



# COMMUNITY VIEW

## Passiontide / Easter 2008

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

---

### EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Because it is almost upon us, I want to make sure that you are aware of the Conference on Prayer that is soon to take place as the National Conference of The Christian Community in New Zealand. As I have mentioned before, this is an excellent opportunity for Australian members to visit New Zealand, and likewise, an excellent opportunity for New Zealanders to get together. Rosalind Pecover is coming over from Sydney to join her New Zealand colleagues for this important conference. Please refer to the notice below and the words that Martin Wittchow has written regarding prayer.

This is the largest edition of Community View ever. It contains some excellent and informative reading. Megan Collins describes her visit to New York, Rebecca Maxwell and Wolfgang Devine report on their experiences during Michael Debus' recent visit and Sune Nielsen gives a picture of the recent ordinations in Stuttgart along with excerpts from a letter on the same theme. We also have two tributes to members who have recently departed. Hildegard (Hilde) Stossel is remembered by John and Margaret Shaw, and Walter Billing by Cheryl Nekvapil.

With very best wishes, - Kevin Coffey

---



### PRAYER & THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH

National Conference of  
The Christian Community  
24 -27 April 2008  
Te Ra Waldorf School  
Kapiti Coast, Wellington,  
New Zealand

Full details -> [www.thechristiancommunity.net](http://www.thechristiancommunity.net)

---

### PRAYER IN OUR TIMES

A fundamental question of the modern soul can assert itself again and again: Is there at all a higher being that listens, that can listen, and is able to respond to prayer? Such a question

springs from that strange doubt-ridden feeling of emptiness, of dead quietness in that inner space towards which prayer is directed. How are we to overcome this doubt? How are we to experience a reality of communication with the Divine?

If only we could hear voices, discernible answers, clear messages of response! Why, if God and other heavenly beings do in fact exist, are they so silent, so quiet, so muted? Is it because they want to test us? Is it because we first have to find the right attitude of honest reverence and quiet acceptance before they let us come near them? Do we perhaps have to first learn an appropriate language in order to communicate with them? Is it quiet because we haven't properly tuned in?

There are people around for whom prayer seems to work. They talk of the strength, the guidance, the help that comes to them through their regular prayer. Are they deceiving themselves? Are they undergoing mere auto-suggestion, - the powerful but empty self affirmation of the soul?

With all these doubting questions it seems natural to stay away from prayer altogether. But, on the other side, if intelligent higher beings do surround us, will it not be vital for every human soul to establish reliable communication with them? Will it not be one of the most important aims of life to learn how to pray? Our National Conference on **Prayer and the future of the earth** will endeavour to address these questions and give guidance on the way of learning to pray for the future of the earth.

Rev Martin Wittchow, Hastings

### LETTER FROM THE USA

New York, aka The Big Apple, is a tiny place. On the wall of the house where we are staying is an old map of Connecticut and the eastern edge of New York State. You have to hunt very hard to find the speck of Manhattan Island there at the mouth of the Hudson River, at the western tip of Long Island. This sliver of an island, barely 14 miles long north to south, is the place where, locals believe, it is all happening.

Surprisingly perhaps, something very new is happening at The Christian Community church here. But before I elaborate on that, a few more perceptions, a little at random, from a visitor to this country, early in 2008 ...

The sun, still quite low at mid-day in this wintry season, stands in the south. The waning moon points the arms of its crescent to the west in the early morning.

If you look at the New York City subway map, you will see at the southern tip of Manhattan island the Cortlandt St. stop, marked “temporarily closed”. This is the site of the former world Trade Center, where America took a direct hit to its national pride at 9/11 2001 and has not, since then, stopped punishing the ‘others’ who inflicted this wound.

Yesterday and today *The New York Times* included articles about stern questions being put to the newly appointed Attorney General about the practice of ‘water boarding’, a treatment of some Al-Quaeda detainees under interrogation (at least in the past), in which the prisoner experiences the sensation of drowning. Mr. Mukasey admitted that “he would consider it torture if he underwent the harsh CIA interrogation technique” but that “the practice was not necessarily illegal, and he would not rule out its use in the future.”

Meanwhile Caroline Kennedy, her uncle, Senator Ted and cousin, Patrick, have all announced that they are barracking (!) for Mr. Obama. In an opinion piece in *The Times* titled ‘A President Like my Father’, Ms. Kennedy says this: “Sometimes it takes a while to recognize that someone has a special ability to get us to believe in ourselves, to tie that belief to our highest ideals and imagine that together we can do great things. [...] We have that kind of opportunity with Senator Obama.”

In our own neighbourhood, further up the street, is an apartment building where the French philosopher Simone Weil lived from July to November 1942, from where she went to England to work for the ‘Free French’ provisional government for the final months of her life. A brass plaque beside the door of this building remembers her with a quote:

“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. It is given to very few minds to notice that things and beings exist. Since my childhood I have not wanted anything else but to receive the complete revelation of this before dying.”

Meanwhile, in our beloved Act of Consecration of Man text, the Christ being, whom formerly we addressed always as ‘thou’, has become simply ‘you’. So have the father God and the Holy Spirit. This came as a bit of a shock when I arrived to serve on the Tuesday following Epiphany and the resident priest (Rev. Erk Ludwig) told me that from January 6<sup>th</sup> we would never again, in North America, say “And may he fill thy spirit.” The priest of course has a lot more changes of text to

remember than the servers, with verb forms throughout the text changing correspondingly when ‘thou, thee, thy, thine’ become our humble and familiar ‘you’ or ‘your’.

I think that part of the shock had to do with ‘you’ seeming familiar in the sense of *slighting* to the divine. However, when the priest and I discussed the changes I was reminded that in our own language, not so long ago, the ‘thou’ form was precisely the mark of intimacy. Languages like French and German still carry that token of greater closeness in ‘tu’ and ‘du’, words around whose use, elaborate social rules apply, because to use either in addressing someone implies that a certain social boundary has been crossed and one is claiming or asserting a particular degree of closeness.

In English however, I realised, because these terms – formerly of endearment – have largely dropped out of the language, when we encounter them again, as in the ACM-as-has-been, they actually *seem* to represent a degree of formality in our address. Rev. Ludwig and I agreed (I think!) that this sense of formality could have the effect of distancing listeners from the realities invoked in the service, especially people new to the Act of Consecration. This factor alone could be a substantial reason for the changes that have now been made, at least in the USA and Canada.

I went away wondering whether I could get used to this strange ‘loss’, and also relieved that I hadn’t heard of any such changes being afoot in Australia, and so maybe we would be able to keep ‘our’ text for a while yet...

But I have also to report that, having been prepared to resist the change, and anticipating that reaction in myself, I went to the ‘new’ service today for the first time as a listener and found that already, in only the fourth week of hearing it, the new text had somehow become ‘normal’ for me; in some ways I was already anticipating the revised word-forms.

I wonder – now – whether there isn’t a kind of clarity in this new form of address: “Sick is the dwelling into which you are entering, but through your word my soul becomes whole” – creating a shock of realisation that I really am addressing the divine realm and therefore am in a direct relationship with these beings, one not muffled or cushioned or *distanced* by the more formal language we know so well.

There was a striking historical moment in all of this when, at the end of the service today the priest said: “The Act of Consecration of Man, thus it will be.” Of course he then corrected himself, but he had also spoken truly in reminding us that the changed text we had just enacted was and is also the text that will carry

'our' Act of Consecration – at least in North American English – into the future.

Megan Collins, Melbourne  
31 January, 2008

## TWO SORTS OF CONSCIENCE AND WHAT ARE WE BELIEVING IN? – ON MICHAEL DEBUS'S TALKS

Several of us Melbournians began the month of February with the stimulating "charge" to consciousness of three "lectures" by Michael Debus; the experience of which, for me, was a process in reflection on "vital" questions.

He suggested that, if we go back to our earliest memory, we will generally find it to be a "social memory": a sense of not being alone, of being carried by our immediate community. The feeling of that early stage of life is that we are not alone; we are enveloped, and fit within our context. In our experience, the representative of the "supporting" society is the mother; the mother who loves and "carries" the offspring unstintingly. Up to the age of confirmation, about 14, the child has "rested" in the authority of the parents, then the authority of the teacher. These adults have instilled in the now "youth" the morality of the society. This is the morality which informs the conscience. So when the person acts, the acts and feelings that arise from instincts and desires are vetted by the social conscience (which is the legacy of parents and teachers). And this will temper the instinctual. The 'WE' put to ourselves inwardly are settled by this imbibed social conscience. By this societal moral perspective we assess ourselves inwardly.

When we leave childhood and enter youth, we come to know that most threatening feeling of being absolutely alone. Especially now in western societies – with the diminishing of communities of origin and the great increase of "single" life – we paddle our own canoe. Our questions, "Should I have done it?" or "Should I say it?" are not always resolved by sticking to the mores we were taught. Another arbiter enters the reflection. "What do I believe, accept, value?" not just "What is acceptable in our way". This brings another conscience to the fore, the individual conscience, for those who can stand alone.

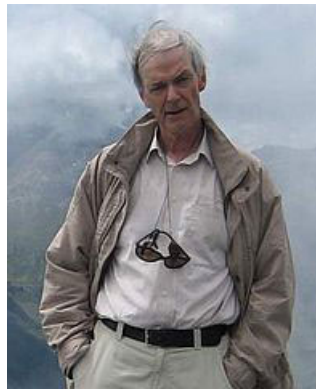
Being 'alone' is painful. So it leads to the community of individuals: the community formed on the basis of an aspect I personally cherish; not just the societal habits I was brought up in, not just the familial or religious laws I inherited, but a "new, chosen community" which is taking steps that contribute to the evolving of society.

Semantically, we can think of the child-like joy in nature, being added to by the framework of society's laws, then moving to the more independent stance of individual conscience – from which new communities of individual

freedom begin to arise. Where eventually, individual difference is accepted to such an extent that the desire to convert the other to conform with my opinion will not arise; and thus neither will the need of war arise.

Rebecca Maxwell, Melbourne

Coming from the lecture, do "I" stand in the Harts Parade – or my car? Am "I" hungry – or is my body needy of food? Am "I" confused by this amount of information – or is my soul a bit out of balance? Placing things into the right corner of my total being is no pure detachment; it gives freedom back, and with it the responsibility to care. I am not the victim of my lower nature, but the creator of meaning and transformer of being in world evolution. And this 'evolution' starts between people and continues into the environment (as in the Act of Consecration).



The Christian Community, this movement in religious renewal, does not expect us to have a set canon of beliefs, not even in the sentences of the creed. We are free to move with our own process. Only the priest needs to be

### Michael Debus

able to stand in a 'canon'; but we are free to grow into it. Michael Debus pointed out that the last words of the service: "The Act of Consecration of Man, thus it has been" is what we need to 'believe': that is, that we have done something essential and real. Transformation has taken place: not in the Protestant sense, that it is only symbolic (of the spiritual world), nor in the Catholic sense, that you can carry the flesh of Christ in the monstrance (in the physical world). *Which "has been"* is in a world 'in-between' (in the becoming), which will be in the future and therefore is already now.

We touched on the secrets of transformation: which as forms and thoughts are what comes from the past; and as will-impulses and actions, stream from the future into our present – thus what we do reveals its 'reality' only in the future.

Wolfgang Devine, Melbourne

## ORDINATIONS FEBRUARY 2008

From the 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> February the priest ordinations took place in Stuttgart. Lots of people gathered there, both priests and laity, to experience this Sacrament. For many people it is a joyous reunion, something that they revisit over and over, maybe every year. Many priests come as frequently as they can to refresh the

experience of their own ordination and perhaps, most of all, to be a physical part of the ‘priest community’, co-celebrating the ordination and welcoming the “new-born” priests into their midst.

Each year some people experience this powerful sacrament for the first time in their lives. Some of you may have experienced the ordination held in Canberra some years ago and have a memory of the greatness of it. For those who did not have this opportunity, I can only stumble for words to describe it. All come together to witness and make the ordination possible.

This year there were 13 candidates for whom these days marked the threshold into an unknown field. They have been preparing intensively over the last few months and before that as well in the priest seminary. It is hard to say when ‘becoming a priest’ begins. You have all the preparation – often many things have to align themselves, pointing in one direction - and finally comes the day of the Ordination.

I remember the days around my own ordination: They were like a big pause in the middle of everything – in the middle of life. The journey towards *becoming* a priest stopped here at the ordination, but it also began in a new way on the other side. The “Angelobung” (the pledging of loyalty to the circle of priests) on the evening before the ordination tore open a room; a room then standing open and empty. The ordination flowed into this open room and the “Becoming” resounded, searching from that time, places, people and situations that it could resonate with. It is a room prepared in the past to search for “becoming” everywhere – “to become”.

Now this February the following 13 people were ordained as priests of The Christian Community. In the official ceremony on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> they heard where their first community was to be (listed in brackets after the name).

Sune Nielsen, Sydney

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008, 10:00 am

Kai Meyer-Hamme **D** (Winterbach D)  
Paula Korpelainen **SF** (Darmstadt D)  
Marianne von Borries **D** (Herdecke D)  
Martina Alexi **D** (Hannover D)

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> Februar 2008, 10:00 am

Jose Mosseve1d **NL** (Rotterdam NL)  
Bart Hessen **NL** (Amsterdam NL)  
Sabine Rosenbruch **D** (Flensburg D)  
Michael Rosenbruch **D** (Rendsburg D)

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> Februar 2008, 10:00 am

Erhard Keller **D/GB** (Stroud GB)  
Liza Joy Marcato **USA** (Erlangen D)  
Steffen Barth **D** (Augsburg D)

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Februar 2008, 10:00 am

Benjamin Robin Black **CAN** (Nürtingen D)  
Xenia Medvedeva **UKR** (Nürtingen D)  
Laurens Marianus Hornemann **D** (Leipzig D)

**EXCERPT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY A  
COMMUNITY MEMBER TO A PRIEST**

..... I have spent a lot of time during this ordination weekend thinking about you priests, therefore I thought I might add a little report, and then some personal comments.

We have had four evening talks, one each by Christward Kröner, Stephan Meyer, Tom Ravetz (in English) and today by Georg Dreißig, the last of which was especially inspired and fulfilled the four evenings, all of which were aimed at explaining the purpose of the ordination and the meaning of the priesthood to us members, relatives, laymen, students, etc.

Then there have been three mornings of ordinations, and one still to come, all in all 14 priests to be ordained, starting with the oldest (age 67), down to the youngest. The music has varied each morning, so that even if the service had the same words, the setting seemed a little bit different every day.

As always it has been a very festive event, with about 100 priests present to welcome the new ones into your fold. It is a very awesome moment, when all of them together say their "Ja, so sei es!". A hundredfold.

As you know quite well what’s happening at the Ordination Service I will skip that part in description, but stick to the surroundings. We have had a largely central European dominated gathering. Only today I caught a glimpse of Oliver Steinrueck (Lenker for North America), who was there to attend Lisa Marcato’s ordination. But as far as I understood, this was the only newly ordained priest from overseas, all the others were European. You would have enjoyed seeing so many colleagues, but I must admit, that there weren’t that many from your ordination group present. It’s always a trick to silently check all the names of the priests coming in, figuring out how many I still know or have met in the past.

Thinking during the talk by Georg Dreißig tonight, I had this picture, that during the time with The Christian Community I have been like a little caterpillar, feeding on the knowledge, and ideas I could get hold of, and the last two years working at The Christian Community retirement home spinning my cocoon..... and now it’s about time to change. Really bite my way out into the light again and see if I have managed to grow wings. And I mean this quite literally, as in : has the information I have soaked up prepared me to do my own thing, develop my own ideas, come out into the world with something genuine?

When Dreißig started his talk today referring to Friedrich Rittelmeyer receiving, meditating and

working through the words of the Act of Consecration of Man, before it ever was celebrated, feeling the urge and call to make it happen, even if it meant for him to step outside existing church limitations, this rang very true for me personally. Rittelmeyer did not initially want to found a new church, he just found it impossible to integrate his convictions into his existing context. I am certainly no Rittelmeyer, nothing on any comparable scale, I do not intend to compare myself, but the impulse, the urge, the immediate consciousness that what I believe as an individual to be true should be either possible within the circumstances I am in – or it calls for stepping out.

The weekend really has been a revelation, I haven't felt as connected with the service for a long time, especially when you experience the silence and concentration in a church as large as Stuttgart – Mitte, completely packed with people, and the essence of the ordination permeates all present. It calls to me who am wondering how an individual does fit into a community, even one she/he knows so well and how to make what is experienced in community into a personal life experience?

Dagmar Brockstedt, Stuttgart

#### CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF HILDEGARD THERESA STOSSEL (nee ULRICH)

Hildegard was a very special human being whose life was one of service for others and who bore great suffering, particularly in the realm of her soul life, with fortitude and acceptance.

##### Brief history

Hildegard was born on 21 May 1917 in Vienna, Austria, one of two children whose parents, Georg and Paula Ulrich, became members of the founding congregation of The Christian Community in that city. The congregation to which they belonged had as their priest, Dr Rudolf Frieling, who was one of the founding circle of priests ordained by Dr Friedrich Rittelmeyer on 16 September 1922 in the "White Room" of the Goetheanum at Dornach in Switzerland.

Hildegard told us that her childhood and youth in Vienna were privileged, but at the age of 21, her world was shattered. It was 1938 and Hitler and his Nazi cohorts occupied Austria, merging it into the Third Reich. It soon became clear to Hildegard that she could no longer continue to live there. She remarked dryly "Since Hitler was not going anywhere, I had to leave." In 1938, Hildegard was able to leave Austria by accompanying a lady on a voyage to Sydney, Australia, as her travelling companion. She regarded this step as a first attempt on her part to reach out for something that "lay beyond my

limits" which she saw as a hallmark of her later life. Her philosophy was that the process was the really important thing, not the result: if the result was achieved, this was a "bonus".



From left: Hildegard Stossel with friends Rose-Marie van Hoogstraten and Eva Kulka [Sydney Church 2002/3]

Hildegard married her husband, Hugo Stossel, an architect, in about 1941. The marriage lasted 28 years but in the last of those years it was increasingly obvious to Hildegard that she and Hugo were growing apart on too many issues. Although Hildegard and Hugo had tried to make their marriage work for the sake of their son, Peter, they agreed to an amicable split and in 1970, Hildegard and Hugo were divorced in Vienna, to which city Hildegard, Hugo and Peter had moved in late 1969. After the divorce, Hildegard joined the workforce again, obtaining a position in the Migration Department of the Australian Embassy in Vienna.

In 1974, her son Peter returned to Australia and three years later Hildegard, feeling that she was needed by Paula who was then approaching 90 years of age, returned to Australia.

On 30 January 1981, Hildegard's beloved mother, Paula, passed through the gate of death at the age of 90 years. Immediately after Paula's funeral, conducted at a funeral parlour in Chatswood, she approached John Shaw and said: *"I was moved by the reading of that verse [by Adam Bittleston] for my mother. I have made up my mind to work with those who wish to establish The Christian Community in Australia, a project very dear to my mother's heart."*

In the mid-1980s, Hildegard worked in Australia as a translator for a German agency. In 1985 her son, Peter, married Diana in a marriage celebrated according to the ritual of The Christian Community: the celebrating priest was Rosalind Pecover.

In 1989, Peter and Diana suggested to Hildegard that she sell her unit in Cammeray, and with the proceeds build a granny flat adjoining their own home in Warrimoo, New South Wales, so that they could look after her. This she did. Then, in

2002, Hildegard, Peter and Diana moved to a new home at Marulan in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. This is where Hildegard lived until about 8 days before her death on Friday, 6 July 2007.

#### Hildegard's contribution to the founding work of The Christian Community in Australia

In accordance with her stated commitment, Hildegard, now approaching 64 years of age, enthusiastically entered into all the activities of the Foundation Group of The Christian Community and was in the forefront of those activities from 1981 up to the permanent foundation on 27 November 1988.

Those who were involved in those days recall the beautiful transparencies which she created and which were fixed to the windows in the Upper Room at Ballast Point Road, Birchgrove, from 1982 to 1987. Hildegard also wrote sketches and small plays for the various festivals, notably St John's Tide. She created dialogue to accompany a new set of transparencies prepared by her which were placed on the windows of our chapel in the shed at 170 Beattie Street, Balmain following the foundation in 1988.

Hildegard gave of her time generously. With her mastery of both English and German, she taught rudimentary German to friends without seeking or receiving any fee for that service.

#### Hildegard's skill as a translator

Because of her mastery of the German and English languages, Hildegard was called on to translate from German to English the work by Wilhelm Kelber, known as "The Son of Man". In taking up this task, she was encouraged by Reverend Arie Boogert. Hildegard also translated into English the monograph by Rudolf Frieling known as "The Transfiguration". Finally, at the request of Wladek Brander and with the approval of Raimund Pohl, Hildegard translated into English a play written in German by Dr Hans Joachim Pohl during the Second World War: the play is entitled "The Healing of Humanity – A Raphael Easter Play". The play was performed in English in 1999 at "Inala" in West Pennant Hills, a Rudolf Steiner Curative Home founded by Dr Pohl's wife, Kyra Pohl in 1958.

#### Hildegard's passing across the threshold

On Friday, 6 July 2007 at Goulburn Hospital, Hildegard, in the presence of her son, Peter, passed through the gate of death. This crossing was not merely something that Hildegard was ready to accept – it was one that she longed for in the firm belief that she would be welcomed in the spiritual world by Christ and by those of her loved ones who had passed over the threshold before her.

#### Funeral

Rev Cheryl Nekvapil, who knew Hildegard, celebrated her funeral in Goulburn on Friday, 13 July 2007. Helen Martin, who knew and loved Hildegard, assisted in the funeral as server. The funeral was also attended by Peter and Diana Stossel and Christopher Dalton.

#### Memorial service for the dead

On Saturday, 2 February 2008, at our "chapel in the shed" at 170 Beattie Street, Balmain, a memorial service was celebrated for Hildegard by Rev Rosalind Pecover in the presence of 8 individuals, all of whom had known Hildegard. Rosalind Pecover painted a vivid picture of the being of Hildegard and of the various hard blows of destiny that she bore so nobly throughout her long life. Following the service, those present formed a circle into which we brought the special recollections that we had of her in those years when Hildegard was particularly active amongst us.

#### The Future

At the circle of remembrance, we contemplated the journey that Hildegard is now taking in the spiritual world. Rosalind Pecover mentioned the immense spiritual forces that Hildegard will gather together as she prepares for her next life. These forces generated by her love for The Christian Community and her life of service for others will endow her with even greater capacity to serve humanity in the next life.

We contemplated the being of one who had experienced the highly cultured life of central Europe but who, by life's circumstances, came to live in a certain degree of isolation. Fortunately, Hildegard was somehow able to dig deep and extract nourishment for her soul through her vivid imagination and her own rich inner resources.

#### Our gratitude to Hildegard

Those who were present at her funeral or at the memorial service and also others who knew Hildegard but were not able to attend either event, give thanks to that kind star which enabled them to share in the life of this great but extraordinarily humble human being.

John and Margaret Shaw, Sydney, 22 Feb. 2008

#### WALTER BILLING

Walter Billing was born in Karlsruhe, Germany on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1928. By the time he was at school in the 1930's, his family was living in Stuttgart and he was a student at the first Waldorf or Steiner School which had been started by Emil Molt and Rudolf Steiner and others in 1919. Friendships from those years lasted a life-time, especially with Friedwart Bock and Werner

Grimm (retired priest of The Christian Community in Vancouver, Canada).

When I first met Walter about 4 years ago, he had been active in the Queensland community for years and was a much loved and respected member of the Management Committee. Serving as treasurer, Walter was extremely competent and attentive. He was the same actually when he attended talks and workshops when the community gathered together during priests' visits. The twinkle in his eye gave expression to his humour, often followed by comments that went to the core of the subject at hand. We've all agreed that he was such a gentleman in our midst.

After Walter was diagnosed with cancer two years ago, he resigned from the Committee handing responsibility for the finances over to Colin Allen, with a nod of approval! Walter continued however to devotedly attend The Act of Consecration of Man during priest visits until July of 2007.

In October of 2007 he was having medical treatment and wrote a letter, regretting that he wouldn't be able to join us, but sent his blessings: "I hope your Queensland priest visit will have many good moments and meetings with our little band of believers, and may the weather be somewhat kind—there are storms forecast for tomorrow and after. I will think of you all and try to be with you in my thoughts."

In the weeks before he died, many people held Walter in their thoughts and prayers in turn. Rev Rosalind Pecover was in regular phone contact with Walter and Marianne, and Christine Long visited him and Marianne frequently. Then it was time to call his family to come to him and say good-bye; and Rosalind was called too. On Saturday evening she celebrated the Sacrament of Anointing for Walter; and Marianne says that then he said, "now I can go". The next day, on Sunday afternoon 20<sup>th</sup> January, Walter passed into life beyond this life, accompanied by prayers and love and with his family and Marianne present with him.

The Funeral Service for Walter was then celebrated by Rev Rosalind Pecover on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2008. Walter lived and died with courage, and dignity, expressed even in the way he said good-bye. He will be with us especially as we remember him as a friend and member of our community.

Cheryl Nekvapil, Canberra,  
February 2008

## IT WAS A BUSY MORNING

It was a busy morning, about 8:30, when an elderly gentleman in his 80's, arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He said he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am. I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound.

On exam, it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound. While taking care of his wound, I asked him if he had another doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry. The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife.

I inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer's Disease. As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now.

I was surprised, and asked him, "And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?" He smiled as he patted my hand and said, "She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is."

I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arm, and thought, "That is the kind of love I want in my life." True love is neither physical, nor romantic. True love is an acceptance of all that is, has been, will be, and will not be. The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything they have. "Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain."

Anonymous

---

For 'Community View' editorial contact: Kevin Coffey  
[thechristiancommunity@paradise.net.nz](mailto:thechristiancommunity@paradise.net.nz)