life, the universe, and everything. He eventually supplied the answer: forty-two. To understand the answer, however, one needed to know the correct *question*. The question could only be supplied an even mightier computer. That computer was Earth, now destroyed by Vogons. In the book, Deep Thought describes itself as a forerunner, using the Biblical language concerning John the Baptist. The Earth is described in Messianic terms. The movie does not dwell on this aspect. But in both the book and the movie, the whole thing comes to nothing with Earth's destruction, indicating a philosophy of ultimate meaninglessness.

Both the movie and the book contain very British "Pythonesque" humour—inane on the surface, but also clever and deeply philosophical. Douglas Adams, who was involved in the making of the movie, explained the "anti-Star Wars principle" operating in it: when a scene would lead the audience to expect a certain outcome, they would simply do the opposite. Expect the unexpected!

The movie has time and audience constraints that did not trouble the original book or TV series, and it is therefore much abridged. The result is a de-emphasizing of the inane and the philosophical, in favour of great special effects and action scenes. I had the opportunity to see part of the TV series again recently, and was struck by how much funnier—and deeper—it was.

Take, for example, the ship powered by the Infinite Improbability Drive. The heroes of the story are jettisoned into the vacuum of space by their Vogon captors. The chances of being rescued by a passing spaceship were infinitesimally small. But a spaceship powered by the Infinite Improbability Drive feeds on infinitesimally small probabilities. The heroes were therefore rescued by a ship of this type, precisely because it was so unlikely. The movie, while mentioning the name of this invention and demonstrating its effects, provides no explanation of what it is. Given Adams' awareness of philosophical issues, it is quite possible he was humorously interacting with the Christian argument that the theory of evolution can be discarded, since it involves vast numbers of highly improbable mutations. Evolutionists have responded to this that even the highly improbable may happen eventually in infinite time and space.

A far more obvious case of Adams' interaction with philosophy comes with the explanation of the "Babel Fish." A Babel Fish placed in one's ear enables instant understanding of anything said in any form of language. The book (and TV series) explains that some used the fish as evidence of God's existence. The Babel Fish could not have evolved by chance. God, however, refuses to prove that He exists: "For proof denies faith, and without faith I am nothing." When confronted with the evidence of the Babel Fish, He exclaims, "Oh dear, I hadn't thought of that," and promptly vanishes in a puff of logic. Here Adams interacts with classical "theistic proofs"—in this case, the "teleological" proof. He is also aware that Christian responses to the theistic proofs vary from the rationalistic end of the spectrum (these really are logical proofs) to the fideistic extreme (faith excludes reason).

The mention of these philosophical and apologetic arguments demonstrates the biggest issue for the Christian viewer: the movie (and even more so the book and TV series) is sometimes overtly blasphemous. In the movie, the earth is depicted as created by a team of planetary designers, not by the Living God. There is also a scene where an alien god is worshipped in what appears to be a parody of Christian worship. The service involves liturgical sneezing, whereupon the response is, of course, "Bless you!"

If you read the whole series, it becomes apparent that it is not only Christianity that becomes the butt of Adams' irreverent humour, but virtually every other philosophy popular in the Western world.

Because of the blasphemous elements, I do not feel I can recommend the movie (less so the book or TV series). Having said that, I must also admit that Adams' irreverent attitude towards other, unbelieving philosophies has provided me with a wealth of illustrations for explaining unbelieving thought. ♦

# 42

# Singled Out by God: For the Girls

by Esther Zorn

WHEN I DID my profession of faith this year, my friend Malien gave me a book by Janet Folger called *What's a Girl to Do?* (*While Waiting for Mr. Right*). I will not lie. I strongly dislike books about being single. I loathe them. Mum used to give me these “courtship” books, but I would always skip the sickly-sweet theology and read the life stories, which were a lot like what you'd find in *Woman's Weekly*—with a theological twist.

So I flicked open the dust jacket to have a closer inspection. Maybe this book had some juicy stories in it too. Lo and behold, I was greeted by a multi-choice question:

What do you do with your ex-boyfriend's shirt?

1. Return it clean and pressed in time for his next date.
2. Sew it into the pillow to cry on.
3. Use it to clean out the crud in the bottom of the fridge.

If you chose option 3 this book is for you!

I liked how the book started. I could appreciate this bitter brand of honesty. So I decided to give it a go.

## Being single is okay!

Let's face it: Our ideas about being single aren't usually uplifting. I laughed at my mum when she went to a singles camp. I mean, c'mon, what was she gonna find? The dregs of society that never quite made it to marital bliss? I think many of us are tempted to view “singleness” as a relatively painful, though temporary, state between coming of age and getting married. When you're married, you've arrived.

One of my friends is a big Josh Harris fan. Back when we were at school, she liked to photocopy bits out of his books, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* and *Boy Meets Girl*. She'd then distribute them to unsuspecting classmates in a mini “Josh revolution.” I used to tease her that the pages dripped out of the photocopier, because at the time I thought they were soppy, sentimental drivel. I realize the value of Josh Harris, but back then I couldn't relate to his ideals.

Janet Folger presents a different side of single life with an honest and cutting dose of healthy realism. She says that yes, at times you might use your ex's shirt for cleaning, or be depressed and eat so much chocolate you'll feel physically sick. Janet tells us to imagine ourselves in a coffee shop with her: catching up with friends, sharing stories, binding each other's wounds, laughing, re-focusing, and re-emerging as women God would want us to be.

## The battlefield

So you're single. Or maybe you've just broken up. It's important to remember the context of our lives: we are constantly in a spiritual battle.

Ephesians 6:12 says, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

God does have a plan for each of us. We are God's special agents, but Satan wants us out of the game. To singles he will say things designed to kick us while we're down: “God has forgotten you,” or “you're a failure,” or “nobody wants you and nobody ever will.”

Lies. After all, Satan *is* a liar—it's his job description. He pulls out the big guns to destroy God's soldiers. Janet says, “His favourite targets are those who could very well be the most effective members of God's kingdom: single people.” Satan has another set of weapons for our married friends. He has sets of weapons designed for every area of our lives, and for most other people, too. So, no matter what position you're in, recognise the deceit for what it is. Consciously replace the lies with the truth of God's Word.

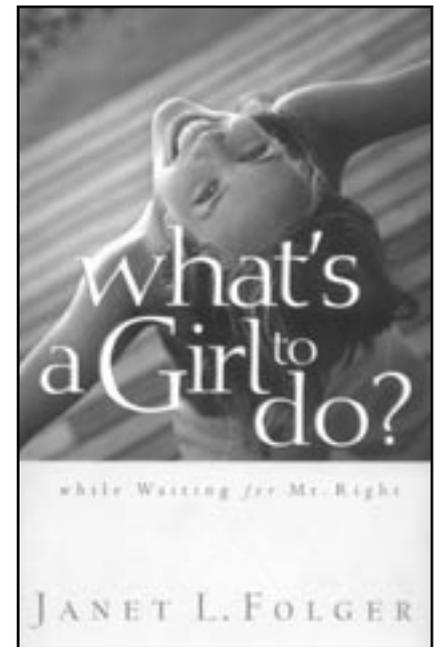
## What does God want for you?

It's hard to distinguish what we *think* is good for us from what *is* good for us, or what *we* want from what *God* wants. We know that God has plans for us, but we can't often see the big picture.

The story of Joseph shows that God is all-powerful. When Joseph was sitting in the stinking mud at the bottom of the pit, I'm sure he couldn't see what was in store for him—that God would later use him to save His people.

In Jeremiah 29:11 God tells us, “‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.’”

The question is: will you let Him use you?



God consistently tells us that He will provide for us if we are faithful in serving Him. Often it's just a matter of His timing. Sometimes God won't move in your life until you've learnt to trust Him and be content in the situation you're in. God promised Sarah a child, but she had to learn to wait and trust. Stop worrying! God can change things in an instant. Thank Him for what you do have, then ask Him how you can be used by Him.

I know that sometimes it feels like your biological clock is ticking and God is taking a long time. But when you're waiting for something, a day seems like a thousand years. So throw yourself into serving God, and make that time fly!

Being single can seem like a colossal waste of time. You could look back on a year of bad relationships and think, "Boy, I could have spent that better!" And you probably could have. But move on. Shut that door. Look ahead, focusing on God.

Spend more time in God-talk and less in guy-talk. My friends and I used to sit down and psycho-analyse every aspect of what a guy said, wondering who he liked and what he was trying to say. We should have spent a lot more of that time on God. Janet says it this way, "Rather than investing in the wrong stock, make your greatest investment in spending time with God. It's not always easy, but the returns will be far, far greater."

The point is that God comes first. Psalm 37:4 tells us, "Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart."

## Onwards and upwards

OK. You've broken up, or you're depressed about being single, and you feel like you've been dragged through a gorse bush backwards. Go on a shopping spree. Buy a new eye shadow or lippy. Eat chocolate. Chocolate gives you endorphins, your body's natural painkillers. So does exercise; you could try some of that too. Maybe grab your Bible, and go sit under a tree and eat some chocolate. Or, like my mum, you could prop your Bible up on the front of your exercise-bike. Then eat some chocolate.

It's also important to heal yourself spiritually. Remember that Satan's going to be attacking you, especially now that you're down and out for the counting. Be wary of repeating the same mistakes again and again. Janet said she struggled with running back to her ex-boyfriends when things got difficult. There's a time to shut the door and focus on God and the road ahead. There are great things you can do through the almighty power of Him who holds you.

There are so many passages to help us in these lonely circumstances. "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is

inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power ... Those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength." (Isaiah 40:28–31.)

So, you've bought new clothes, had a make-over, done a bit of exercise and disarmed Satan's artillery by ignoring his lies and concentrating on the truths of God's word. Now what?

## A special power? Me?

God has a special message for singles! "One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided ... This I say for your own benefit ... and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:32–35.)

We are able tools simply because we are not distracted. Forget about your weaknesses and inadequacies and fears. Take courage, trust God to work through you, and you will see God-sized things happening. We only need to be obedient for God to use us.

Janet herself was able to accomplish some amazing things. In the United States in 2001, she almost single-handedly launched a pro-life campaign called Faith2Action. She commandeered one of the largest spiritual armies in the world; over 500,000 people joined with her as a voice for the voiceless, and successfully lobbied for the first partial-birth abortion ban. For nine years she was the legislative director of Ohio Right to Life, which, among many accomplishments, removed all state-funded abortion. All this was achieved by her early thirties.

You are commanded to be the salt and light of the earth, and you'll never be in a better position than now. Pray, and work as well! Don't just be a walking encyclopaedia on Christian living—use it! Be zealous for the Lord and He will greatly bless you.

Janet comments, "You were born for such a time as this! You already know that you don't need any special talents. God specializes in using ordinary people. Even the most unlikely people. Especially those. So quit making excuses. There aren't any left."

We single people have a special power in the work we can do for the Lord. But wherever we're at, we need to be filled with zeal to serve God. Recognise your talents and gifts, and pray that God will use you in what He has planned for you.

Use the time. Don't let Satan steal it from you. God has something for you to do, and He's going to give you what He's promised. Hebrews 10:36 says, "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised." ♦

## Political Zeal

by Aaron Stewart

THE OFT-HEARD MANTRA of the “separation of Church and State” has two quite different meanings.

### The meaning of two faiths

There is, or used to be, a worldview in which man interprets and rules the universe by his reason alone, and not by “religious conviction.” This is sometimes called “rationalism.” In this view, the State supposedly has no religion; it is neutral. Therefore, it can safeguard a healthy society, by leaving room for people to pursue their own religious convictions.

However, this kind of State is not really neutral at all. It constructs a faith, a religious hope, from man’s reason. It claims that reason allows us to see the way things *really are*. And, in the public realm, it removes competing ways of seeing the world. Therefore, the Church is told to keep itself to the realm of personal conviction: “Be thou separate!” In this way the Church is made subservient to the State’s view of how to improve the world.

Under a robust Christian worldview, however, humanity represents God in all of creation, both personally and as a group. Therefore, our final source of interpretation and authority is God alone. Human reason is never “neutral.” And precisely because of its corruption in the grasp for power, reason cannot be the bedrock for faith or the hope for improvement. In this view, therefore, the State acts under God to restrain human arrogance and to promote public welfare. The State *shares* with the Church an allegiance to Christ, but performs *distinct functions* in a different sphere of authority. The two are separate.

### Christianity and political freedom

When the ideas that gave rise to the mantra were first articulated, they assumed a Christian worldview. The separation of Church and State was a *Christian* idea that was both practical and principled. Practically, it attempted to curb the corruption of power within nations. Its supporters held that there should be multiple ruling institutions in society. This meant that rule was divided and spread: no single ruler could become a tyrant, or speak in the name of God without checks and balances.

In principle, it also affirmed the dignity of representing God through governance, and rule belonged, in different but complimentary ways, to all people. Absolute, tyrannical power can only violate this widespread dignity. Thus, absolute rule should not be given to anyone. It was therefore Christianity’s view of power that, under one God, laid the foundation for political freedom.

With rationalism began a new faith—the exaltation of the reason common to the 18th and 19th century West. Stealing the Christian privilege of hope, but leaving behind humility and grace, this new faith boldly hauled anchor and sailed off into a post-Christian world. In so doing, the mantra “separating Church and State” came to reflect the faith of rationalism.

Christians need to be aware of the radical change in meaning this has involved. It has subjected political freedom to “reason”—and modern western obsessions, culture and philosophy. So, when we agree that the separation of Church and State is a Good Thing, we do *not* mean or agree that the State has no religion, or that religion is a private matter best kept out of the public realm, or that the Church is a threat to a healthy democracy. We do not agree that Christ’s realm, which includes the State and the whole public arena, should be surrendered to other gods.

What we agree is that the State is not the Church and the Church is not the State. They are distinct institutions with distinct powers and distinct responsibilities. But they are both institutions under God, and Christians have *every right* to enter them convinced that their faith should be exercised in full, not left at the door.

### The renewed threat of tyranny

The advent of post-modernism makes this realisation increasingly urgent. The faith in so-called “neutral reason,” upon which rationalism was built, has largely been undermined by the observation that neutrality doesn’t exist; that no-one has a “view from nowhere.” Everyone speaks from a point of view, from a culturally constructed context. And, since the 18th and 19th century context created rationalism, how can it claim to be valid for everyone in all times?

Man’s political faith has therefore swung from arrogance to complete uncertainty. We now feel unable to assert that any particular point of view is more valuable than another. The ship of rationalist fools, now well over the horizon, has suddenly lost its compass. And once the realisation truly sinks in, uncertainty may quickly and cynically be replaced with a naked, unapologetic grasp for power: someone will simply grab the tiller.

With no faith worth defending, our political vision has failed. We are largely reduced to the ethic of consumerism: we pay the price for whatever makes us feel good. Perhaps fortunately, we still hear the unthinking remnant of rationalism: Church and State must be separate. At least they’re still talking about it. But now, more than ever, the State needs the faith of the Church.

So be careful: make sure people know what you mean when you agree that State and Church should be separate! ♦

# Dunne Talking

with Peter Dunne

WHATEVER HAPPENED to United Future?

Christian voters around the country seem to be wondering just that. For many, this past parliamentary term may well be remembered as the “seedy one”—the one in which hookers got the green light and homosexual couples got the right to unite.

How on earth did all this happen? Or, rather, how on earth did Labour get away with it while hitched to an apparently Christian party?

Jonathan Marinus let the Honourable Peter Dunne, leader of United Future, address these concerns himself.

*JM: It could be said that Labour has made United Future look weak and impotent by passing a string of morally dubious laws right under the noses of a political partner perceived to be quite Christian. What would you say to such a claim?*

PD: I reject the claim on many grounds. First, the matters you have referred to were passed by conscience votes—not just government votes. United Future MPs voted against all of them. By contrast, each of the measures concerned were passed because a number of National MPs voted for them. If, for example, Dr Brash had voted against the Prostitution Bill instead of for it, the Bill would have been defeated. Second, in a democracy the will of the majority always prevails. The implication in the question is that our 8 MPs should have been able to hold the remaining 112 MPs hostage on such legislation, and I reject that entirely.

*Some believe that United Future compromised its effectiveness as a distinct voice by agreeing to support Labour on confidence and supply. Is this true? If not, how did United Future manage to maintain their effectiveness?*

The result of the 2002 election meant only two government options were possible, given the numbers—a Labour government supported by the Greens or a Labour government supported by United Future. It was a no-brainer, really. We are a centre party that has to be capable of working with either side of politics and we have demonstrated in this term that we can do that. Not only have we ensured the most stable and longest-lasting government arrangement since MMP came in, but we have also achieved all of our key policy objectives from the last election, and everything that was in our agreement with Labour. At the same time we have not hesitated to oppose them when we differ and in fact have voted against Labour more often than the Greens have. A full list of our achievements is set out on our party website.



*One thing United Future claims as a measure of its effectiveness is the establishment of the Families Commission. Isn't this just adding bureaucratic fat to an already obese government?*

The Families Commission is probably the most important social policy development in the last 50 years. For the first time, we have a government body dedicated to promoting the interests of families and ensuring over time that government policies reflect the interests of families. This is a long-term move which will not overturn overnight the stresses and strains families have been facing for the last generation or so, but will make a start, and it is vital that we do. In fact, in time the Families Commission will lead to less duplication in government services and far greater focus on family issues, and that has to be positive.

*If United Future makes it back into Parliament later this year, how do you intend to protect and promote Christianity?*

United Future will be in the next Parliament and our aim is that no government will be able to be formed without our participation. We will be promoting our policies and values and inviting the support and participation of all New Zealanders who agree with them.

*The website [www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz) reports that you are “adamant United Future is not a ‘Christian’ party”. Is that report accurate? If so, why should Christians vote for you? What does United Future offer that would interest the Christian voter?*

United Future is not and never has been a church-based party. We respect and uphold the right of everyone to hold their own views. As a political party we promote policies that are in tune with the aspirations of the mainstream New Zealand family. Those policies appeal to many New Zealanders—Christians and otherwise—but are not aimed exclusively at any one group. Promoting religious beliefs and values are the province of the churches, not political parties. The role of a political party is to promote policies that are in the public interest and which attract the support of people accordingly. It is not our role to second guess the role of the church, or to mandate by law that which the church has been unable to achieve by its moral persuasion of its adherents. Having said that, we recognise the role of the church in society, and work closely with it. We have to operate in the interests of all New Zealanders, and we do that by promoting policies which we believe are good for all New Zealanders. ♦

# Go and Make More

by Andrea Munroe, 2002



I DO NOT HAVE a long attention span. My hands should be busy with the warm, lumpy clay. Instead I am gazing around our workshop, which is large—so large, in fact, that the room I am in is only a small part of it. There are many workers making their pots and plates at benches like mine. Some are industrious, others bored, happy, efficient, or painstaking. Some idle like me.

A sunbeam cruises up a wall to strike a finished pot, one of several on display. This is not ours, the common workers' work. It was made by our master, the most skilled ceramics maker in the world. The pot, a brilliant blue, glows fierily as the sunbeam plays on its flawless surface. My eyes drop to my own work, the crooked line of pots on my workbench, knobbly and grey. Why ever did he hire us? Street-dwellers could do what we do! In fact, they do. I myself have seen them patting clay into crude shapes. Ours are little better, I acknowledge bitterly. Despite training, my hands are still clumsy, though I might spend hours trying to shape the soggy clay and smooth out the lumps.

What do they do with our work, I wonder, when it disappears into that black hole in the wall? We often hear noises issuing from beyond the hole: rumbling, cracking, grinding, the occasional crash. Very likely the pots we make provide stress relief to the real potters. They play cricket or squash with them, or roll them down an obstacle course watching to see which breaks first.

A hot pricking begins behind my eyes. In despair I fling away the pot I had been working on for the day. It subsides limply onto the floor, not even smashing decently but emitting a single, humiliating *gloop*. The other workers turn at the sound, some shocked and contemptuous, some understanding.

A crash comes from the hole in the wall, and I flush with anger. Grabbing some clay I start making large balls and stuffing them through the hole. After all, these have equally satisfactory smash value, besides being little uglier than the pots. My co-workers watch in horrified fascination as I double, even quadruple my normal output, working with certain malicious zest.

When the sun finally slips into his dusky pavilion we retire to our pallets. Now I am having misgivings. Master did tell us to make pots, and I made balls. Maybe I will be arrested, or thrown out into the streets. I listen for footsteps coming to get me.

Sure enough, they are coming. Faint at first, closer and closer, until a hand grips my shoulder and shakes me.

*The master wishes to see you,* a voice whispers. Then, down

corridors I have never seen, with twists and turns, to a large wooden door upon which my companion raps briefly, and then vanishes with unnecessary haste.

Bidden to enter, I do so, limiting my focus to the tiles under my feet. But not for long; the flickering firelight highlights the gorgeous treasures placed on shelves all about the room: urns, vases, bowls in green, red, rich purple, azure, and cream. Some are plain and others adorned with flowers or fruits or various patterns—all works of finest art.

I had not even noticed him sitting quietly there, and when he rises I gasp and resume examining the tiles, all my fears surging back. But my mind is still struck by the beauty I had just seen—until it is rudely banished by a repulsive object breaking my view of my toes. A pot I made, mottled and lumpy.

*Is this yours?*

My eyes meet his fleetingly and fall again.

*Come.*

I am led to a workroom, to an oven which is producing fearsome heat. This is it, I think miserably. My pot will melt sighingly into the flames and I will be ejected ignominiously out of doors.

He places my pot in the oven and it turns bright red, but does not melt or burst or do anything violent. It just sits potato-like on the grate. Ah well, my pots were always contrary.

We wait a while until at last Master opens the oven to retrieve the pot with a tool. He is tired of waiting; he will crush it in front of me with his bare hands.

*Watch closer,* he reproves, with a hint of something in his voice. Could it be amusement?

While the pot cools, he explains that some pots, if the clay wasn't dense enough or if it was too thin or impure, would be shattered by the oven's heat. *But this one is good.*

Good?

He takes a stone and starts to grind the pot to powder. No, not ... wait! I watch, astonished, as under his dexterous fingers the lumps disappear, the rim becomes symmetrical, the hollow perfectly rounded. No longer grey, the clay is white; not wet, but dry and hard.

The stone is swapped for a paintbrush, and rich, hunter green applied to the whole bowl; then red, and cherries appear. Finally gold to highlight the rim. It goes back in the oven for but a few minutes, then is taken out and glazed so the surface mirrors his face and mine. He places it on a shelf with other flawless vessels. It does not look out of place.

I stare at it there, then dumbly up at his face.

He smiles and strokes my cheek lightly with the back of his fingers, as one would a child.

*Go and make more for me.* ♦

# Exit Sandman

by Joel Rademaker

Anguish in the land of never,  
The monster's cords—too tight.  
Riding on a bed of fear,  
Full of doubt, full of fright.  
What is futile?

Too hard, too dark  
To struggle, to fight;  
These bonds won't sever.  
The pain, to suffer—seems forever here,  
Hiding in the endless night.

Dark hollow glass, set in black plastic,  
Light from the inside, as from some mystic,  
High pitch of noise, screaming unheard.  
Round of applause, for the blue man in the red cape?  
(It all seems so innocent.)  
We've formed another prison, from which to escape,  
Filled with the violence, the gossip, the rape.  
What is darkness?

See the man dressed in sand,  
Take his hand, feel the sting  
Of the snake underneath.  
Leave the land of the living,  
Embrace eternal death,  
Suffer the torments.  
Endure the wrath,  
Never to regain breath;  
Living, yet dying, in the pit of Sandman.

Are we here? Are we not?  
Are we sweetly seated?  
Gazing at the blot.  
No one to guide us,  
Forgetting to find why.  
Just jump on the band bus,  
Don't let us see you cry.  
Leaving all tradition,  
Not knowing the truth;  
Lack of knowledge, it haunts us,  
The apathy of the past—see it bear fruit.

Modern-day gladiators dancing on screen,  
Senseless bloodbaths, angry blasphemous cries:  
Moderate behaviour? Unheard and unseen.  
Wretched characters, locked in mortal combat.

What are we doing to those sweet eyes?  
The youthful, they watch us,  
They size up our shape.  
Maybe not innocent,  
Yet seeming free from the chains.  
Where are the wise?

To show them the Word—  
That is the key.  
Not cartoons of rebels,  
And brazen empty lies  
Entering the psyche, deceiving the soul.  
They yearn for plastic fame, never to be whole.  
Lacking commitment, no sense of direction.  
Living for the rush, they're losing control.  
Run by their feelings—spontaneous emotion.

Forsaking true reason.  
Leaping into the unknown,  
Continued forever, it might seem;  
Though, wisdom would not agree.  
Wisdom, where is she?

Intent to "live well" in society's faking,  
Seeming content, shell of their own making;  
Each one, a prisoner of self-made apathy.  
Glass neon universe, never sure about reality,  
Cities of the virtual,  
Individuals, not a one.  
Gazing at the "sea of knowledge"—  
Flickering lights, blinking on ...

Deception of Sandman,  
So often he seems nice.  
We run with his schemes  
Like a million empty mice.  
So white on the outside,  
Yet grey in between.  
Who knows what's upstream?

What is Light?

Know the Man, dressed as Lamb,  
See the sword underneath.  
Flee His wrath,  
Embrace His cross;  
Ever to be free. ♦



# No Shortcuts

with Mark Munroe

ONE DAY over ten years ago, the Arctic Princess limped into the driveway of 55 Richards Avenue, North Shore. Her upholstery was torn, the paint scratched, and one cobweb stuck drearily to her rear-view mirror. “Nice,” the family agreed stoically as Mark proudly patted the hood.

From then on, evening after evening, for five long years, Mark chipped, banged, sawed, and hammered away furiously far into the night, as he dismantled the 1965 Jaguar and rebuilt it into the flawless, gleaming, purring model she is today.

He was determined that the car should be one hundred percent authentic, right down to the last screw. Literally. It took Mark a year to track down one particular screw which suppliers said no longer existed. But mostly the car experts were very helpful, engaging in Mark’s enthusiasm for a restoration project that was like a work of art. “I even found people who were willing to do things for nothing.”

Certainly classic car enthusiasts share a unique rapport. Whenever Mark is cruising down the motorway and catches sight of another Jaguar he waves vigorously at the other driver, who returns a gracious acknowledgement. (That is, assuming Mark is driving the Princess. He has, on occasion, forgotten that he was driving an old red Mitsubishi station



<b>Model</b>	Jaguar S-Type 1965
<b>Engine</b>	3.4 L (210 in <sup>3</sup> ) straight 6
<b>Transmission</b>	4 speed with overdrive
<b>Top speed</b>	184 km/h (115 mph)
<b>Power</b>	156 kW (210 bhp) at 5500rpm
<b>Torque</b>	290 Nm (215 lb ft) at 3000rpm
<b>Fuel usage</b>	7–9 km/L (16–22 mpg)

wagon, and waved and grinned broadly at a classic car driver, causing considerable astonishment and alarm.)

Mark could never have achieved this state of prestige had he not made absolutely sure he knew how to put the car back together again once it was disassembled. At one point the Jaguar existed only in little meticulously labelled bags stowed all over the garage. “I bagged and labelled every component, big or small, radiator grille or washer. It wasn’t always obvious how some components came apart and it could take me hours of experimentation just to dismantle one part. Putting it together again took over a year. I got very tired but didn’t want to stop for fear I’d never get started again.”

But now the Jaguar is a common sight gliding over the Harbour Bridge and back five days a week. Lately it’s been wearing white satin streamers on the weekends.

And Mark still hasn’t lost that thrill of satisfaction as he gets into the front seat and breathes in the rich smell of leather and varnish.

“I really enjoy driving this car.” ♦



# Sporting Zeal

by Tim Sterne

WE SHOULD always play sport to win. If we are playing competitive sport we should do everything we possibly can to win every time we enter the sporting arena.

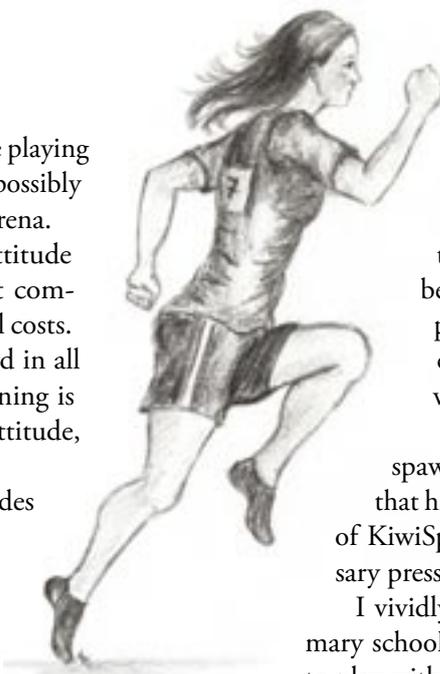
Some people display a decidedly weak attitude towards their chosen sport. They play sport competitively yet do not have the drive to win at all costs. Team training is only an option. Training hard in all kinds of weather is unnecessary. Personal training is out of the question. This is an unacceptable attitude, especially for a Christian.

Ex-*All Black* flanker, Michael Jones, provides an excellent example of a healthy attitude toward sport. For most of his career Jones was considered by many to be the greatest open-side flanker in the world. Many still believe he is the best we have ever seen (though some say Richie McCaw has inherited that mantle). Jones was known for being tough and uncompromising—one of the heaviest tacklers in the history of the game.

A journalist once asked Jones how he could, as a Christian, justify tackling his opposition with such ferocity. With his idiosyncratic grin Jones quoted Acts 20:35: “It is better to give than to receive.” Ask anyone who played alongside or against Jones and they will tell you he put absolutely everything he had into his game. Writes Jones: “I don’t see any discrepancy between the “aggressiveness” of sport and Christian values. Attributes are a gift from God, everyone has something special, and I was created with an ability to play this game ... I had to be confrontational without being dirty or playing outside rules of the game, it was controlled aggression, whilst expressing the gifts as best you could.”<sup>1</sup> I think this is the way everyone should approach sport.

In Colossians 3:23–24 Paul tells us to do everything “heartily, as to the Lord.” Why? Because we know that we will receive the great inheritance from God, thanks to the redemptive work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ came to earth with a mission: “to seek and to save what was lost.”<sup>2</sup> God did not send Him to earth with the instructions “it doesn’t matter if you conquer death or not, just as long as you do your best.” No, Jesus came with the goal of winning, no matter what the cost. And the cost was high. God wants us to recognise this by approaching everything we do, including sport, with the same attitude.

To pre-empt any angry responses to this article from those who are completely disinterested in sport, allow me to clarify. I am not saying that every human being must have



a burning desire to play sport and be successful in it.

Many find a game of rugby about as interesting as ... well, a game of cricket, and there is nothing wrong with that. I would rather watch a documentary on the genetic make-up of the dung beetle than program a computer. My point is that if you are going to play competitive sport you should play it with complete commitment.

The “winning is not important” idea spawns from the KiwiSport phenomena that hit New Zealand’s shores in 1988. One of KiwiSport’s goals is to eliminate “unnecessary pressure to win.”<sup>3</sup>

I vividly remember being horrified as a primary school cricket player when we were made to play with plastic bats and balls and were then told our runs were not even being counted. *What is the point of playing at all?* I wondered. At an athletics day my best friend and I received absolutely no recognition after coming first and second in the 100-metre sprint. Instead, everyone got a “participation award.” KiwiSport (despite its good intentions) has eliminated winning full stop.

The danger of removing the *pressure* to win is that the *desire* to win goes with it. Eventually New Zealand sportsmen lose sight of their goal, which is, of course, to win. There are dangers in the KiwiSport attitude for Christians in particular. If a Christian is seen to be putting in only a half-hearted effort into his chosen sport, what kind of image does that portray? As I said earlier, Christ certainly did not have that attitude as He went about His redemptive work. If we are to be good imitators of Christ we need to have the same attitude when it comes to playing sport.

Young people in particular should be taught that when we play sport we play hard—as hard as we possibly can. And we play as hard as we can because we are trying to win. Winning *is* important. Any other attitude should be despised. Do everything unto the Lord. When we play sport we should try to win, unto the Lord. If we succeed in maintaining this attitude we glorify God.

And after all, isn’t that the goal of a Christian? Strive to glorify your Creator. ♦

<sup>1</sup> From *All time All Black “Great”* in Anew NZ’s “Visions by Leading Kiwis”: <http://win.dante.co.nz/3080/vision.asp?id=251>

<sup>2</sup> Luke 19:10 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> From *KiwiSport*: <http://sparc.org.nz/whatwedo/yp/kiwisport.php>

*Fix your eyes upon the greater goal,  
Live a life that feeds your soul.*



*by Joel Rademaker*