

Prism



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Editorial

by Ben Hoyt

Loyalty IS A HUGE TOPIC, and the aim of this issue is not to cover it (no magazine could), but simply to use it as a bouncing-off point. What does loyalty mean in film, in art, in life?

Loyalty itself is pretty simple, but sometimes the decisions we have to make aren't exactly cut and dried. Even with printing *Prism*, for instance, we had to ask some hard questions. Should we remain loyal to the (more expensive) printers we started with? Should we aim for "loyalty to quality", and go for the best print quality, regardless of cost? Or perhaps get them done as cheaply as possible so we can print twice as many and give away the spares, showing our loyalty to the "*Prism* cause"? Even as I write this the final decision hasn't been made ...

Our new blog

In website news, Bryan Hoyt has recently made us a shiny new blog tailored for *Prism*. "In between issues" is where we'll be posting updates and thoughts from now on, sometimes directly *Prism*-related, sometimes not. We'll try to post new items once or twice a week. The new blog's much easier to use than the old discussion forum, so browse to www.prismmagazine.co.nz/blog and have your say!

If you're not sure what a "blog" is, it's short for "web log", and basically it's a place where a few people write posts about various things, and anyone who wants can add comments to a post. They're good for sharing interesting links and lively discussions.

The content

We had great plans for a feature interview with Kiwi music icon Dave Dobbyn about his album *Loyal*, but alas, he was too busy. Even Tim Sterne sweet-talking Dobbyn's PA didn't seem to help. Maybe another time. But Tim's review of *Available Light*, Dobbyn's latest album, almost makes up for it – even I want to fork out some money to buy it and have a listen.

We've also got a neat story by writer Joanna Beresford, who lives in Masterton with her husband Ben. She's part mother, part writer, and is currently writing a novel based on the life of a prominent figure in Masterton history.

Then, among other things, there's film reviews, down-to-earth food and gardening info, wheels and sport columns, and thoughts and paintings by Christchurch artist Jason Flinn. The articles are strung together by our theme of loyalty.



Once again, we're calling for writers (not to mention photographers)! Remember, you don't have to be a pro (none of us are) – you just need an idea and the passion to run with it. We know lots of talent hides in cracks, so if you've got an idea or you know someone that does, please contact us. We don't pay out \$250 for your funny stories, but you could have the satisfaction of showing your friends your name in print.

So do have a good read. As usual, we welcome letters to the editor. If you have some feedback you'd like published, write in! ♦

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Laugh-out-louds

This issue was really enjoyable to receive. The photos look fantastic, the layout is improving and best of all, the writing is getting better! Heidi's article was a favourite, as was Mum's (I would say that!). "Shaving grace" and "Recumbent glory" got some laugh-out-louds at my place. I can only say this is a big step up – bravo! There's a long way to go, but already it's looking much more professional. Looking forward to Issue 3.

Kathy Bartlett

Prism's subversive desires

The list of contributors in your second issue caused me to wonder whether it was the intention of *Prism magazine* to put asunder what God has joined together. Or perhaps the list was merely the expression of a subversive desire to do away with such "old-fashioned" traditions as the changing of a woman's surname once she is married?

Ed Havelaar ("Mr Liana Hoyt")

Editor's reply: Oops – old habits die hard. And to think "Liana Havelaar" would make her move up alphabetically, too!

We welcome feedback, so please write in – casual or formal, positive or negative, short or long.

Māori loyalty

with the Arahanga family

THE MĀORI PEOPLE have a lot of good stuff to say about loyalty. *Prism* editor Ben Hoyt talks about some of the issues with a neighbour, Roberta Arahanga, and some of her extended family (*whanau*).

BH: What's the Māori word for loyalty? Is loyalty high on the list of things important to you?

RA: The Māori word is *pono*, or *piripono*, and it is very important; we expect it from all of our family. In terms of supporting what is right, the heart (*aroha*) is also very important.

What are some of the things loyalty means to Māori?

Loyalty also has a lot to do with respect, though that's going downhill because now we're being urbanised, and there's not such a sense of community. And giving support, especially in someone's hour of need, say at a funeral (*tangi*) – giving encouragement in rough times. Sharing our talents with each other, and not just being selfish about them.

Gossiping about friends is another thing. If my friend is being talked about in a bad way, I am not going to let it happen. Gossip – that's not loyalty.

Which is more important, loyalty to immediate family or loyalty whanau?

I don't differentiate between the two. (Though as a grandparent, of course there's a special closeness with my grandchildren.) We would always remain loyal to *whanau*, though we won't condone it when they do what's wrong.

As an example, if a family member invited me to speak at her little embroiderer's guild or something, but then I'm invited to a flash Hollywood dinner, all expenses paid, on the same night – we'd definitely have to say no to the dinner. That's just loyalty.

You mentioned a tangi, or funeral, and I understand you've recently had a death in the family. If you don't mind talking about it, how does family loyalty work at a tangi?

It was a neighbour and a brother-in-law. He's been there for us, and now we can be there for him – there's no question about loyalty.

A family is like a tree, where the trunk is your ancestors, and there are many branches, and you are one of them. If one of the branches dies, there is support from all the branches around. The family with the death doesn't do anything at the *tangi* – everything is organised and supported by the other branches.



As Christians, we believe our bodies will be resurrected. Do you believe in an afterlife? What are some other spiritual beliefs that help you at times like this?

Yes, Māori believe in an afterlife, that we will go to a better place, that they're up there waiting for you. That's something that gives us hope.

Love is a spiritual thing, too. Even DNA! If someone dies, we sometimes see these personalities come alive again in the younger children, in the grandkids.

What are your views on loyalty and land?

How much time have you got, Ben – have you got all year? [laughs] Well, I can only speak for myself. I am very possessive of all that is Māori. Our language (*te reo*) is very much connected with land.

If I had to buy a bone carving, I would buy one that was New Zealand made, Māori made, not mass produced in China. That's part of loyalty to our people.

It's also about history. For example, people chop down so much native bush and plant pine trees in their place. Pine trees only take 25 years to grow, but a *totara* tree – that takes 100 years. It takes time, it's history, going and going.

And one last question: what's important to you as far as work and jobs are concerned?

Well, I'm from a family of workers. My mother and father, they worked. I worked. My husband (my *tane*, my "man"), when he was still alive, he worked. And he was a role model for the children. That's very important, that they see the older people as role models, and they want to earn a good honest wage too.

I don't want my children and grandkids to do what I want them to do, I want them doing what they want to do, what they love. I've seen people who are very happy doing the rubbish for the council. But if they are happy being a doctor, that's great too. I believe people can be happy whatever they do. ♦

Gardening with Madame Whitefly

by Janette Bartlett

TODAY I BEGIN a new series on *vegetable gardening*.

Over recent months I've been party to several conversations dealing with what we eat and who produces the things we do eat. Are shop-bought vegetables covered in lethal spray residues? Are they weeks old? Do they still possess the essential vitamins and minerals we expect?

To answer these questions I would encourage everyone to grow their own! Not only would we feel proud of the achievement, we'd also enjoy tastier food!

My advice will be directed to the novice gardener, maybe a young person in a flatting situation or a young couple in their first home. I am quite happy to answer any questions individually, so please email me anytime at gardening@prismmagazine.com.

The basis for any gardening is to consider the soil. New Zealand soils vary widely – anything from hard clay to soft, crumbly sand. Ideally, the garden should sit in the sunniest spot of the section, and should be well drained and sheltered from wind. For a convenient guide, just look over the fences in your neighborhood: if there are lots of flowering plants, trees and vegetables you can safely assume that the soil in your area is fertile, and will only need to be dug over and fertilized before you plant. But if the neighbors' sections show a meager display of weeds and little else, a bit more work will be required before you can begin.

A good way to defeat hard clay is to build raised beds. Recently we turned recycled wooden bins from The Warehouse into four raised vegetable beds, with recycled bricks in between for the paths. Both of these items were free! We three-quarters filled them with a compost or soil mix purchased through a recycling plant at the rubbish tip. This cost us \$25.

Another secret to a good garden is to keep it weed-free and have the exposed topsoil lightly forked over to prevent a crust forming. Having small beds encourages you to do a little often, thus ensuring you keep to your good intentions.

Along with the beds, a climbing frame is almost essential (though not usually needed until springtime). A couple of

1.5-metre posts with wire netting or string strung across securely would do the trick. Also effective are three thin poles joined into a teepee arrangement.

With winter approaching fast, you can safely grow only a small selection of veggies. Silverbeet, cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli could be planted now throughout New Zealand. But if you prefer to leave the planting until springtime, you could give your soil a bonus and plant a green crop. The purpose of a green crop is to discourage weeds growing through the winter, often spreading their seeds for next season's headaches, to fix nitrogen in the soil and provide humus. A typical green crop is the blue lupin, which is sowed directly onto recently dug-over soil. Keep the soil



moist while they grow, and when you see the blue flowers forming at the top of each plant, cut them down at ground level with hedge clippers. With a clean spade or shovel, dig the lupins into the soil, turning over each spadeful so that the green part of the plant is completely covered in soil. Allow four to six weeks before planting in that spot again while the lupins decompose into ready-made compost.

Next time, all going well, I will deal with planting, tending and harvesting ... ♦



Active hospitality

by Maricha Dekker

MANY OF YOU WILL already be thinking that hospitality “is not my cup of tea”, or “we can’t afford to feed others on our tight budget”, or “I can’t cook well enough to entertain guests!”, or even “it’s too much work!” This is not going to be a recipe page as such, but more a few ideas and tips to get you motivated to *actively* practice hospitality (instead of just thinking about it!).

It’s just not my cup of tea

Among other things, practicing hospitality is a very good way to be a witness – not just to friends we are comfortable with, but to our neighbours, workmates, or visitors at church. In fact, the Scriptures *command* us to be hospitable: “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Pet 4:9–10)

Hospitality was one of the hallmarks of early Christian communities, but today we consider it a chore rather than a virtue. Again Scripture says, “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.” (Luke 14:13–14a)

As you will see, hospitality doesn’t take too much effort, and you may actually end up enjoying it!

We can’t afford it

There are many ways you can stretch basic ingredients and make things from scratch very economically. You’ll be able to feed a crowd – and for not much more than when you use prepared foods to cook a meal for only your family. Here are some ideas:

- Buy in bulk, going halves with a friend if you find items are too large. If you have access to a Moore Wilson’s or Rattrays you can buy some things for substantially less than in the supermarket.
- Make the most of specials. Buy in season. Buy raw ingredients (for example, dried beans and tins of tomatoes instead of more expensive ready-made sauces).
- Trade with others who have gardens or fruit trees. You can trade veggies, baking or whatever you have surplus of. Just ask friends – you’ll be surprised what you can gather by trading (or even making up big batches with a friend)!
- Extend stews, soups and even pizza simply by adding more vegetables. A really good standby to have in the freezer is cooked dried beans (such as kidney beans). These are nutritious and inexpensive, and you can cook up a big pot and divide it into smaller portions to freeze, then pull them out at short notice.

Chinese corn soup (serves 10–15)

four 425 g tins creamed corn
2.5 L frozen chicken stock
(or 2.5L water & 2 tsp stock powder)
salt, pepper and herbs to taste
vegetables and meat
spring onion, finely chopped
2 eggs, beaten (optional)

Bring to boil corn, water, stock and herbs in large pot.

Add any of the following to make up to about five litres: chopped vegetables, chopped and cooked chicken, bacon, ham, or a couple of chopped frankfurters. To make a more hearty soup, add pasta, rice, or grated potato or kumara.

Simmer for about fifteen minutes, stirring often.

Just before serving add spring onion and whisk eggs into soup in thin stream, stirring constantly.

- Use cooked chicken. This is one thing I really do use a lot when I'm expecting a large crowd and have the day beforehand to prepare. Simply boil one or two skinned chickens in a large pot of water with some chopped carrot, onion, and celery; optionally add a bay leaf, some peppercorns, and some fresh herbs. When it is cooked (about 80 mins) strain the stock and freeze for later use in soups, shred the chicken and refrigerate. If you use a little imagination, there are many ways you can stretch one cooked chicken to feed two families: pizza (see recipe), a big hearty pot of soup, lasagne, a meat pie, on rice with lots of vegetables (and a side salad), or add a basic white sauce and herbs, and use it as a delicious filling for toasties.

I use two very beneficial books by Sophie Gray (you could purchase them or borrow them from the library): *Destitute Gourmet* and *More Stunning Food From Small Change*. They are well worth the expense.

If you're prepared to put a little more effort into your preparation, you will soon see that you can entertain on very little!

It's too much work

One of the ways you can entertain at short notice is by being well prepared *in advance*. For one, it doesn't take much effort to have a few basics in the freezer.

Two work-saving appliances that I use on many occasions are a slow cooker (that is, a "crock-pot") and a bread maker. A large crock-pot is well worth the investment; it's really easy to throw all the ingredients into the pot and leave it for the day. Our seven litre crock-pot easily feeds 20 people when it's full (I always try to fill it up and freeze the leftovers). A bread maker can give you really cheap bread and dough's, especially if you buy yeast and flour in bulk.

There are work-saving recipes, too. Chinese Corn Soup (recipe shown) is one you can make in a mere twenty minutes. It's great for unexpected guests.

I can't cook

People don't come to visit you just for the food (well, if they're really your friends they won't!). They come for the fellowship first and foremost. Most people will be more than happy to enjoy simple fare with you: soup and buns, pizza, or even a simple macaroni dish. Besides, the "simple" meals are generally favourites! Whatever you're comfortable cooking for your own family will be more than acceptable to your visitors. If you cook what you're familiar with, you'll not only be comfortable, you'll be confident.

You have nothing to lose

In conclusion, I'd like to encourage you to just open your home and go for it. You've got nothing to lose, only friendships to strengthen and gain. So, who are you having over this weekend? ♦

Pizza dough (makes 2 oven tray size)

500 mL warm water	1 tsp onion powder
2 tsp salt	½ tsp garlic powder
1 tsp sugar	6 cups flour
4 tbsp oil	3 tsp yeast granules
4 tbsp cornmeal	(or 2 tbsp Surebake)

Put ingredients into break maker in given order.

Set on dough cycle (may need "helping stir" after 5 mins). When complete, transfer to large bowl, cover loosely with oiled gladwrap and leave to rise till doubled in size (about 1.5 hours). Transfer to two baking trays and roll out to fit trays. Leave to rise for further ten minutes while preparing toppings.

Pre-cook the two bases for 8 minutes at 200°C. While hot, spread pizza sauce on evenly and assemble toppings. Bake for around 20 minutes at 190°C. Tastes just like Pizza Hut!

Easy pizza sauce

two 425 g tins chopped tomatoes (Budget is fine)
¼ cup tomato paste (optional)
¼ cup brown sugar
2 tsp basil
2 tsp oregano
½ tsp crushed garlic (optional)

Mix all ingredients and boil for about fifteen minutes, stirring occasionally. (If sauce is too thin, add 2 tsp corn flour dissolved in water.)

Pizza toppings

cheese, ham, bacon, tomato, pineapple, capsicum, onion, etc.

These traditional toppings are always popular, but if you want to jazz them up a bit, it's not hard to create a few different sensations. Our favourite at the moment is to mix a bit of apricot or cranberry sauce with the tomato base, then top with cheese, shredded cooked chicken, onion, pineapple and few small wedges of brie cheese.

Or, take a simple satay sauce, spread over base and top with shredded chicken, thinly sliced onion and cheese. (You *will* get compliments on this one.) Alternatively – for similar comments – if you have some left-over chilli con carne, spread it on a pizza base and top with a few items like corn, capsicum, kidney beans and cheese. Experiment!



Ambivalence

by Joanna Beresford

THE OLD MAN at number forty-two waved at me. I'd seen him before as I marched home from the station. This evening, instead of sitting on the porch, he was in the garden pruning his camellia tree.

We always smiled or nodded a greeting at each other, nothing more, just a salute between strangers. But now here he was ambling slowly towards the gate with a flower raised in his right hand and secateurs in the other.

"Nice day we're havin'," he said.

I reluctantly slowed down to agree.

"Bit dry though," he added. "Me garden's dyin' off. Shame to see the camellias all brownin' up."

"Mm," I replied, not happy to have my routine broken. "Your garden still looks nice though."

"Ah, not really the same since me wife died. She used to take care of that sort of thing. A real green thumb, she was." He smiled wistfully at the flower in his hand.

"I'm sorry to hear that," I mumbled dutifully.

He looked up quickly.

"Don't be, love. That's life isn't it? Some might call me lucky ... Are you looking forward to Christmas?"

Christmas was three days away. My last day of work was tomorrow and then I could start looking forward to a week of sleep-ins, barbecues and drinking some wine.

"Yes, I am," I smiled in spite of my impatience. "We're spending it with my husband's side this year." I hesitated, feeling myself inadvertently drawn into conversation. "How about yourself?"

"I'm not up to much. I'll just be here." The old man absently swept his arm up towards the house.

"Any family coming around?" I delved.

"No, me daughter's family is up in North Queensland and I don't see much of me son these days."

"You'll have to make a nice dinner then, to celebrate," I said, attempting to crack the awkwardness of the situation.

"Nah, probably just have the usual sandwiches."

Horried, I searched his creased expression for traces of self-pity. There were none. He smiled again.

"It's all right, I've had some good Christmases, I've got me memories. Here," he extended his arm, crackled and sun-spotted, pushing the camellia into my hand. "A pretty flower for a pretty girl."

"Thank you." I took his offering and inhaled the delicate fragrance.

"I'd better be going," I said slowly. Suddenly I wanted to carefully wrap this fragile old man up and take him away with me. "I'm Karen by the way."

"John," he replied. "Pleased to meet you."

"Bye then." I began to wander slowly up the footpath.

"Merry Christmas, cheerio." He went back to his pruning while twenty steps away I walked on, fighting back tears. Could I ask him to the family Christmas dinner?

"Yes!" My conscience screamed.

But my husband's family? Would they think I was completely mad, inviting a stranger into their home? Their Christmas was entwined with their own traditions. Too many presents and plenty of barbecued prawns. How could it possibly work?

It wouldn't hurt to ask.

I stopped and began to walk back the way I'd just come.

Paused again and stared over the lawns, just glimpsing the top of the camellia tree.

I swung back in the direction of my own house.

And kept walking. ♦

Meaning – in a meaningless age

by Berwyn Hoyt

IT SEEMS THAT MANKIND has an incessant quest for meaning – the French, I'm told, look for meaning in love, Italians seek it in song, and Greeks in olives and hummus. As for us, we Kiwis want to find meaning in financial security.

History also bears witness to this endless quest. Starting with the Enlightenment, people thought ultimate meaning could be found in knowledge. Then we had modernists, who sought it in science and rational thought. Now we have postmodernists, who haven't found it in rational thought so they seek meaning in community. Flitting among all these "spirits of the ages," we have the politicians and religions promising meaning in various mixtures of the same ideals, and a few others as well. But what a pointless quest it is when true and real meaning is staring us in the face the whole time.

Meaning in our own age?

Since we live in this age, let me dwell on postmodernism for a moment longer before getting to my point. Postmodernism is a big, yucky, 25-cent word whose name tells you nothing about what it means except that it is an ideal that developed after "modernism." At the risk of being simplistic, I will define postmodernism as "the quest for meaning in our relativist age."

With such a simple definition, postmodernism often seems very confusing – partly because of its starting assumptions. For example, postmodernism assumes that everything is relative, that society is fragmented into groups, that there is no agreement on the answers, that therefore you can't communicate to someone who doesn't share your way of thinking (your *paradigm*), so therefore truth is pointless outside of like-minded groups of people. Furthermore, "truth" is different for each group of people. Toleration is paramount: nobody can possibly be wrong (they just belong to a different paradigm and don't think like you do). These are what I call the starting assumptions.

All of these ideas are pretty much what our culture thinks. Our teens and twenties certainly think this way, as do many of those in their thirties. All these ideas are accepted as norms under the word postmodernism – more as initial assumptions, than as part of the ideal. They are all just a statement of where we as a culture are at.

Against this cultural background, postmodernism proposes a solution to help us in the quest for meaning. Its solution is to form communities. Communities, that is,



of like-minded people. If you are surrounded by people who accept your way of looking at things, you have a fighting chance of actually communicating something to them. As a group, you'll regard

your common way of thinking as "truth" and you may be able to build on it, forming something useful. This group contains people you can work with.

To be fair, it's not a bad starting point when, by definition, you don't have anywhere to start, and nowhere to go. Let's face it: that's the state we're in.

Meaning: a simulation or reality?

I'm not merely trying to present the culture we are in. I'm saying all of this to show that we're still stuck in that pointless, age-old exercise of searching for meaning. And why is it pointless? Because the answer is staring us in the face.

Someone once wisely said "Know thyself." And he was right, but he only got half-way there. In order to know ourselves, we have to see ourselves in perspective. Where can we stand to see and know ourselves rightly? This knowledge of the whole is called the creator-creature distinction. Only by knowing God can we know ourselves. Only He gives a perspective that contains real meaning, and sheds light on the path of life. He has written, "I am the light of the world."

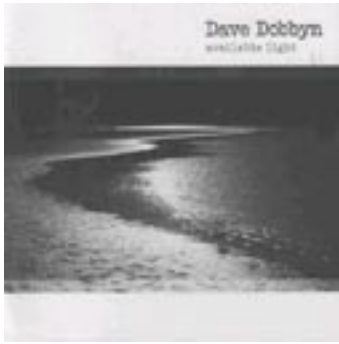
This is the opposite solution to postmodernism. Postmodernism recommends that we *simulate* meaning by isolating ourselves in tiny communities so that we can agree with each other and work together. God's Word provides *real* meaning, *real* knowledge, and *real* truth. When we know who we are from the Grand Master's perspective, what we do will take on a whole new world of usefulness and meaning.

Christianity is not just one of the religious ideals mentioned earlier. It is not even one of the many like-minded paradigms of postmodernism. Its distinguishing mark is that *we* didn't think it up. Instead, it has been handed down to us. We can't do a bit of it. It is free. We can reject it with do-it-yourself pride, or accept it with humility.

Our culture wallows in a paradigm of despair. People everywhere are beginning to realize how meaningless their lives really are. Perhaps this diagnosis is the first step toward the solution.

The bottom line is this: *Christianity brings meaning in a meaningless age.*

But you weren't reading this to get meaning, were you? ♦



Healing hearts

by Tim Sterne

FEW KIWI MUSICIANS have managed to produce music that is both Christian and very popular. I can't think of any that have done it with as much success as Dave Dobbyn.

His latest release, *Available Light*, is unashamedly imbued with Christian imagery and themes: light and darkness, redemption, forgiveness. Dobbyn has simply told his story. And told it straight from the heart.

Living in a world where he often hears the sound of "nothing but pain", he provides sage advice to a generation in the throes of war, racial disharmony and the rapid rise of serious drug abuse. Dobbyn is not an artist searching for the answers. He's found solutions, and he's keen to share them with anyone who cares to listen: "Find forgiveness ... fight for justice and for truth ... and peace will be upon you" ("Free the People").



As you would expect, the album is very Kiwi, and it doesn't take long to find out why. David Long (award winning producer and ex-Muttonbird), Lee Prebble, Neil Finn and Bic Runga all had a part to play in the production. Not to mention musical assistance from the likes of Ross Burge (Muttonbirds), Bones Hillman (Midnight Oil and The Swingers) and Warryn Maxwell (Trinity Roots and Fat Freddy's Drop).

The sleeve contains poignant photography by Dobbyn himself. And not the kind you see on postcards, but images from the far north that clearly hold particular significance for Dobbyn, and consequently fit the music perfectly.

Available Light (2005), Dave Dobbyn
Sony BMG Music Entertainment
www.davedobbyn.co.nz

This is backed up by some unmistakably Kiwi lyricism. "You know there's always forgiveness", sings Dobbyn, "it beats a poke in the eye." And then there's that unforgettable line from the chorus of "Welcome Home": "There's a woman with her hands trembling – haere mai?"

You get the feeling that with this album Dobbyn was just doing his own thing, and loving it. Perhaps that's what gives this album its delightful, down-to-earth flavour. It's not market-driven in the slightest. Rather, it has been created out of a love for Jesus, New Zealand and mankind.

Echoes of gospel, soul and Christian hymns resonate throughout many of the tracks. And if you're a fan of his '80s work, "Free the People" will probably float your boat as it harks back to that era. But the most moving song on the album is the romantic ballad "You Got Heart", which I can only assume is meant for his wife, Anneliesje. He sings the song predominantly in falsetto. "It seemed to be the most vulnerable place I could sing from," explains Dobbyn. And that's what makes this such a special album – it comes from a man who has been well and truly humbled by the grace of God.

As a Christian, I find the album simply inspiring. Dobbyn eschews the sopiness that drips from so much Christian music these days, and has produced an album that won't only be heard by Christians, but by anyone sitting in pubs, bars and cafés all over New Zealand for many years to come.

In very small print at the back of the sleeve for *Available Light* is the following from Dobbyn: "This album is dedicated to healing hearts."

It shows, Dave. ♦

Honour amongst thieves

by Daniel McClelland

The Godfather (1972)

RI6, 168 minutes

Directed by Francis Ford Coppola

Starring Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, James Caan



IN 1972, DIRECTOR Francis Ford Coppola translated Mario Puzo's novel *The Godfather* to the big screen. It and its two sequels established all involved in the production as infamous masters of the cinematic form. This review will focus on the picture's thematic musings on *loyalty*.

The Godfather begins with a tightly framed close-up of a man's face. His daughter has been attacked recently, and the United States' police force is unable to endorse his quest for retributive "justice". The camera pulls backwards as he outlines his dilemma to Marlon Brando's brooding silhouette. His size diminishes within a room of burly gangsters, and we understand that his private battle will always be fought against insignificance: within the presence of the titular Godfather, the state of New York, and the wider hostile culture of American urban life.

It is an effective, intimate opening for a film of grandiose proportions, and its tiny presence within the narrative highlights this man's struggle to be heard. In this case, his desire for help is ridiculed, because the Don "can't remember the last time that you invited me to your house for a cup of coffee." In short, the scene says that alliances can't be relied upon in times of need unless they're strengthened during peacetimes of plenty.

The Corleone family is introduced through a series of tilting stereotypes. Set at a wedding, these do a good job establishing the group's patriarchy. We only meet the blushing bride of the family from a distance, while the men are given dramatic scenes battling the press and FBI. A character says, "In Sicily, women are more dangerous than shotguns." The implication in the statement is that a shotgun is not lethal until it is loaded, and the American migrant experience has

taught second-generation gangsters to keep their women subjugated, beaten, belittled and silenced.

How can loyalty flourish in such an atmosphere? The question is easily related to wartime trench diggers, or colonial slaves. A society of fear oppresses the majority, and only a few are brave enough to query the regime they are ruled under. Kay, the outsider wife with college training, undermines her husband's succession to the title of Godfather with a singular remark. She does not need bullets to make her messages heard. Her willingness to stand up and be accounted for as a woman is met by a closing door in the stunning final shot of the picture. The supposedly hardened, family-oriented gangsters of the picture would take this disrespect as reason for murderous revenge, while Kay displays a patient ability to stand outside, waiting for resolution. She becomes tougher than a bullet-proof vest, and simultaneously shows her true, loving loyalty.

The Corleones are under strict instructions to keep their views and disagreements "within the family". *The Godfather's* script is the same way: utterly insular, it always keeps the characters within an arm's reach of the Don's sphere of influence. This is reasonably unique for the gangster genre – because characters like "investigative reporters" or "honest detectives" typically show morality's flipside – and it quickly builds a feeling of inescapable awe in the gangster culture.

Michael is the only member of the family that truly sees the organisation as hierarchical. At one point he says, "My father is ... like a president ...". But how does one get the attention of a sub-country's "president" without being seen as disrespectful or disloyal? As interesting as it is to watch intemperate men clamber for mana amongst their peers, *The Godfather* suggests outwardly peaceful characters are far more likely to gain favour with a leader. Michael's own rise to power begins with a few whispered words. His loyalty is as passionate as those around him, but he focuses it humbly on the leader, rather than rashly on the collective group. What this suggests about the republics and democracies of the "New World" – as opposed to the monarchies and dictatorships of the "Old World" – is anybody's guess.

Metaphors aside, *The Godfather* shows us that respect is worthless if one does not understand how to be respectable. ♦

Merry Christmas

by
John and Hettie
Arends

THIS “WORLD CINEMA” war drama, filmed in France and Germany, is performed in three languages, which simply adds to the authenticity of the story. Based on a battlefield event that occurred over Christmas at the start of World War I, the film’s dialogue interchanges between French, German and English (often spoken with broad Scottish accents), and uses subtitles to translate.

A write-up in our local cinema’s programme flyer attracted us to go see this movie on impulse. It was described as a “heart-warming dramatisation of how French, Scottish and German soldiers laid down their weapons on Christmas Eve 1914 to eat, drink and play soccer”. What we got to see was so much more than that!

Three of the main characters, military leaders – Scottish Officer Gordon, German Lieutenant Horstmayer and French Lieutenant Audebert – are torn between a host of loyalties: to their own countries, their regiments, their consciences and those of their men, to follow orders, to “the spirit of Christmas” and to humanity. This moving, realistic and very human portrayal of life in the trenches goes on to depict the struggle each soldier faces between getting on with the business of war, or showing, at least for this one Christmas, a familial loyalty to his fellow man, and facing the consequences that follow.

A Scottish priest, who is the on-site padre for the troops, tries to be a real spiritual counselor to all the men, regardless of nationality, and to bring the message of Christ to each one. However, again we see the battle of loyalties he faces – between doing what he believes Scripture teaches and listening to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church.

Recommended viewing for older youth and adults, this movie has one moderate sex scene, low-level battlefield violence and no bad language that we can recall. Not a frivolous offering, like so much of what Hollywood has on show, but definitely a movie that will challenge viewers to think and feel. ♦

Joyeux Noël / Merry Christmas (2002)

M, 116 minutes, English subtitles

Directed by Christian Carion

Starring Alex Ferns, Daniel Brühl, Guillaume Canet



Life is short,
watch decent DVDs

On video – *Malena*

by
Jonathan
Marinus

“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out ... And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

(Matthew 5:29–30)

SADLY, THE MEN of Castelcutto, a small Sicilian community, have something other than eternal destinations on their minds – something like the ravishing Signora Malena (Bellucci), town siren and wife of Nino Scordia. She’s so hot, she has them reading their newspapers bottom side up. Not surprisingly, the wives and girlfriends of these disloyal lechers are incensed by the effect Mrs Scordia has on their men and so, together, they gradually develop the mood of a lynch-mob and conspire to take the offensive against her.

Enter young, pubescent Renato Amoroso (Sulfaro). He, too, is besotted by Malena. At one point, he fantasises about telling her, “After your husband, the only man in your life is me.” Through the cobbled lanes he pedals his blue bicycle, ever in hope of an encounter, however distant or brief.

At night, he breaks curfew to scale her roof and spy.

Cute though his behaviour seems, it is motivated by lust much like all his fellows. Yet he *is* different. To Renato, Malena has a heart and a soul, not merely a body. To the others, she is just eye candy.

As Renato shadows Malena, he discovers that her personal integrity equals her captivating beauty. While her husband serves overseas in Il Duce’s army, she faithfully awaits his return, keeping aloof from meantime Casanovas. It’s not until she hears of Nino’s death that she entertains new possibilities.

To their shame, the townsfolk fail to notice her loyalty. The men are blinded by lasciviousness, the women by envy

and jealousy. Like an ant under a sun-filled magnifying glass, they burn her viciously with their ignorant gossip and false allegations. Eventually, everything is stripped from her – family, livelihood, dignity.

Through it all, young Renato stands firm and defends her honour at every turn. His loyalty matches hers. When

things get rough, he enlists Mother Mary: “You must protect Malena Scordia from the town,” he pleads prayerfully.

Malena is, without a doubt, a seductive film – thanks mostly to an exotic setting, a Morricone score and a truly mesmerising leading lady. Unfortunately, though, the sensuality gets excessive. By bending to the temptation to undress what is best left clothed, Tornatore distracts the audience and

so muddies his message and undermines its value.

A shame, really. ♦



Well done, Sam Gamgee

with Hannah Holder

“TOLKIEN WOULD BE HAPPY to know that, at last, he is not alone in his opinion that Sam is ‘the chief hero’ of *The Lord of the Rings*. Many have written books on the significance of Gandalf, Frodo, and Aragorn, or on the roles of women, but I have found no one ... who has devoted more than three paragraphs solely to Sam. Many, far from praising Sam’s role and character, find fault with his seemingly exaggerated attitude of servitude or see him only as playing some necessary literary device. Few acknowledge or praise his unique loyalty to Frodo or even see him to be one of the central characters in the book, as Tolkien has stated he is. I find that Sam’s servant/friend relationship with Frodo is as moving as anything else in the book.”



So says Hannah Holder in her enlightening and detailed article on the loyalty of hobbit Samwise Gamgee. She discusses his Christ-like humility and sacrifice, as well as showing how he’s not at all a push-over, as many seem to believe.

The article answers many questions, but it also asks some interesting ones, with the author musing, “I wonder if it ever crossed Sam’s mind that he should serve and be willing to die for Frodo because Frodo was willing to die in an attempt to save the rest of Middle-earth? Was Sam simply following on a smaller, more concentrated level what he saw in his master’s life?”

Holder shows clearly the huge number of Christian themes that Tolkien incorporates into the story. Not only is there humility and loyalty, there’s suffering, and it’s suffering that produces perseverance, character and hope (Romans 5:4).

Perhaps Tolkien invented Sam to be a figure somewhat like himself? Or as someone he *wanted* to be? In any case, Sam is a person whose sense of duty we’d do well to learn from, and Holder’s article is a compelling read to start us along that path.

Go to www.prismmagazine.co.nz/issue3/welldone.php and read her article online (or simply go to the *Prism* website, click on “back issues” and “Issue 3”, and then on her article at the bottom of the page). ♦



The ruin of Gollum

by Aaron Stewart

I HAVE MISLAID my copy of *Lord of the Rings*, but Tolkien’s description of Gollum’s ruin, told by Gandalf, came to mind today. After being driven from his family for murder and other shameful acts, Gollum begins looking always downward, peering into deep and dark places, exploring the roots of things. He goes underground, and eventually comes to hate and to be hurt by the sun – even the moon is unpleasant to him.

That process of acclimatisation to darkness is also what Paul describes, in reverse:

“At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

‘Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’”

Useful, I think. ♦

The love prism

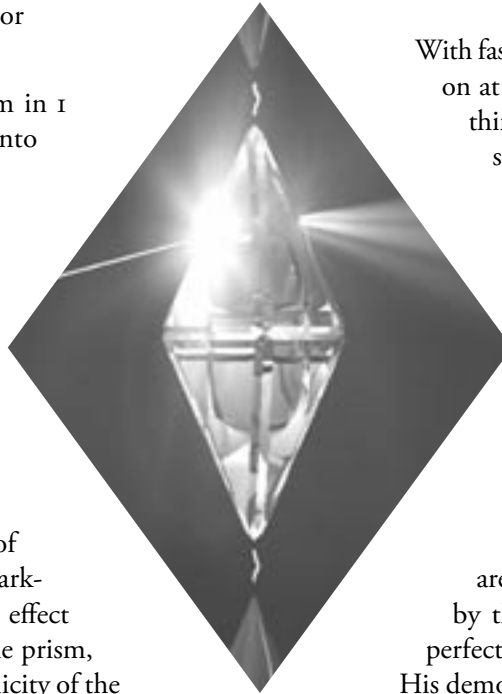
by Genevieve Smith

WHEN YOU PUT LIGHT through a prism what do you get? All the colours in the rainbow. But when you put love through a prism you get 1 Corinthians 13! Author Len Evans once put it like this:

“Paul has put love through a prism in 1 Corinthians 13 and broken it down into its beautiful and humble parts.”

A prism breaks light into its different parts: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. A prism shows the different parts of love to be patience, kindness, humility, selflessness, truth, hope and perseverance.

Through a prism we see the colour and vibrancy of light. Light goes into the prism and out comes a bevy of colour, a rainbow, smashing and remarkable, delighting those who see it. The effect is similar with love. Love goes into the prism, which reveals the beauty and the simplicity of the pure allurements of its different parts.



With fascination, the observer of the prism looks on at the revelation of the parts of love. “To think of the colour of love having so many shades!” In awe, the sight of such a phenomenon brings the observer to a place of praise for the One who created such a nonpareil as this love!

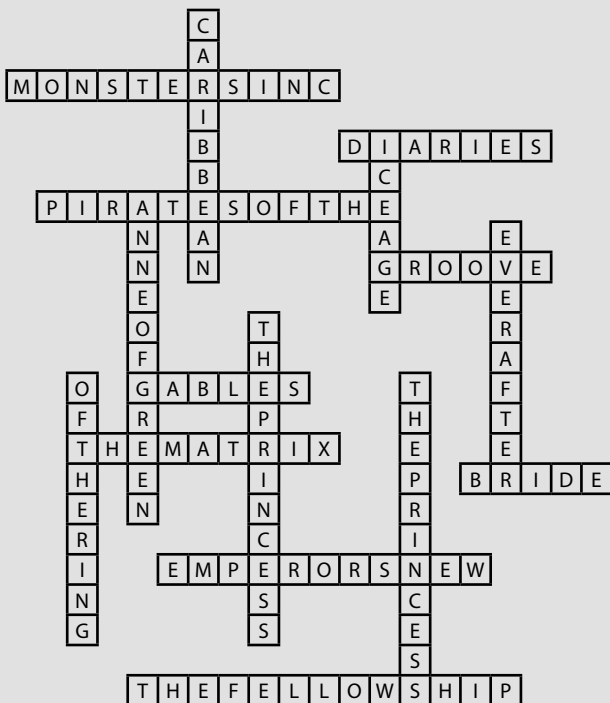
Thanks to the prism for revealing the glories of love.

But what is this prism? A prism that refracts the light into rainbows is angled glass.

But the prism revealing love for what it is – that’s flesh and blood.

There are many imperfect prisms that are still in the process of being polished by their Maker. There is just one that is perfect. The One perfect prism never errs in His demonstration of love. And this Prism has a name: Jesus Christ. ♦

NAME THE MOVIE
ISSUE 2 ANSWERS



WANTED: QUALITY PICS

Right this very minute, *Prism* is hunting for high quality images to doll up her pages.

If you think you’ve seen or snapped a fine photograph or two and wouldn’t mind donating it to our good cause, please forward it to our art director, Jonathan Marinus.

Either email the image to art@prismmagazine.com or post it to 1 Haig St, Waterloo, Lower Hutt, New Zealand.



Wendell Berry is an amazing man: poet, novelist, and corn and tobacco farmer (among other things). Find out more about him online at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendell_Berry

I see ... by Franci Hoyt

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, a certain young man told me that I had “dog-brown eyes”. I was not impressed. As a child, my grandfather would sit me on his knee and tell me wonderful stories of how brown eyes could see better than blue eyes, in an attempt to curb my disappointment at having blonde hair but not getting the usual blue eyes along with it. When, at the age of eleven, I had to get glasses, it seemed as if my eyes would be a liability for the rest of my life. I was wrong.

My whole body serves me loyally day after day. It obeys my command, suffers my negligence or strain, and houses my soul – all without me thinking about it too much, except when I criticize it or complain about it. Yet today, as I walked to town in pouring rain, I realized that I am thankful for my body. My whole, imperfect, yet perfectly loyal body. I thought about how horrible it would be to lose parts of it – the use of my hands my or legs, the failure of an organ, contracting cancer, or loss of sight, sound, taste, touch, smell ...

I made a hypothetical decision that I would give up most things, as long as I could keep sight and hearing. As a musician I cannot imagine a world without music, but if it came



to the crunch, I would even forfeit my sense of hearing if God would be merciful and I could still see.

Because I *see* poetry, you know. A poetry that catches glimpses of moments inexpressible with words or even music. How do you adequately use words to describe the movement of seaweed underwater? The sight of a small boy on a hot day licking his melting ice cream; the drops of dew on a spider’s web; the small white flowers on a prickly cactus; the little blonde hairs on a tanned bicep bent at work; the sight of a mother nursing her child?

Do not bore me with the science of sight, because that alone is not what makes me see. My eyes truly are the windows of my soul – through two beautifully designed holes in my head, my soul takes in the world around me and the poetry therein, but it also tells you about me. Just as I can look into your eyes and right there I can see the scars of life, your questions, your naiveté, your hope – so also you can see these things in me.

Mouths are full of lies, full of boasts, uncontrollable and pretentious. But the eyes cannot lie, for your soul always shows the truth about you. Your soul shines through your eyes. Truly, in the eyes there is a poetry of the soul, so deep that that is where words stop and true sight starts. ♦

Sycamore by Wendell Berry

IN THE PLACE that is my own place, whose earth I am shaped in and must bear, there is an old tree growing, a great sycamore that is a wondrous healer of itself. Fences have been tied to it, nails driven into it, hacks and whittles cut in it, the lightning has burned it. There is no year it has flourished in that has not harmed it. There is a hollow in it that is its death, though its living brims whitely at the lip of the darkness and flows outward. Over all its scars has come the seamless white of the bark. It bears the gnarls of its history healed over. It has risen to a strange perfection in the warp and bending of its long growth. It has gathered all accidents into its purpose. It has become the intention and radiance of its dark fate. It is a fact, sublime, mystical and unassailable. In all the country there is no other like it I recognize in it a principle, an indwelling the same as itself, and greater, that I would be ruled by. I see that it stands in its place, and feeds upon it, and is fed upon, and is native, and maker. ♦

Tongariro – one step closer

by Tim Sterne

THERE ARE A FEW LOCATIONS in New Zealand that make me feel very close to my Maker. Ocean Beach in Hawkes Bay (when it's not crowded) is one of those spots; my family's farm in North Canterbury is another; and the most recent addition to this list is the Tongariro Crossing.

The beauty of this one-day hike lies in its variety. For starters, there's the variety of terrain. Going in the conventional direction you cross flat tussock land, traverse an almost vertical rocky slope, walk past a volcano crater (where the earth is warm to the touch), slide down a track of black ash, and descend through tundra followed by bush.

Then there's the variety in the weather. One minute you can be drenched in sweat and pouring on the sunscreen, the next you're frantically digging in your pack for the swanndri. Thankfully, both extremes have their advantages. Sunny weather reveals stunning vistas – you can't help but take perfect photographs, while wet weather creates a surreal, almost magical atmosphere.

And I must mention the variety of people. There are hundreds (sometimes literally) of other people walking the Tongariro Crossing, whatever the weather – testament to its magnificence, I suppose. The first time I did the Crossing I came across the following: French (or were they Swiss?) tourists asleep in a hut, an elderly couple (still very much in love, I imagined) carefully picking their way down the ash slope, two 17 year old girls who had camped overnight in a crater, a park ranger on his way to visit the girls, plus dozens of friendly fellow hikers ready to give a wave and "Guten tag!", "Dag!", "Bonjour!" or maybe even "Hello!"

If you're thinking of doing the Crossing, be prepared to feel overwhelmed at the bottom of the first climb; be prepared to feel exasperated at having to carry a pack full of winter clothes in 30 degree heat; be prepared to drive for hours only to be rained off and forced to return home without even getting to the start of the track.

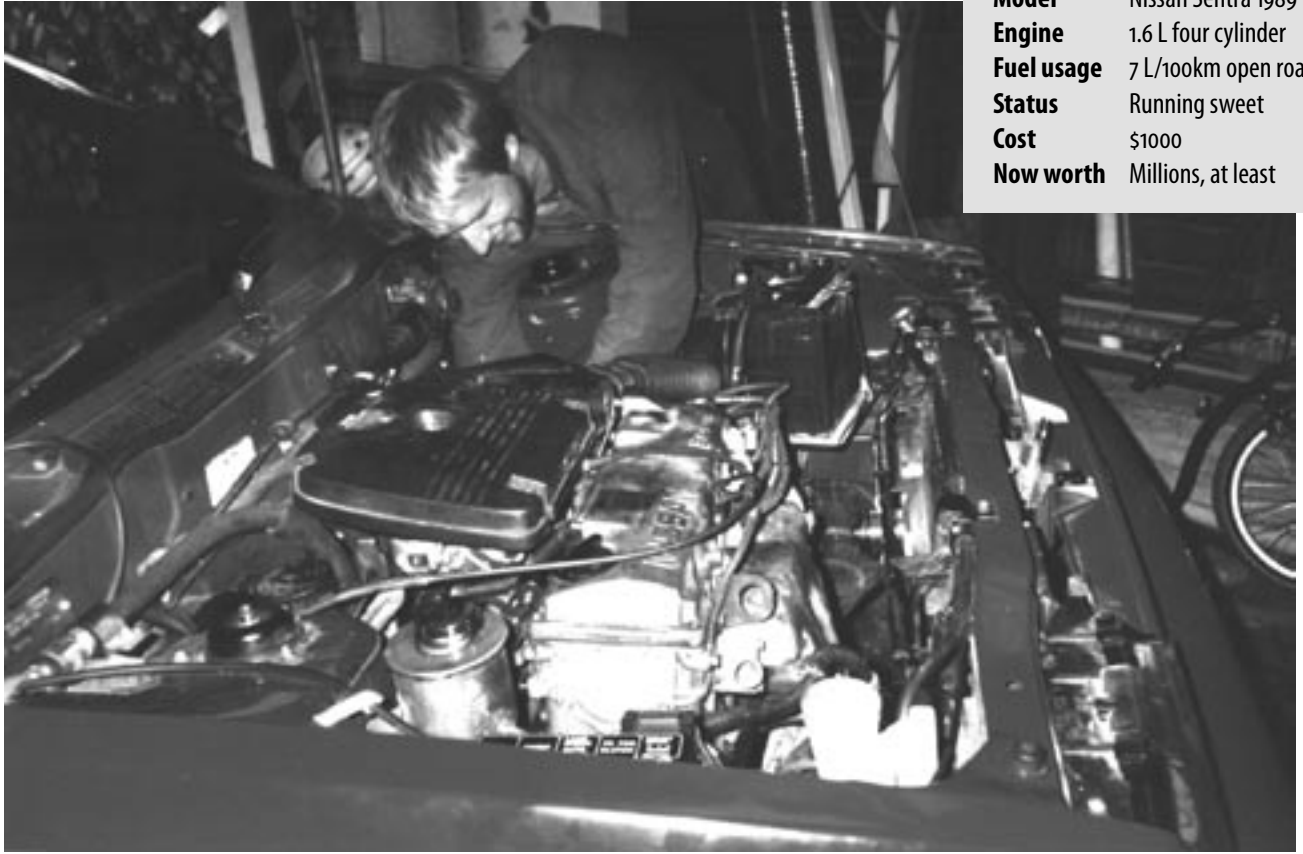
But also be prepared to feel like you're walking on the moon as you traverse the volcano; be prepared to feel like

you've been dropped into a C. S. Lewis fantasy as you stare at the Emerald Lakes; be prepared to stop for a second and pretend you're a character from *Lord of the Rings* as you pop out above the bush line and look out over the rolling green.

In short, be prepared to take one step closer to God. ♦



For more info about the Tongariro Crossing, the Department of Conservation's website has lots of handy information: tinyurl.com/6uhr7



Model	Nissan Sentra 1989
Engine	1.6 L four cylinder
Fuel usage	7 L/100km open road
Status	Running sweet
Cost	\$1000
Now worth	Millions, at least

AT LEAST IT WASN'T on the way *to* our holiday destination. But even on the trip back from a nice, two-week Christmas holiday, it's never the nicest thing in the world to blow your gasket. Your car's head gasket.

We'd known when we bought the car that its engine was on the way out. In fact, I managed to weasel the seller down from \$1400 to \$1000 because of it. Poor old Morris – how disloyal of me! – sold for a grand, so this car wasn't allowed to cost much more than that. But you get what you pay for.

I paid for what I got, too. The cure, they said, was complete heart surgery: "You'll need to replace the engine." So after a \$350 tow-truck fee and a \$400 second-hand engine, little did I think I'd be spending the next week of evenings under the bonnet in oily overalls.

The Cressy boys (yes, same ones that starred in last issue's Wheels column) gave me a big head start. Here I was, not too many moons after discovering how to change the oil, learning how to change an engine.

To say it took longer than we thought would be understatement. One evening soon turned into two, and two turned into seven. On the plus side, I actually gained a fair bit of mechanical confidence, because the technical aspect isn't the hard part. In short, you pull all the pipes and wires off the old engine, pull it out and put the new one in, then replace the pipes and wires and do up the bolts. You're away.

But in practice, *man!* First problem: an engine weighs a kilo or two. You nicely undo all the bolts, but your "fancy lifting gear" is limited to some homely ropes and the wooden cross-beams that support the garage roof. Then there's the question of whether to lift or to drop the engine out ...

Well, this story too has an end. Engine back in, radiator back on, tense moment as I turn the key – and it purred!

Poured, I mean. Yes, this new engine's water pump leaked. Drat! The \$80 for a new one was the easy part. Would we have to take out the whole engine again to install it? I was close to giving up, but I rang the car-wrecker, and he merely said, "In most cars you can replace the water pump without taking out the engine."

In our Nissan Sentra you could, too, but just. Replacing this one part was one of the biggest ordeals (as I remember it). One of the pump's bolts was almost inaccessible – you had about three millimeters to get your spanner in there. One of us held the pump by awkwardly reaching over various pipes and pulleys, trying to keep our arms out of the way of the guy doing up the bolts. He would be trying to use a combination of four or five different spanners and socket sets to reach in there, doing maybe a quarter of a turn at a time.

Finally, finally it was done. It really purred this time (at least to our tired, accepting ears). All that said, it recommend everyone doing it at least once. If I can change an engine, I'm thinking, I'll be really good at changing the oil. ♦



Legitimate art?

by T Jason Flinn

Hi! I'M JAS, AND HERE'S just a brief intro so you know where my bias stands. I'm a self-employed artist, and have been for a year and a half now. I've been asked to write about loyalty and art (what else), and I've been struggling with problems of loyalty to God through my work. So ... I'm gonna throw out some thoughts on whether artistry is a legitimate Christian calling. I don't have all the answers, so bear with me!

When choosing any career you are seeking what God's will is for your life. That is a heavy responsibility, and often times there's not a black and white answer! All sorts of questions are raised when you are choosing the direction, for example: "What are the God-given talents I have been gifted with?" and "Is this type of job God-honouring?" Being an artist, I've really struggled with these questions.

I think one of the biggest problems is that an artist has a sporadic income (at least until he gets a solid reputation). This is a negative in the minds of many Christians. A dedicated Christian man should be getting a solid job that will provide a steady income for a wife and family. But what's the difference between a student going to uni or polytech for three years to get a qualification and an artist working three years to get a reputation? At the end of that time they both receive the business.

However, I could say that while the artist is making money on the side, he has to be extremely self-controlled (something I find hard) in order to treat his work as a job instead of a hobby. The uni student has it all laid out for him, and all he has to do is dig in his heels and get stuck into the work. Easy! But it takes a real man to be an artist! It takes a man to sit in a bathroom (my studio) for seven hours a day, in a rather hermetical situation.. But that raises another question ...

How is being a hermit acceptable when I could be out in the work force as an "effective witness", interacting with people, helping, leading and being a role model? Any ideas?

I've been told that my art is the witness, but how does this work when most modern art buyers are after an emotion or feeling – isn't that loyalty to self? As Christians, we tend to stand out, because we have something other than feelings to base our lives on. I have no problem with an artist presenting his interpretation of what he sees – that is called for, in fact – but I really appreciate striving to

capture the amazing beauty that God has designed around us. Being God's people we are chiefly to "glorify God and enjoy him forever".

The *glorify* part of that statement sort of sticks out. How can self-promotion serve God? In the art world people are buying a reputation, a label. The artist has to say "Hey! Look at me! Check out my exceptional quality." Where is God in that equation? Yet how does that differ from a business working to establish a quality reputation? The business also has to promote itself in order to be appealing to the market. This effects how you live, and that's where talent, skill and work ethic come in. Every job must maintain a standard and, as Christians, our standards are found in God's word.

But how do you bring God's word through in your work? People are going to interpret art based on their own feelings and experiences. Often what they see and what the artist puts in are totally different. Once again, we have to remove loyalty to self and place God first. This doesn't necessarily mean we have to paint like Leonardo da Vinci, rather it means having our work dedicated to God. A great example of this is J. S. Bach, who wrote *solī deo gloria* ("glory to God alone") at the end of all his compositions. God has gifted you with unique talents that are a delight as well as a duty. To whom much is given, much is expected. As in the Parable of the Talents, we have to develop what God has given us, and at the end, He will say (from Matthew 25:23):

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

You're most welcome to send any thoughts or suggestions to me at alphalfinator@hotmail.com. Cheers! ♦



by T Jason Flinn