

ON THE ROAD

**Newsletter of the Anabaptist Association of
Australia and New Zealand**

Issue 7 February 2000

Sabbath, Jubilee and Spirituality

Reviews for autumn reading

Remembering witnesses to the faith

**Homepage on the Internet
<http://www.anabaptist.asn.au>**

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From the Editor's Desk

Doing some New Year's Eve reflection I was moved to try and identify some of the outstanding public Christian witnesses during this period whose life and witness has been an encouragement to me. An exercise in remembering and finding encouragement to remain faithful.

Who did I come up with?

For me the life and witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer stands out. His concern with living the reality of the church, challenging the powers of evil, finding a form of spirituality and witness which took the gospel and the world seriously in a context shaped by the death of Christendom and the challenge of modernity.

Martin Luther King stands as another public witness who confronted the issues of his time while remaining grounded within the church. Running my mind through other names, Jacques Ellul, Dorothy Day and William Stringfellow Desmond Tutu and Oscar Romero spring to mind. Their lives have this common thread of critical engagement with the public issues of their age while remaining seriously engaged with the church as a community which retained its own identity rooted in the gospel.

About this issue

There are some connections as it turns out between my year end musings on witnesses to the faith and the material

which rolled electronically for this issue of the Newsletter.

I was delighted to receive some interesting and diverse reviews along with a survey article on Sabbath and Jubilee from Mark Hurst. Mark Hurst has also been doing some winter reading and reflecting and was good enough to share it with us. Mark Young contributed a review of the recent book by David Andrews.

The final contribution from the June 1999 conference will be included in the May issue with notes from Graeme Chatfield who will provide a helpful historical perspective on the Anabaptists as a gathered community.

Faithful witnesses

Remembering faithful witnesses to the radical tradition in the Christian community demanded attention as well. From Mark Young there was a memorial to Edmund Coxsedge, long time activist associated with the House of Freedom in Brisbane while Dale Hess drew my attention to the death of Brethren in Christ preacher, theologian and activist, Dale Aukerman.

The News column therefore includes a memorial to Dale Aukerman who died in September last year. The Resources column provides some notes on recent articles by Dale that might be of interest to those who are not familiar with his writings. I will be happy to supply photocopies of them on request.

The departure of these faithful witnesses from among us reminds us yet again that we are indeed surrounded and sustained by a great cloud of witnesses whose stories we need to remember and whose stories can

encourage us as we continue our own journey.

Please note the new address for the Association website, with thanks to Gary Baker for his work in establishing this.

Ian Duckham in his Presidents column provides further news on progress with Mark and Mary Hurst's visa and plans to return to Australia.

Doug Hynd (Editor)

Making it on the Web - Third Way Café

An Internet web site where the menu includes current events from a Christian perspective and information on Mennonites.

www.thirdway.com

Presidents Column

It seems that entry into the year 2000 is an occasion for looking backwards as well as forwards. Looking backwards often appears easier than looking forwards to new challenges and embracing the changes that are sure to come. Nevertheless looking backwards we can gain strength and inspiration from the knowledge of obstacles overcome, the experience of God's blessing in our lives in times of trial as well as times of triumph.

As an organisation the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand overcame one of the major

obstacles in the path of its progress in 1999.

In November, our immigration lawyer in Melbourne advised that the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs had approved the sponsorship nomination for Mark and Mary Hurst to return to Australia as pastoral workers. More recently the lawyer has reported that Micah and Moriah's nominations have also been approved, and subject to a positive assessment by the Embassy in Washington, Mark and Mary should receive the all clear in the next month or two in time to return to Australia in June or July 2000.

The Committee has ratified Mark and Mary's choice of Sydney as their centre for ministry. Sydney, while not geographically central, does offer advantages of ready access to other centres. We also agreed with Mark and Mary that it was important to have a strong Anabaptist presence in Australia's largest city.

The immigration saga really has been a test of faith for a relatively small group of believers spread out over thousands of kilometres. It began in May 1995 with the formation of the Anabaptist Network of Australia and New Zealand at a 'A Call to Gather' conference in Sheffield, Tasmania. 'The participants [representing four Australian states, New Zealand and the USA] came from a number of denominations, including Baptist, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist, Mennonite, Uniting and various house churches.' To quote from the press release:

The gathering represented a network of personal relationships rather than organisational links... [Despite the difficulties of using the name

'anabaptist' in an Australian or New Zealand setting] for those present the 'Anabaptist movement' put a name and gave an historical context for the beliefs and practices that for them came through conviction and experience. Anabaptist belief and practice also provided models for joining evangelical and charismatic emphases and exploring our roles as Christians at work and witness in society'

The Sheffield gathering decided that they wanted Mark and Mary to return to Australia as pastoral workers and resource persons for the network. From that time forward we have been seeking to secure the immigration visa for them. This work involved numerous setbacks and delays that must have been very disheartening for Mark and Mary, if not for the committee.

Now patience, persistence and prayer has been rewarded or is about to be rewarded. I am profoundly grateful for those who have worked with us to secure this happening, and very grateful to those who have stood by us financially at a time when legal fees seemed unending. Thank you - all of you who pledged your support in prayer and finance. Without you we could never have achieved this outcome.

It's all a bit of a miracle when you think of it. A tiny organisation of less than 50 members who meet face to face hopefully about once a year, and who can barely afford to pay legal fees receive notification that an application to sponsor two pastoral workers has been successful. Surely God had a hand in this!

Looking forward, our web site will be an important tool in networking with other Anabaptist-minded people. Thanks to the efforts of Gary Baker we

now have a web site in our own name, highlighted on the front cover of this edition of the Newsletter.

Looking to the future

Planning for the Australia Day weekend January 2001 Melbourne Conference is picking up momentum in the capable hands of Bessie Pereira and her sub-committee members, David Wilson, Neil and Saralynn Horsburgh. We will be keeping you informed on the Conference as the program develops. Start planning now to attend the Anabaptist Olympic alternative!!

Ian Duckham

Executive

President: Ian Duckham
Vice President: Doug Hynd
Secretary: Ross Coleman
Treasurer: Gary Baker

Committee members

Bessie Pereira
Tim Dyer
Tim Costello - Public Officer
John Cox
Chris Marshall

We try as a committee to use electronic means of communication and the internet as much as possible to keep in touch with each other. I have enclosed our e-mail addresses to enable you to contact any of us by that means.

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AAANZ 2001 CONFERENCE

COMMUNITY & MISSION

24-26 JANUARY 2001

**WHITLEY COLLEGE
MELBOURNE**

Details soon

**Put it in your diary now
A time to share, worship, learn and
dream together**

**Treasurer's February
Report**

Thank you to all who have made donations.

A further \$627 has been donated in response to the appeal since the report at the end of November. The current balance, at the beginning of February 2000, was \$3,011.

An invoice to the Association for further legal fees for the visa application for Mark and Mary Hurst of \$3,687 has just been received. To enable full payment of this bill will require further donations of \$676.

Annual registration of the association under the Victorian Associations Incorporation Act was completed following the acceptance of the

auditor's report by a General Meeting of the Association.

Regular donations are helpful to the Association. For periodic donations please ensure that your surname will appear on the receiving banks receipt. This is important for the record of our transactions.

For periodic transfers, the AAANZ's National Australia Bank account number is 46 486 7622 and the branch number is 082-407. Donations made out to the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc (or AAANZ) can also be sent to me, at PO Box 1514 Armidale NSW 2350 Australia.

Shalom
Gary Baker

**From the membership
secretary**

Following are the short names of currently signed-up members of AAANZ. Full names are entered on the register (as required by our rules), based on the information provided on each signed application form).

If there are any errors or omissions, in particular in regard to who is on and who is not on the register, would you please let the membership secretary, John Cox, know at:

- 12/81 Box Hill Avenue Conder ACT 2906; or
- 02 6294 7415 (h); or
- jcox@ipaustrialia.gov.au

Eleanor Baker
Gary Baker
Gil Cann

Graeme Chatfield
Ann Clarke
Michael Clarke
Diane Coleman
Ross Coleman
Tim Costello
John Cox
Jill Crisp
Andrew Curtis
Rowena Curtis
Ann Duckham
Ian Duckham
Tim Dyer
Ken Goodlet
Doug Hynd
Colin Isaac
Harold Koch
Ross Langmead
Sally Longley
Chris Marshall
Phillip Matthews
Brigitte Muller
Douglas Nalder
John Olley
Bessie Pereira
Doug Sewell
Jay Streeter
John U'ren
Noel Vose

If you would like to become a member (no joining or membership fees) please visit the AAANZ home page, www.anabaptist.asn.au, for an application form and other membership information.

Letters & emails

Doug and Gary,

I want to congratulate you on the hard

work you have put in to establish the Association and the Newsletter. Your efforts are clearly apparent. I am very impressed with the layout and design as well as the content of the Newsletter. I also like the title, because I am especially fond of Athol's book. I find the Newsletter to be a valuable resource.

May I suggest a couple of items that you may want to consider. Dale Aukerman died on 4 September 1999 in Maryland. He was a widely known peace activist, pastor and author (Darkening Valley: A Biblical Perspective on Nuclear War; Reckoning with Apocalypse: Terminal Politics and Christian Hope) from the Church of the Brethren (German Baptist Brethren). It would be good to include a few words about him. Perhaps Don Durnbaugh would be willing to send something to you if asked.

In one of your earlier issues just after the death of John Howard Yoder you discuss his influence on Anabaptist thinking. The Conrad Grebel Review devotes a special issue (Spring 1998) to Yoder's life and work.

I will stop now.
Peace,

Dale Hess
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Australia 3001

Dear Doug Hynd,

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Chris Marshall to follow up his conversation with my colleague, Alan

Kreider, about the possibility of some sharing of resources and articles between Anabaptism Today, the journal of the UK Anabaptist Network, of which I am editor, and your own On the Road. I was pleased to receive a copy of Issue 6 in an e-mail recently and have enjoyed reading this. We are not yet sufficiently advanced electronically to post our journal on the web, but I hope we may be able to do this before too long.

But I would be very interested in exploring the kind of sharing Chris suggests. From my perspective I would be happy to authorise you to reproduce anything you think might be suitable for your readers in Anabaptism Today, providing you acknowledge the journal as you do this. Until we post the journal on the web, I would be pleased to e-mail you anything you request. How would you see this working from your end?

Another area for co-operation might be in the area of book reviews, to enable our respective networks to draw on literature from opposite sides of the globe.

Perhaps I can also mention to you a couple of other ventures that might be of interest. We are just about to launch our own in-house publishing co-operative with a view to producing a series of booklets on Anabaptist themes. The first of these will be entitled **Becoming a Peace Church** and will draw on five recent articles in Anabaptism Today on this subject. Our aim is to keep these as low cost as possible. A second venture is the publication shortly of a book edited by Alan Kreider and myself entitled **Coming Home: Stories of British and Irish Anabaptists**. This contains about

sixty stories of Christians in the British Isles for whom Anabaptism has been significant in recent years, together with four essays.

So I look forward to hearing from you about any of the above. I am looking forward also to my first visit to Australia in October of this year. I am lecturing in Sydney for two weeks and hope also to get to New Zealand. I hope to be able to make further connections with the AAANZ, having met Mark and Mary Hurst in Elkhart last Summer.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Murray

News

CHICAGO: Tribute to Dale Aukerman

CPTnet September 14, 1999
CHICAGO: A Tribute to Dale Aukerman by John Stoner on behalf of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)

The following comments were read at the memorial service for Dale Aukerman, Church of the Brethren theologian and long time member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams Steering Committee on September 12, 1999.

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Dale devoted his life to visions and tasks which built for the future. He

understood the proverb which says "Nothing worth doing can be finished in a lifetime." I am pleased to represent the voice of the workers and steering committee of CPT, Christian Peacemaker Teams. CPT is deeply indebted to Dale for his contribution to the development of CPT over the years. We found his presence at our Steering Committee meetings an important rudder steering our course. He did not speak a lot, but when he did, we heard words seasoned with wisdom and biblical awareness. Personally, I had the privilege of lodging with Dale in the home of a friend of CPT in Chicago a number of times. Our evening and breakfast conversations were rich

Dale's writings enriched us all. **Darkening Valley** remains, in my view, the best analysis available of the meaning of nuclear weapons. No one could do more to honour Dale's memory than to act on these words from **Darkening Valley** which were published in 1981: "Why, under God's sovereignty, the Bomb? Because God chose to let our rebellion be limitless; because He has chosen to give this culminating disclosure that apart from Him we are doomed: because He is, in this dread time, calling all peoples to recognise that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) For Dale, any separation of the name of Jesus from the practice of nonviolence was a perversion of the name of Jesus.

Wendell Berry says in his poem "The Mad Farmer Liberation Front:" "Plant sequoias." Dale planted trees. He nurtured nonviolent peacemaking, and CPT. He looked to the future. I don't know whether he planted any sequoias, but my wife Janet and I did. In 1994 we

planted a sequoia in our back yard in Akron, started from a seed. It is nearly eight feet tall now, and if somebody gives it a little extra water for the next 500 years or so, it will be the tallest tree in town in less time than that. A lot of people are watering CPT and similar seedlings of peace. We expect them to grow as well. We've dedicated the tree to CPT and to Dale's memory.

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Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is an initiative among Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations and Friends Meetings that supports violence reduction efforts around the world. CPT P. O. Box 6508 Chicago, IL 60680 tel:312-455-1199 FAX 312-432-1213 To join CPTNET, our e-mail network, fill out the form found on our WEB page.

Christian peace activist
remembered

Edmund Cocksedge
(1915-2000)

Christian peace activist and communitarian Edmund Cocksedge died on January 13th, 2000, aged 84.

Family, friends and comrades from Edmund's long-term involvement in peace, environmental and social justice movements shared their recollections at a memorial service in Brisbane. Stories were told of Edmund as a young pacifist in England leading up to the outbreak of

WW2, as part of the Bruderhof community in Paraguay for two decades, as a passionate motorcyclist, lover of music, amateur film-maker, sculptor of metal, artist, father, grandfather and member of the common-purse group within the House of Freedom Christian Community.

Edmund was a member of House of Freedom since the mid-1970s as well as an active participant in Concerned Christians, the West End Housing Co-operative, the Brisbane Peace Network, the Queensland Greens and the Rainbow Alliance. While Edmund rejected the hierarchies of status, title, church, state and commerce, he accepted people for wherever they stood in the journey towards greater sharing, non-violence and common life.

Edmund maintained his links with communities around the world through gatherings of ANOCC (an Australian Network of Christian Communities), as well as recent trips to the UK, New Zealand and the United States. His faith was shaped by many traditions, including the writings of George Fox, Eberhard Arnold, and more recently Athol Gill, Jean Vanier and Jim Wallis. Friend

Trevor Jordan spoke of Edmund's gift of 'steadfastness' as well as his practical spirituality and quiet activism. His quest for peace lives on in the hearts of those who travelled the journey with Edmund.

Mark Young

Editor's note

A slightly more detailed account of Edmund Coxsedge's life and witness

can be found on pp.158-161 of David Andrew's book **Christi-Anarchy**, reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter.

A world wide perspective

courier

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Web site: <http://www.mwc-cmm.org>

Sabbath and Jubilee A Spirituality For the 21st Century

by Mark Hurst

Following is an article which has grown out of some study Mark Hurst has been doing for a series of sermons on Sabbath and Jubilee theme. It could prove a useful resource for study groups.

A topic that keeps coming up at the end of this century and on the edge of the new one (depending on your view) is the issue of time. People do not seem to have enough of it. We noticed this on our visit to Australia and New Zealand this past year. People are getting busier and busier and seem to be enjoying life less.

Tom Sine noticed this too in his travels and comments on it in his recent book.

"Bottom line, people in Western countries are spending more time at work, so they have significantly less time left for other things, including things of faith." (Sine, 92) His prediction is that things will get worse before they get better. *...Those under thirty-five are likely to have significantly less time and money to contribute to the work of God's kingdom than did older generations.* (95)

His suggestion is to "put first things first" and reorient our lives.

We will need to find ways to reinvent how we live our lives and act out our faith, if we hope to effectively address the challenges of a new millenium. We will need to learn to think outside of the box. (17)

One of the things we need to do is rediscover Sabbath and Jubilee. It is a peace and justice issue because we are doing violence to others and ourselves with our hectic lifestyles. Wayne Muller says it this way:

A successful life has become a violent enterprise. We make war on our own bodies, pushing them beyond their limits; war on our children, because we cannot find enough time to be with them when they are hurt and afraid, and need our company; war on our spirit, because we are too preoccupied to listen to the quiet voices that seek to nourish and refresh us; war on our communities, because we are fearfully protecting what we have, and do not feel safe enough to be kind and generous; war on the earth, because we cannot take the time to place our feet on the ground and allow it to feed us, to taste its blessings and give thanks. (Muller, 2)

The Chinese pictograph for "busy" is composed of two characters: "heart" and "killing". We are in danger of killing off, that which is most important to us. How did we get to this place? We have forgotten the Sabbath. Retrieving some Sabbath and Jubilee principles can help reorient us again and return a godly rhythm to our lives.

Sabbath time can be a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork, mindless accumulation, and the endless multiplication of desires, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity. (Muller, 6)

Muller says that if we do not take time for Sabbath rest in our busy lives, "illness becomes our Sabbath." (20) This is an illustration of how seriously God takes the idea of Sabbath rest. Sabbath keeping has been key in the Jewish people being an alternative community. In fact, they say that it is not that Jews keep the Sabbath but that the Sabbath has kept the Jews, it has made them what they are.

Jewish writers talk about the Sabbath as "God's most precious gift", the "Queen", the "Bride", and the "beloved of Israel". They say it was the first of all things to be called *holy*. Genesis introduces us to Sabbath in Genesis two:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. (Gen. 2:1-3)

In these verses, we see that God "rested", "blessed" and "hallowed" the seventh day. Rested means "ceased" from labor, not relaxation that is a different word in Hebrew. The Hebrew word here is "shabbat" and that is the root meaning of Sabbath - to cease, desist.

Walter Brueggemann says Sabbath is a "covenantal work stoppage." We cease from work because God also rested. God "is not a workaholic and has no need to be more secure, more sufficient, more in control or more noticed." Nor do we. Maria Harris says, "*God's world is not a place of endless productivity, ambition, or anxiety. Instead, it is a place where listening to and receiving word and world precede our tending to them.*" (Harris, Proclaim Jubilee!, 30)

We often think that creation of humankind is the final and highest act of God's creation but the final act was creating the Sabbath and it is the first thing called "holy". Sabbath is the "crown" of creation in Jewish eyes, not humankind.

Jewish writers also talk about Sabbath as "our great cathedral", "a palace in time which we build", and "not a date but an atmosphere." In Jewish thought what God makes holy is, "time" not spaces. Judaism is about "holy time", not "holy things". (Which some parts of Christianity have done with sacred bones, sites, etc.)

In the Genesis account we read it talks about the "seventh day". The first mention of "Sabbath" is in Exodus 16:22f. Moses explains to the people about gathering manna in the wilderness and has to explain about the Sabbath. God will provide enough food for them to last several days so they can

set this day aside as special. Verse 29 says:

...See! The Lord has given you the Sabbath... (Ex. 16:29)

The day is not legislated as a special day until chapter 20 where it turns up as one of the Ten Commandments:

Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy."(Ex. 20:8)

The account in Deuteronomy says:

Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. (Deut. 5:12)

When we look at the Sabbath in the context of all of the Ten Commandments we see that it has a dominant place. More is said about it than any other commandment. It bridges the movement from "God" to "Humanity" in the commandments and includes both in its instructions. It is central to Jewish law.

Later in Exodus, the Sabbath is called a "sign" between God and the people. It is a visible sign of the covenant God made with Israel. In Leviticus God calls Sabbaths "my" Sabbaths:

.. "you shall keep my Sabbath...(Lev. 19:3, 30)

In addition, we see more than just the idea of "rest". Leviticus 23 talks about it being a time when the people come together to worship:

Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation; you shall do no work: it is a Sabbath to the Lord throughout your settlements. (Lev. 23:3)

And two chapters later we see that the land is included in this Sabbath idea:

...The land shall observe a Sabbath for the Lord...in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land... (Lev.25: 2,4)

Then after seven times seven years of Sabbaths, there was to be a year of Jubilee:

And you shall hallow the 50th year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land...It shall be a jubilee for you...(Lev.25: 10)

The Jubilee was a year to forgive debts, to return to your family's land, and free any slaves. It is not known if Israel ever took Jubilee seriously but many scholars believe that when Jesus says in Luke 4:19 that he was here "... to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor..." that what he was doing was proclaiming a Jubilee. Jesus took up this Old Testament concern about economic justice and liberty for the oppressed.

Whether Israel took Sabbaths for the land and Jubilee seriously or not, God did. In 2 Chronicles, we read how the years of Israel's exile in Babylon were determined:

...Until the land had made up for its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill 70 years. (2 Chron. 36:21)

God was serious about Sabbath and Jubilee. When you read Nehemiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel you see that these writers chided the people for neglecting the Sabbath. Isaiah sums up the essence of Sabbath in chapter 58:

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth...(Isa. 58:13,14)

The Sabbath was a day to honour God and not a day for humankind to pursue its own interests.

Practicing Jews take this seriously to this day. Sabbath keeping is still central to their faith and a day to practice Jewish values like holiness, worship, study, human freedom and dignity, peace, quiet and contentment, the bliss of family life, hospitality, spiritual satisfaction together with moderate and sober enjoyment of material things. Rabbi Solomon Goldman says:

In our age, it shuts out the noise and tumult, the strain and tension of modern living. It frees us from our enslavement to the mechanical and man-made civilisation in which we live, from our enslavement to time, from our enslavement to ourselves as taskmasters. (4)

The Jewish week builds up to Sabbath and then down again. The two verses from the Ten Commandments from the build-up - "Observe" from Deuteronomy and the descent after Sabbath with "Remember" from Exodus. Sabbath gives the whole week its rhythm.

Following the Sabbath has made the Jews an alternative community. When the Greeks and Romans first came across the Jews and their practice of

Sabbath keeping they scoffed at, derided the Jews, and called them lazy.

A quick look at the New Testament shows us that the Gospel writers saw Jesus as more important than the Sabbath. In a number of stories, Jesus runs into trouble with other Jews who had added all kinds of rules and restrictions to the Sabbath. The Gospel writers emphasise:

...For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. (Matt. 12:8)

And:

The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27,28)

Paul in writing to the Colossians warned them not to let anyone condemn them in matters of:

...festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Col. 2:16,17)

The writer of Hebrews talks about Sabbath in terms of God's final rest for God's people, a hope for the future:

...So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest...(Heb. 4:9-11)

I will not take the time here to explore New Testament passages that deal with the Jubilee themes of fallow land, forgiveness, freedom, justice, and jubilation but refer you to the books on Jubilee listed at the end of the article.

There have been many debates about how Christians are to understand the Sabbath teachings today. The following is a summary of four positions.

Four Christian Responses To "Sabbath"

1. The Sabbath must always refer to the seventh day of the week, Saturday. Observing the seventh day as a day of rest remains mandatory for Christians today. (The view of Seventh Day Adventist and other Sabbitarians.)

2. The concept of Sabbath has been transferred from Saturday to Sunday. Sunday is a "Christian Sabbath", a mandatory day of rest and worship.

3. "Sunday" does not equal "Sabbath". Sunday is the "Lord's day" and the appropriate day for Christian worship. Sabbath laws were fulfilled in Christ in such a way that Christians are not commanded to do anything special on one day out of seven, though they may voluntarily do so. (And there is great benefit in doing so.)

4. Ignore the Sabbath.

Many of us, if we are honest, fall into the last category. If I stop and think about it, I am in category three. Sabbath is not mandatory but there is great value in following Sabbath principles. I am attracted to the weekly rhythm that Sabbath has provided Jews throughout the ages. Tilden Edwards, a Christian writer says:

An understanding and living of Sabbath time can help support a sane and holy rhythm of life for us. (6)

One of the demons of our time is "business". We rush around all week with

work, recreation, and shopping and then try to fit Sunday activities into the end or beginning of our week. We find ourselves too busy for many things we say we hold dear - time with family and the church community, time for Bible study and reflection, time to enjoy God's creation in nature or in the city, and time for hospitality.

Edwards calls Christians to choose a different rhythm, one more in line with what God intended for us:

I hope that the practical Christian rhythm of Sabbath and ministry will be seen as a major contribution of the church to the whole society, one that offers an alternative to the growing societal rhythm between driven achievement and narrow escape, a deadly rhythm that threatens to bury ever more deeply the fullness and sanity of our human calling in God. (6)

There is to be a balance between "Sabbath rest" and "ministry". If we do not take Sabbath seriously, we will be in no shape for ministry.

There are a number of books that I would recommend on this topic. One is Marva Dawn's Keeping The Sabbath Wholly, Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, and Feasting. Another is Making Sunday Special, by Karen Mains. Both of these authors have found ways to prepare for the Lord's Day by doing some Sabbath keeping first and building Sabbath routines into their lifestyle.

Dawn has an outburst about language that I think is insightful:

"We are NOT "going to church"! We are going to a sanctuary to participate in an order of worship together with other people of God gathered in community, to be nourished by all that

we do there together so that we can go out into the world and be church."

Sabbath and Jubilee principles can help us "be church" in our world. As we look at the year ahead, one possibility for us is to go on Sabbatical for the next year, spend a year immersing ourselves in Sabbath and Jubilee principles. We could experience rest, a deepening of our relationship to God through corporate and individual worship, freedom from the rat race around us, and a chance to sort out what God is calling us to choose in life and what we are called to reject. We can immerse ourselves in Jubilee practices of forgiveness, justice, and jubilation and be the people God wants us to be.

Pope John Paul II has called Christians to observe the year 2000 as a Jubilee year. Other Christians call for us to get involved with the "Jubilee 2000" campaign, a worldwide movement to cancel the crushing international debt of impoverished countries. As we ready ourselves for a new century let these themes of justice and concerns for the poor guide us in putting first things first in our lives.

Books, Resources, and Organisations

For more information about Jubilee 2000 contact:

Grant Hill, TEAR Australia, PO Box 289, Hawthorn, Vic, 3122
ph: (03) 9819 1900 FAX: (03) 9818 3586 E-mail: grant@tear.org.au
website: <http://www.jubilee2000.org.au>

For family and church resources on celebrating Jubilee contact:

Parenting for Peace and Justice Network

E-mail: PPJN@aol.com website:
http://members.aol.com/ppjn

Blosser, Donald W. Jesus and The Jubilee, The Year of Jubilee and its Significance in the Gospel of Luke, Doctoral Dissertation, 1979.

Dawn, Marva J. Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).

Edwards, Tilden. Sabbath Time (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1992).

Goldman, Rabbi Solomon. A Guide To The Sabbath (London: Jewish Chronicle Publications, 1961).

Harris, Maria. Jubilee Time, Celebrating Women, Spirit, and the Advent of Age (New York: Bantam Books, 1995).

Harris, Maria. Proclaim Jubilee! A Spirituality For The Twenty-First Century (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. The Sabbath: Its Meaning For Modern Man (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951).

Kinsler, Gloria and Kinsler, Ross. The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life (New York: Orbis Books, 1999).

Mains, Karen Burton. Making Sunday Special (Nashville: Star Song, 1994).

Muller, Wayne. Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest (New York: Bantam Books, 1999).

Sine, Tom. Mustard Seed Versus McWorld (Baker Books, 1999).

Ringe, Sharon H. Jesus, Liberation, And The Biblical Jubilee (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

Trocme, Andre. Jesus And The Nonviolent Revolution (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1973).

Yoder, John H. The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Christi-Anarchy by David
Andrews Lion, 1999

The late Anglican Bishop Ralph Wicks used to say in the midst of his three-hour Good Friday services that "Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship". This is a hardy seed of an idea; an idea which has taken root in Dave Andrews' third book, *Christi-Anarchy*.

In reviewing this book, I feel like I'm introducing the man himself. Dave identifies strongly with his world view, to say the least. He takes his religion very personally - in fact he is, to put it simply and I hope politely, fixated with Christ. This is the essence of the theme of *Christi-Anarchy*: that Christianity as a religion has been distorted by its neglect of the actual figure and teachings of Christ.

This is hardly a new message, as there are many reformers who strive to reclaim the original and central personality of Christianity. But Dave is not trying to reform an ailing system. Like his political counterparts, the anarchists, he is trying to practise a new system within (or alongside) the shell of the old. Which explains, partly, Dave's capacity to irritate even the most sympathetic church bureaucrat.

My only worry (apart from being a church bureaucrat myself) is that in trying to evangelise the evangelicals, liberate the liberals and ferment the fundamentalists, Dave risks trying to 'out-Jesus' Jesus. There is a thin line between devout disciple and messianic mischief-maker. For what it's worth, I can vouch for Dave's presence on the right side of this line. More importantly, however, so can hundreds (if not

thousands) of people from the slums of India to the boarding houses of Brisbane - in other words, the experts on such matters in the up-side-down Kingdom of God.

Dave writes out of his current experience in inner-city Brisbane within "the Waiters Union", a network of creative community workers who have befriended local refugees, of all kinds, who have fled persecution, society, the church or the dominant consumer culture. He is an 'open-minded absolutist' who errs on the side of compassion in any situation, based on an informed imagination of where Christ is in today's world.

Dave's other genius is that he upholds deep-seated tolerance while adhering to a central claim of truth. Gleaned from years of service in the multi-religious and caste-based society of India, he has a firm grasp of pluralism and how its neglect has (at times inadvertently) turned many Christians, on the one hand, into racial supremacists, and on the other, other-worldly quietists.

Dave also knows what buttons religion pushes in the Australian psyche. In reading *Christi-Anarchy* it is clear he has argued with evangelicals and liberal Christians alike, challenging each with the unique counter characteristics of Jesus. The final synthesis of this argument is a discomfiting and compassionate faith which maintains open boundaries around a central (and hard-) core of belief.

The book includes sources from a smorgasbord of writers, activists and radical movements. More importantly, it provides the basis for practical action by local Christian groups, as well as those who have been stung, bitten or crushed by the institutional excesses of

the faith.

This is a truly offensive book - and the writer should be commended.

Mark Young

Balance Of Power and The Price Of Power, by James W. Huston, William Morrow and Company, New York, 1998 and 1999.

If you are into political thrillers with a pacifist theme thrown in here are two books to read. One of the blurbs on the back cover says "A heart-stopping story of military action combined with Washington politics and law." I would not go that far but as political thrillers go these books are good for a night or two of entertainment.

The first book starts with a terrorist action against an American ship close to Indonesia. (The author assumes his readers know nothing of that part of the world so puts in information that should be unnecessary for Australian readers.) The President refuses to respond immediately with military force against the terrorists. The Speaker of the House suspects that the President is really a pacifist and is not fit to remain in office so goes about trying to get the President impeached.

The interesting twist is that the President was raised in a Mennonite home and attended Goshen College, a Mennonite university. The Speaker tries to use this background against the President and argues that by definition a pacifist can not hold the office of U.S. President because part of the job is being the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

Right after I read these books; I got my Autumn 1999 copy of Anabaptism Today from Great Britain. It contained an article on Balthasar Hubmaier, a sixteenth century Anabaptist theologian and leader. He disagreed with other Swiss Anabaptist leaders on whether a Christian could be involved in government or not. That whole argument comes up again in these two novels.

These books would be fun to read with others and then discuss. Can a pacifist hold high office in a country with a powerful military? The books raised other questions for me that the author never gets to. Read the books and see what is stirred up for you.

Mark Hurst

Mustard Seed Versus McWorld, Reinventing Life and Faith for the Future, by Tom Sine, Baker Books, 1999.

As I was reading this book the "Battle in Seattle" was taking place and was headline news each day. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was trying to hold meetings in the USA city of Seattle, Washington. Protesters against "globalization" and other trends filled the streets trying to be heard. Reading Sine's book during all of this was very timely.

Sine calls globalization "McWorld". As a Christian futurologist, Sine paints a picture of the world we are headed into and says "We will need to find ways to reinvent how we live our lives and act out our faith, if we hope to effectively address the challenges of a new millenium. We will need to learn to think outside of the box." (17) He draws

on experiences he has had worldwide working with churches and Christian organisations to suggest areas we should be addressing.

The book is written mainly to a North American audience (what else is new?) but is peppered with examples from Australia and New Zealand. "Questions for Discussion and Action" at the end of each chapter make this a good study book for small groups.

This book is right up there with Rodney Clapp's A Peculiar People as a "must read" book. Questions about how the church lives and does mission in McWorld are important ones to ask and struggle with if we are to be faithful in the years ahead.

Mark Hurst

YES! Published by the Positives Futures Network, P.O. Box 10818, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110, USA.

I am always looking for journals or magazines that help live life on the creative edge. YES! calls itself "A Journal of Positive Futures" and it fills that need in me. It feeds me in ways that Sojourners and The Other Side used to but do not anymore. I think it has to do with the "positive" message and the hopeful articles it publishes.

Instead of just pointing out what is wrong in our world, this journal says, "Here is what you can do about it." YES! is not a "Christian" journal but will feed those Christians trying to live responsibly. Each issue focuses on a main theme. Ones covered recently include "Economics s If Life Matters", "Cities Of Exuberance", "Education For Life", and "Peace Makers". It has a

worldwide perspective and often has examples from Australia.

The Positive Futures Network describes itself as "an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt Organization that supports people's active engagement in creating a just, sustainable, and compassionate future." AMEN to that! Check them out at www.futurenet.org.

Mark Hurst

Drowning Towers and Down There In Darkness, by George Turner, 1987 and 1999.

I do not usually read science fiction but these two books caught my eye in the local library. What hooked me was the fact that Turner was an Australian writer, one I had not read before. Evidently, Turner is well known in sci-fi reading circles.

Drowning Towers takes place in Melbourne some fifty to sixty years in the future. The "Greenhouse effect" and global warming warnings were ignored. Weather patterns change, the oceans rise, the polar caps melt, unemployment is rife, the money system collapses, and Australian society is divided between "Swill" and "Sweet", the have-nots and the haves. Turner spins a tale with memorable characters trying to get by in this kind of world. I found it thought provoking.

One minor character is a Christian and this is said about him and other Christians:

"The Christians are a punctilious lot, always polite but conscious of sanctity - not plainly apart but not wholly of the common herd...They feel themselves to be a rapidly decreasing minority as the

contemplative oriental philosophies gain ground." (5)

After these comments, little is said about Christians. They seem not to have a role in dealing with the difficult issues of 21st century Australia.

Down There In Darkness deals with a time after the other book where genetic engineering has produced a new society. Some are exploring ways to get in touch with the "dreaming", tapping into all of the world's thinking.

Both books address 20th century issues that need to be dealt with now or, according to Turner, the future will be very different from the present - issues like the environment, technology, and overpopulation. An interview with NSW's Premier Bob Carr in the 6 January 2000 edition of the Sydney Morning Herald reinforces these thoughts. In an article entitled "We're dancing on our graves", Carr warned about ignoring issues like "overcrowding, global warming and environmental degradation." Mr. Carr's "wake-up call to people cruising into the new century" is similar to Turner's and one that Christians serious about stewardship of God's creation need to heed.

Mark Hurst

Book Notes

A brief reminder of the most recent book by Dale Aukerman **Reckoning with Apocalypse: Terminal Politics and Christian Hope** Crossroad, 1993.

Stanley Hauerwas in the Foreword commends this book in the following terms:

Aukerman frees apocalyptic from those who use selected passages of the bible to forecast this or that happening as well as those who ignore or demythologise apocalyptic as not crucial for Christian existence.

With a talent that can only be described as poetic, Aukerman reclaims apocalyptic as not just one other aspect of the gospel, but as at the very heart of the good news of God's call to Israel and the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. Accordingly he helps us to see that our lives are embedded in forces and powers that can be understood and resisted only to the extent that as Christians we have been made citizens of a Kingdom of the end times. (ix)

I don't know whether or not it is still in print but I would recommend that you try and lay your hands on a copy.

I want to draw your attention to a couple of books which I hope to carry reviews of in the next issue.

Prayers Plainly Spoken by Stanley Hauerwas InterVarsity Press 1999.

A rare event this, a collection of prayers by one of the most significant theologians in the English speaking world. There is no false piety but a real directness and theological substance embodied in these prayers. All this and an Introduction with some pungent comments on the nature of prayer.

Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models by Robert Banks Eerdmans, 1999

A substantial and challenging reconsideration of theological education and its relationship to the mission of the church. There is a lifetime of experience embodied in the analysis and suggestions for the future of theological education.

Resources

Recent articles by Dale Aukerman

- “Reckoning with Apocalypse: Reflections on the Millennium 3rd in a series” **Christian Century** December 8, 1999 pp.1200-1201.

In this viewpoint length article, Aukerman summarises his theological viewpoint in the following terms:

Giving room to God’s acting is far from passive. Disciples seek to embody and proclaim the incursion of God’s rule and therefore resist, rather than stand with structures set against that rule. In their lives and community, as a messianic city on the hilltop, they strive to attest and embody God’s rule for the world as a whole.

Disciples work toward the individual and collective turning from death toward life. They aim for nonhierarchical leadership, for societal dynamics centered in servanthood (not powerseeking), for organising political and economic power into units small enough to depend mainly on face-to-face interaction. They use no weapons, no

violence to counter violence, but rather rely on acts of loving resistance and noncooperation. Disciples intercede and enter into prayer combat against the powers of destruction, and stand with those who suffer. Such guidelines are not utopian. They are simply Christian and evangelical. (p.2001)

- “The Biblical and Theological Basis of Reconciliation” **Brethren Life and Thought** Vol XLI, Spring and Summer 1996, pp.10-18

A brief and well focussed discussion of the biblical material on this issue. In closing the discussion Aukerman observes:

A primary imperative from Jesus is that disciples of his are willing and ready to take whatever initiatives seem needed to bring restoration of right relationships between people, especially within the community of those who look to him as Lord. Every Christian community would benefit from calling some members with special gifts for taking such initiatives in the ministry of reconciliation. (p.17)

- “Anabaptist Peacemaking for a New Century” **Brethren Life and Thought** Vol XXXIX, Spring and Summer 1994, pp.203-209 A reflection on Philippians 2:1-11 as providing the determinative basis for Christian peace witness in the coming century.

Anabaptist pacemaking for the next century should be more definitely shaped by the downward movement of Jesus surveyed in the hymn and understood in terms of coming under repression by those who dominate. It

should be much more a peacemaking through accompaniment of the victimised of standing with, entering into solidarity with them. (p.205)

Reflections on the theological legacy of John Howard Yoder

The Conrad Grebel Review, Special Issue: John Howard Yoder
Volume 16 No.2, Spring 1998

Subscriptions: Conrad Grebel college,
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 5G6

The issue contains a variety of articles on Yoder's theological legacy. Articles that look likely to be of particular interest include:

"Mennonites, Christ and Culture: The Yoder Legacy" by James Refner
"He came preaching Peace: The Ecumenical Peace witness of John H. Yoder" by Mark Thiessen Nation
"John Howard Yoder and the Ecumenical Church" by William Klassen.

New Publications

Making Peace with Conflict: Practical Skills for Conflict Transformation edited by Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and Lawrence Ressler
Herald Press, 1999

A practical guide to understanding and transforming conflict based on biblical and Anabaptist principles. Over 20 noted authors, shaped by many experiences and cultures tell of lessons taught by walking conflict's holy ground.

Study questions continue the conversation begun in each of the 17 chapters.

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Duplicate books

I have just finished tidying up my study and have found that I have accumulated duplicates of a number of books that may be of interest to readers of this newsletter.

- Robert Banks **All the Business of Life** Albatross, 1987
- Robert and Julia Banks **The Home Church** Albatross, 1986
- Stanley Hauerwas **After Christendom?** Lancer , 1991
- Stanley Hauerwas **A Community of Character** Notre Dame Press, 1981
- Roland H Bainton **Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace** Abingdon Press, 1960

I would be happy to supply these books to anyone who is interested for the cost of postage plus a donation to AAANZ. Please e-mail or phone me, 02 6288 9191 with enquires, offers or expressions of interest.

Doug Hynd

The Anabaptist Association of Australian and New Zealand

Background to the Association

The initiative for the establishment of the Association came out of a meeting in Tasmania in May 1995 of Christians from a variety of denominational backgrounds who had been influenced in a variety of ways by the anabaptist tradition. To provide a means of building on the contacts established at the meeting the Anabaptist Network of Australia and New Zealand was formed which became the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand following its incorporation in 1998.

Purposes of the Association

The purposes of the Association are:

1. to nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
2. to network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
3. to provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
4. to provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.

5. to convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.
6. to extend the awareness of Anabaptism in Australia and New Zealand assisting individuals, churches and groups discover and express their links with the Anabaptist tradition.
7. to provide an opportunity for affiliation for churches and groups who wish to be known in Australia and New Zealand as Anabaptists.

What is Anabaptism?

Anabaptism is a radical Christian renewal movement that emerged in Europe during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Whilst Anabaptism was a grass roots movement with diverse expressions in its early development, its enduring legacy usually has included the following:

- baptism upon profession of faith
- a view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
- a commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
- separation of church and state worshipping congregations which create authentic community and reach out through vision and service