

Sea of Faith

Exploring Values, Spirituality and Meaning

www.sof.org.nz

A recovered old Newsletter

SEA OF FAITH NETWORK (NZ)

Newsletter No 3. May 1993

This letter comes to all who are currently known to have an interest in the establishment of a Sea of Faith Network in New Zealand. The second letter went only to those who had responded to the first letter by returning the questionnaire. It has now been found that some on the original list were under the impression they had returned it or else had lost it. This is one more opportunity to register your interest. But to receive further issues of the Newsletter those who have not returned the questionnaire will need to indicate to the Acting Secretary their continued interest. To those receiving this, even though it was their wish not pursue the matter further we apologise for this intrusion.

Sea of Faith (NZ) Statistics

A total of 193 (marriage partners usually only counted once) have expressed an interest at some stage in the Sea of Faith Network. 141 have returned the questionnaire. 65 have already paid a subscription of \$10, and these are still coming in.

SOFN Discussion Groups

Local discussion groups have been, or are being set up in the following locations, the name of the current convener and contact address given in brackets.

NORTH SHORE- Clyde McLaren, 486-3043, 35 Craig Rd, Milford.
AUCKLAND - Murray Jenkin, 524-8518, 10 Bell Rd., Remuera
HAMILTON - John Denny, 856-3321, 110 Knighton Rd., Hamilton
ROTORUA - Cornelia Leenman, 347-8643, 1 Grandview Rd., Rotorua

NAPIER - Alan Goss, 835-9594, 4 McDonald St., Napier
PALMERSTON NORTH - ?
HUTT VALLEY - Brian King, 567-7246, 49 Tilbury St. Lower Hutt.
WELLINGTON - EPHESUS GROUP - Ian Harris, 286-3627, 129 Grafton Rd., Roseneath
CHRISTCHURCH- Clive Pearson, 348-6418, 9 Puriri St, Riccarton
DUNEDIN - Mae Cairns, 4770-234, 411 Moray Place, Dunedin.

If you are not already in one of these groups and wish to join, please contact the convener. The fact that your name has not been forwarded hitherto is because your name came in later or you were geographically some distance away from the meeting place.

Steering Committee

A small self-appointed steering committee is now operating to guide the next steps; it consists of Ian Crabtree, Lloyd Geering, Ian Harris and David Simmers. Its main task has been to plan the first national conference (see below). Steps will be taken at this conference to set the SOFN on an official basis with elected officers and steering committee.

National SOFN Conference

This will take place at Bryant Hall, University of Waikato, Hamilton, from the evening of Friday September 3 until the afternoon of Sunday September 5. This venue has been chosen because the greater number of SOFN members are in the North, and because of the kind offer of John Denny, Warden of Bryant Hall, to make the Hall available and to make all the local arrangements.

John and his wife Gillian participated in the UK Sea of Faith Network Conference at Leicester in July, 1992.

Bryant Hall not only has full conference facilities available but offers accommodation of single room plus all meals for \$35 a day, for an upper limit of 100.

The conference programme will consist of 2 or 3 lectures, a variety of discussion groups and workshops and a business session for the official establishment of the SOFN. Any further suggestions for the programme, from groups or members, will be welcomed.

If you are at all able to come, please note the dates in your diary now. Fuller information and registration details will be posted with Newsletter No. 4 in June. Although this Conference will be in the North it is hoped that at least some from the more southern groups will be able to attend. A Conference discount is available on all Air New Zealand Flights; Thrifty and Super Thrifty discounts are available (if you book in time) on Flight NZ 648 arriving at Hamilton on Friday September 3 at 2.50pm, and leaving Hamilton on Flight NZ 649 at 3.25 pm on Sunday 5 September.

Honest to God -30 Years Later.

It was in March 1963 that John Robinson published the little book, Honest to God, which set the Christian world alight with lively religious debate. The BBC has just marked the event by a series of five radio talks entitled "Thirty Years of Honesty". The secretary now holds a tape of each of these and can make any of them available for use in group discussion. (Send a blank tape in an addressed envelope). NZ On Air have been informed of them but it is not clear if BBC will make them available. They are by:

(1) Eric James, a lifelong friend, and subsequent biographer of John Robinson, recounts the story of John and the book in "The Flowering of Honesty".

(2) Ruth Robinson, John's widow -speaks on "Life was Never the Same". She is now a member of the UK Sea of Faith Network. Her talk is one of the best and in places is quite moving. This is not because of personal references to John but because of the way she speaks of her own spiritual pilgrimage. One suspects that from the beginning her own feminine intuition led her to be more radical even than John.

(3) Ruth Etchells, in the "The Awful Truth", tells of the difficulties she had in coming to terms with Honest to God.

(4) John Bowden, now Editor of the SCM Press which originally published Honest to God and a very able scholar in his own right here gives an excellent assessment of what was at stake. He clearly feels that this was an opportunity which the churches failed to grasp. Hence he calls it "A Loss of Nerve". It was not because Robinson was too radical but rather not radical enough that the book did not lead to more fruitful results.

(5) Alan Race, in "Truth is Many-eyed", discusses the relationship of Christianity with other religions in today's multi-faith society.

Next issue - Comment on the book Jesus by A.N.Wilson.

If this newsletter had a tick overleaf it indicated your subscription had been received. If it did not and you still wish to

receive the Newsletter please send
TEN DOLLARS to:
The Acting Secretary,
Sea of Faith Network (NZ),
5B Herbert Gardens,
186 The Terrace,
WELLINGTON

