

DRAWING ASIDE

the

VEILS



THE OMEGA ORDER
in
NEW ZEALAND



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Recollections from New Zealanders
who
Have Responded to the
Unfolding of the OMEGA VISION

SISTER LEONIE O'NEILL, R.S.M

EDITOR.



DRAWING ASIDE THE VEILS.

THE OMEGA ORDER IN NEW ZEALAND.

*Recollections from New Zealanders who have
responded to the
Unfolding of the Omega Vision.*

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INTRODUCTION

*'take the barriers down
And draw aside the veils.'*

When Peter Spink was in Christchurch in 1996 he asked me to approach friends of Omega in New Zealand inviting them to put on paper something of their spiritual journeys and the influence of Omega in their lives. For those reading this who know little or nothing about the Omega Order, I have included material from the books of Peter Spink, OMEGA NEWS U.K., OMEGA NEWS N.Z., other newsletters, reports and programmes of festivals held throughout New Zealand. I have also touched briefly on the story of the beginnings of Omega. This information may put the stories in a unified context.

This is not an historical account of the Omega Order, nor of the development of the Order in New Zealand. It is an attempt to collate reflections of some people who have been motivated by the Omega Vision because of visits to New Zealand by Peter Spink and other members of the Omega Order, and in whom the vision is still unfolding.

As I have 'met' Omega in my own spiritual journey comparatively recently I had to depend upon others for contacting names and addresses. This booklet, therefore, contains a selection of responses from those I was able to contact. Some felt their journeys had been too painful or too personal to express in words. Some thought it was too soon to put a 'story of Omega in New Zealand' together for publication. The omission of responses from people who have been supportive of Omega over the years, and who contributed greatly to the '*drawing aside of the veils*' to reveal the Omega Vision in New Zealand since 1983 is not a deliberate omission. At some time in the future an historical account may be written. I hope so.

I am grateful to those who responded to my invitation, and to those who, although they preferred not to contribute at this time, helped me form a clearer picture, or pointed me in another direction. All the letters and stories moved me deeply. The ONE EARTH GATHERING passed me by at a time when I was struggling with personal conflicts. If a friend had drawn my attention to Peter's visit and the Omega Vision then, my spiritual journey at that period of my life could have been

less traumatic. Who knows? Perhaps I wasn't ready. As a Sister of Mercy now for almost fifty years, I have felt humble reading about the spiritual searchings and dedicated lives of so many men and women throughout New Zealand.

The Omega Vision in New Zealand is alive and well.

I hope this booklet will put a stamp upon the work begun by Peter Spink in 1983 when he answered a call to come to the ONE EARTH GATHERING and journey with sixteen other speakers throughout our country opening hearts to a deeper awareness within themselves, and graciously affirming those already following their vision.

I hope, too, that many reading the reflections collated here will be inspired to find within themselves that which is already longing to come to birth, the God within.

Sister Leonie O'Neill, RSM,
January, 2000.

A Place of Prayer



THE OMEGA VISION

A small New Zealand stone is to find a place in the new building now under construction at Kent House, the home of the Omega Order in the U.K. It will link Kent House to that series of mountain ranges that run right through the North and South Islands -- the very backbone of New Zealand. It is a small piece of greywacke taken from the bed of the Mangatoetoenui Stream high up on the central desert plateau east of Mount Ruapehu. It was collected on 5th December, 1983, the day of Peter Spink's departure from New Zealand for the U.K. and is a symbol of the link now established between us." (OMEGA INFO N.Z. Jan. 1984.)

This notice was in the first OMEGA NEWS N.Z. after the ONE EARTH GATHERING. In the July issue of the same journal there is reference to the New Zealanders who had visited Kent House. *"John and Michael von Dadelszen wrote from Kent House telling of their one week's stay and the occasion of the dedication of the chapel. They described a simple and moving ceremony at which the Bishop of Tonbridge dedicated the chapel to Pope John XXIII. The stone from the cold-clear North Island mountain stream was received for incorporation into the fabric of the chapel, a simple symbol of our unity and love with the work and witness of Kent House. (OMEGA INFO N.Z. July, 1984.)*

During the past seventeen years the spiritual journeys of many New Zealanders have been along pathways they may never have trod if Peter Spink had not accepted that invitation to speak at the ONE EARTH GATHERING of 1983. These journeys are still continuing in the lives of men and women personally dedicated to the fostering of a new consciousness in the arts, in religion, in science and in medicine all over the world.

Peter Spink is a man with a vision. He founded an Order to serve the needs of contemporary society -- an ecumenical contemplative Order, rooted in historic Christianity.

His vision, called the Omega Vision, is a 'many-splendoured thing' enfolding all history. This vision struck a chord in the hearts of New Zealanders who were already 'hearing at a deeper level.'

The *OMEGA ORDER* which takes its title and inspiration from the words of Christ: "*I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last,*" is a company of men and women from all walks of life who have committed themselves in terms of a personal dedication to foster the new consciousness in religion, science, medicine and the arts.

In RELIGION this is seen as a change from devotionalism to interior awareness evidenced by the widespread desire for training in the practice of meditation. The Order is concerned for spiritual renewal. It has no doctrines of its own and exists to serve the church. It values its close links with both traditional religious communities and the newer 'open' centres.

In SCIENCE there is a new realisation of a connection at a profound level between creative human consciousness and the nature of material reality.

In MEDICINE the search is made for a holistic approach which views people functioning as a whole, and takes into account the physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions of sickness and health.

In the ARTS this new consciousness recognises that to be intuitively in touch with the universe is the source of creative energy.

The Order was founded in 1980 and its present headquarters is Winford Manor, Winford, near Bristol. Here are companions and friends who live within the framework of a contemplative lifestyle. At the centre of this lifestyle is the practice of contemplative meditation and prayer, '*the awakening of the heart to perceive reality or the truth as it is in Jesus.*' This awakening involves self-awareness, an accurate perception of others, insight into society and an understanding of the great movements of history which shape human destiny.

In his books: *THE END OF AN AGE*, and *A CHRISTIAN IN THE NEW AGE*, Peter Spink graphically describes his own journey from being a young missionary in India through many '*awakenings*' to his ordination as an Anglican priest, and a visit to Iona where, he says: "*In a moment of truth and confrontation I knew that I did NOT know and a new process of learning had to begin -- a spiritual search for the 'truth as it is in Jesus.'*"

Peter Spink's latest book, *BEYOND BELIEF*, puts his own journey and the

spelling out of his vision in perspective.

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PETER SPINK.

Peter worked as a missionary in the villages of Northern India for five years. Returning to England he was ordained priest in the Anglican church. His first parish was a new housing estate in the Midlands. Then he became chaplain to various British Embassies in Bonn, Vienna, Prague and Budapest. For nine years he worked on the staff of Coventry Cathedral. While in that pastoral situation he became aware of a change taking place in the consciousness of men and women, not only in his own parishioners but in the wider church of the world. This new consciousness was a change from devotionism to 'the God within,' rather than 'the God without.'

Two men in particular had a great impact upon his thinking at that period. One was Pope John XXIII who 'threw open the doors' not only of the Catholic church, but of the whole world. The charismatic experience which followed an ecumenical movement broke down conventional Christian behaviour patterns and became significant in being a transition for many from religious conventionalism to the opening of the heart into the path that is perceived as 'experiential wisdom.'

The other was Teilhard de Chardin about whom Peter Spink was asked to speak at a gathering in Iona, SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN OUR DAY. Teilhard de Chardin was a Jesuit priest who was sent to China by his church because his writings were suspect. There in the wilderness he continued to write about '*the Christ who fills all things ... who is part of the whole evolutionary process.*' Teilhard de Chardin died in 1955 without seeing his books published.

Peter Spink had been asked by his bishop to represent him at the conference on Iona and say something about this priest. Until then this Jesuit, mystic, scientist and palaeontologist had been totally unknown to Peter. While reading Chardin's writings, however, and taking part in the conference, Peter's whole conception of the cosmic Christ changed. He spoke with one of the participants who suggested to him that he was 'acting a part.' Peter began to follow a disciplined approach to meditation and his spiritual pilgrimage underwent a transformation.

From 1977 to 1980 Peter Spink was warden of the Burrswood Home of Healing founded by Dorothy Kerin. Experiences there were similar to those he had had in India and Iona where healings took place without medical intervention. Peter quotes from Leslie Weatherhead: '*I am sure that there are many energies in the*

Universe as yet untapped which God means us to use to make wounded spirits whole. I want to help release them without descending to magic or superstition.'
(WOUNDED SPIRITS, by Leslie Weatherhead.)

KENT HOUSE.

This emerged from an idea of an 'open centre' set up by Peter Spink while he was at Coventry Cathedral. Many people, especially young people, were searching for a place where they could find themselves spiritually without necessarily belonging to an ecclesiastical structure. A house was found called Hill House and in the basement or crypt a room for prayer and meditation was established. Those living in the house carried on with their usual employment but met regularly for prayer. Sister Joyce from her Convent in Belper was a frequent visitor, as was James Fahey who at the time was finishing his training as a teacher and was able to live out of college.

This 'open centre' was a place where those people for whom it was right were able to live and pray together, establishing a rather loosely-defined community. Other centres like this were being set up in other places, each with its own parameters and individual focus.

When Peter Spink, after much discernment, agreed to go as warden to Burrswood, he looked for a place that could be set up as a house of prayer and of spiritual studies. At this stage Peter had no memoranda of how the house should be set up, nor where such a house could be found.

One memorable day, two people from Burrswood who were enthusiastic about Peter's idea, out on a casual walk, saw a prospective property. When Peter saw it he knew it was the house he wanted.

Offers of money as loans and gifts began to arrive.

James Fahey had finished his training and began work restoring the house. He camped at the house although at this stage neither water nor power had been connected. James was joined by other helpers and KENT HOUSE began to take shape.

Courses for spiritual studies had already been advertised. People came to help or listen or stay. As Peter said: 'The right people came always at the right time.' Molly Henry had been to Iona and she, too, came to live and contribute. Molly's friends begged her to think again, for, they told her: 'You will never be the same again!'

Peter had met Elisabeth Calice in Vienna when he was at the Embassy. Elisabeth settled her affairs in Vienna, after coming for a while to 'see if she liked it!' Both Elisabeth and Molly stayed, and contributed; Molly with her profound Biblical knowledge, and Elisabeth with her musical giftedness.

The aims of the house became these:

1. To teach techniques of prayer and meditation as taught by the Christian mystics and other authorities on religious life;
2. to study the whole concept of healing in relation to the church's ministry, to religion in general, to science and to medicine;
3. to provide a place where people felt free to follow their own paths;
4. to provide a place where research might be carried out concerning religious belief in the development of the 'true self,' and true spiritual awareness;
5. to provide a centre for individual and group retreats.

From the outset Peter's attitude was always to stand back and let things unfold in their own time. The chapel at Kent House was dedicated to Michael the archangel. Michael is seen as the "Lightbearer" for the second coming of Christ. Michael-consciousness precedes Christ-consciousness. Michael blazes the trail. The Michael-consciousness, as Peter said, 'is recognised in its purity when there is a connection with a religious framework. It needs to have a moral and ethical contract.'

*From the point of light within the mind of God,
Let light stream forth into the minds of men;
Let light descend on earth.*

*From the point of love within the heart of God,
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men;
May Christ return to earth.*

The Michael-consciousness is a means of reconciling us to our own humanity. Many people today are searching for the 'true self,' and in the discovery of the 'self' the link between the human and the Divine is realised.

THE OMEGA ORDER.

The people who became the foundation group of the Omega Order were those resident at Kent House, which became the Omega Trust Headquarters. The work of the Order was co-ordinated and planned by this group with the inspiration of Peter Spink. Activities included residential training courses, conferences and retreats both at Kent House itself, and reaching out to other centres throughout the country.

The Omega Order took its title from the dynamic that manifested in and proceeded from Jesus Christ -- 'the alpha and the omega.' It took its inspiration from the writings of F.C. Happold and Teilhard de Chardin among others.

Happold states: *"In this leap epoch of human evolution in which consciousness is passing on to a new level of awareness and insight the only acceptable religion is likely to be a mystical one, mysticism in the sense of experiential or experiential wisdom."*

Teilhard de Chardin, in his book, CHRISTIANITY AND EVOLUTION, says: *"After what will soon be two thousand years Christ must be born again. Christ can not reappear tangibly among us but he can reveal to our minds a new and triumphant aspect of his former countenance. This is the new Christ-consciousness."*

The Omega Order existed to extend the vision motivated by these writers and was founded in the confidence that to those who would follow in the path of experiential wisdom, the contemplative way, this triumphant aspect of Christ's countenance was already being revealed and was leading to the unfolding of the very being of the Universe.

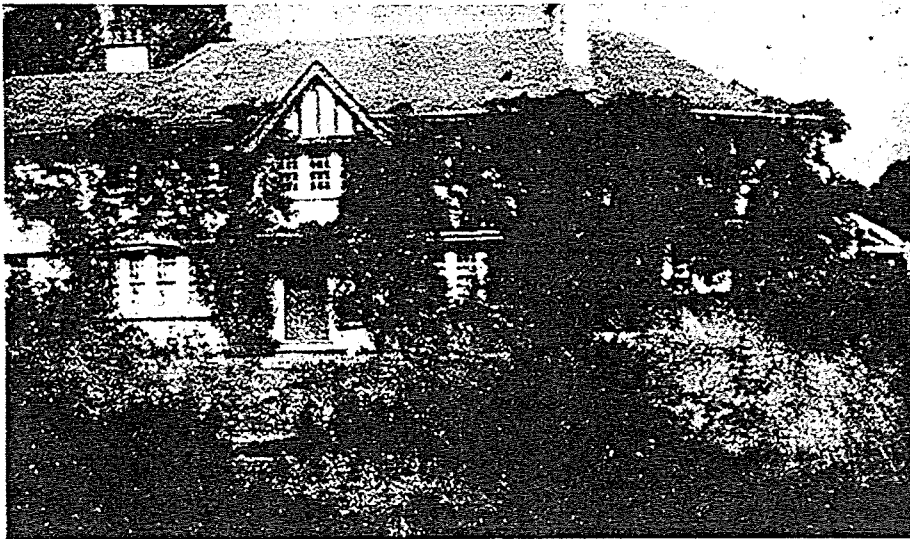
The symbol or insignia for the members of the Order was based on a design in a stained glass window in a church at Lew Trenchard where Peter went to pray. As Peter described it: *"It was there, waiting for us. It came at me from the window. I knew that that was it!"*

The Omega Order established its constitutions and aims. These were revealed to Peter as he prayed. These constitutions and other 'trappings' were not to be set in concrete. Peter knew the vision would unfold as it went along. Those who became companions in the Order would know what was right as they travelled the path together.

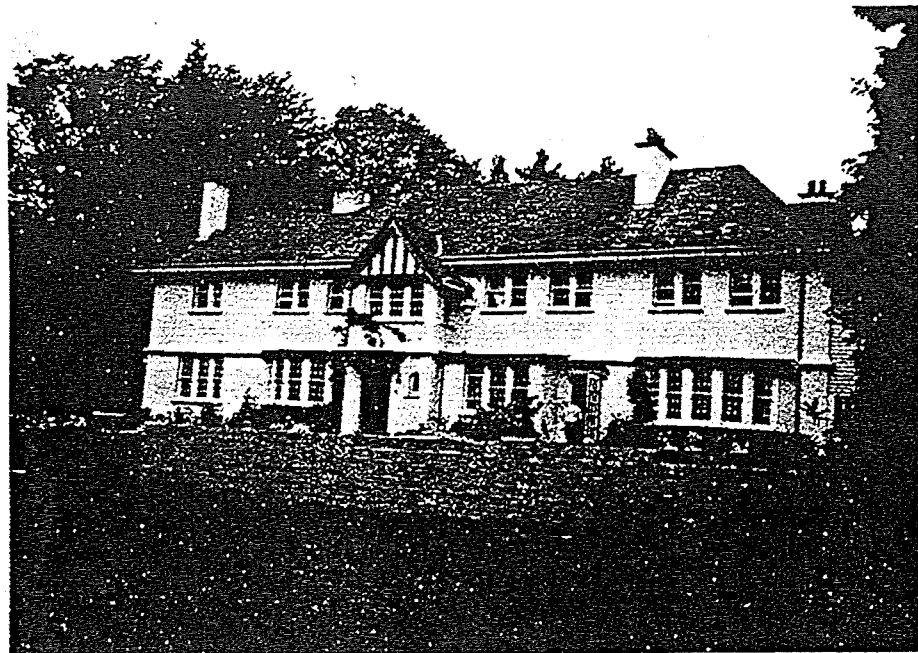
The aims of the Omega Order are these:

1. To follow those spiritual disciplines which awaken the heart to the truth as it is in Jesus.
2. To recognise Christ under all forms to the exclusion of none.
3. To encourage the Christ-consciousness wherever it is found.
4. To work for co-operation with the evolving life of the planet.

Although the starting point of the Order is the Christian religion it has no doctrines of its own but through prayer and meditation seeks to penetrate the essence of all doctrines.



Kent House as we found it!



Kent House restored to its glories!

WINFORD MANOR.

Kent House, in Tunbridge Wells, was a derelict desolate building ready for demolition when the group moved in. Within a few years it had become a functional house restored and enlarged, and a busy teaching centre. From the beginning a daily rhythm of meditation was established and the Omega Vision emerged.

This Omega Vision, printed at the end of this book, was revealed to Peter Spink, as were the aims of the Order, as he prayed in the church at Lew Trenchard. The Vision defines the purpose and aspirations of the Order. More than that it is a guide for 'the people of the Way,' those who long to know 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

About six years after Kent House had been established, however, it was realised the work of the Order had outgrown the physical space. A larger building with more accommodation facilities and retreat and teaching potential was needed. In OMEGA NEWS U.K. James Fahey tells of the search.

"We viewed a castle in Worcester, a fort in Gloucester, a convent in the Midlands. Then a phone call told us of a Manor near Bristol. It was a derelict building divided informally into flats and in need of refurbishment."

Energy, planning and sheer hard work had been put into Kent House to convert it into livable accommodation. That work began again.

Winford Manor in the village of Winford, near Bristol, was occupied in 1986. The advance party saw *'an impressive Georgian building with two Victorian wings, a range of stables, coach houses and ancillary buildings, standing in five acres of mature trees and lawns.'*

Refurbishing began after planning approval had been given and the new headquarters of the Omega Order began its struggle to 'come to birth.'

Among the advance party from Kent House to Winford Manor were Doreen Simpson and Jo Howard of New Zealand. In the OMEGA NEWS N.Z. September, 1986, Jo writes: "Winford Manor was probably built in the mid- to late 18th century and stands in 5-6 acres of rural Somerset countryside. The house is almost twice the size of Kent House and will allow a lot more room for the community to have their own space as well as room for guests. A small house in the village has been bought for the elderly ladies of the community to live in while the Manor undergoes its renovation. Plumbing, heating and wiring all need

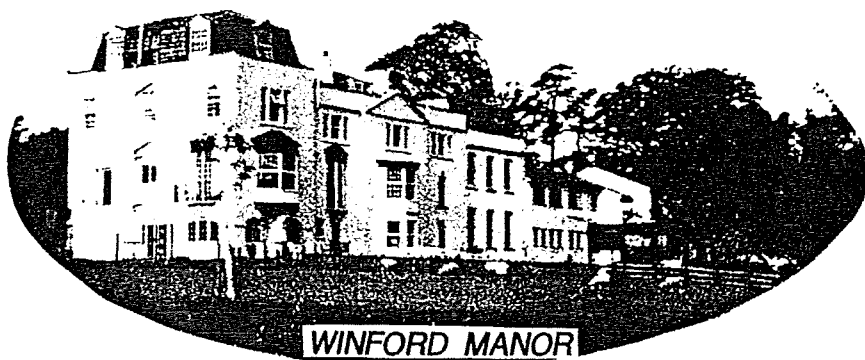
attention.

Two other New Zealanders, Lyn and Kevin Gallagher, visited Winford Manor in October, 1986, with the view of shifting with their family of four to the Manor in the following year. Lyn wrote: *"I had the privilege of sleeping in the first newly renovated room. The ceiling had partially collapsed under someone's weight while the upstairs bathroom floor was being replaced. The daily rhythm continued with the Offices and meditation. A continual stream of people visited the Manor fitting into the rhythm where they felt able."*

Kevin Gallagher also wrote for the OMEGA NEWS, N.Z., *"Renovation work continues at a steady rate with the numbers of rooms for guests just keeping up with the numbers of guests wanting to stay. The community always has 'one foot in the water' with regard to the financing of this mammoth project."*

In the Autumn issue of OMEGA NEWS U.K., there was a different slant to the account of the arrivals at the Manor. Winifred Hickee, wife of the Vicar of Winford, wrote of the rumours that circulated round the village when Peter Spink and the Omega companions moved in. She wrote: *"It was with great surprise that we learned that the Manor had been sold to a 'strange group of people.' The Moonies, we thought! After meeting Peter, however, we were delighted with the idea of a Christian community moving into our midst. Not long after we had a conducted tour of the Manor and I was distressed at the state of the house. I was worried lest, through our prayers, we might have been in any way instrumental in helping them to get it! Little did I know of the community's capacity for hard work and their ability to make things happen."*

Since those days Winford Manor has continued to grow and develop. Peter Spink's vision continues to unfold. James Fahey's experience and interpersonal skills and sheer hard slog, coupled with the vision, determination, prayerfulness and industry of other companions and workers have built up a centre where the Omega Vision continues to be unfolded to so many.



WINFORD MANOR

THE COMPANIONS and THE PROGRAMME

Over the years some 'trappings' as Peter would call them, have altered. In the late 80's and early 90's men and women became Companions. These people had contributed to life at the Manor and had followed the Omega Vision in their daily lives. They did not have to live at the Manor, but would visit there from time to time. In their own countries, however, they lived out the Omega way of life.

The Companions today, however, do live at Winford Manor on a full time basis. They are a dedicated band of men and women who inspire and help so many people. Theirs is a community lifestyle incorporating a daily balanced rhythm of meditation, prayer, physical activity and service to guests. This community life is centred in the consciousness of the unchanging Divine presence and within a framework of regular times for daily Offices and corporate silence times. Each Companion has his or her own special contribution to make to life at the Manor. Together they form a nucleus from which the spirit of love, hospitality and graciousness flows.

The Manor offers a programme of events and courses geared to the awakening of the intuitive and imaginative faculties. Various media and techniques are used to evoke a response from the whole person. Art, music, movement, literature and the active use of silence occupy an important place in the programme. Guests may come to day sessions, or stay for weekends, or remain for a period of time according to their needs. The staff run sessions, but guest speakers and course directors are invited too. Every season and every year has its own format.

The OMEGA VISION, then, is a truly holistic vision seeing all the kingdoms of creation as interrelated parts of a universal pattern. The vision expands to encompass past, present and future and the universe itself.

*"Here is the secret of the vision's flowering
Its full fruition and its harvest home
When, from earth's every hidden part
Shall sound those sacred words, and every atom
Of this rolling sphere surrender to the Light.
Like shall be like, and breaking all fast bonds*

*Each child of Light shall raise its head as one
And in a mighty unison return into the Sun.*

*Here is the promised clear unveiling
Where past and future now fill out the whole,
For He who is Himself the Sun's true splendour
With Light and Love and Power fills all in all.*

(OMEGA VISION)

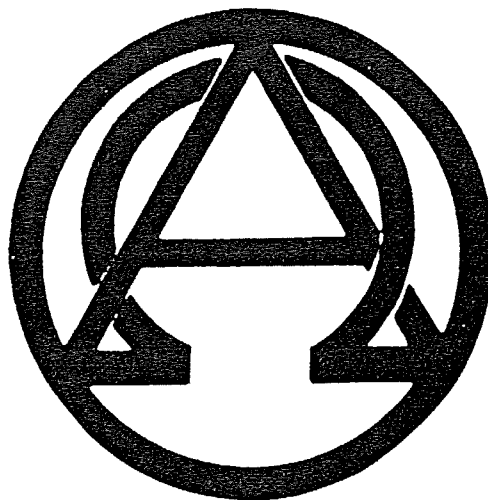
The Vision was there before time began. It cannot be communicated by words or thoughts, by lectures or by reading. It is the truth which 'cannot be hidden from those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.'

As in the U.K. and in Findhorn, Iona, and other 'open' centres throughout the world, so in New Zealand in 1983 the ONE EARTH GATHERING demonstrated a new consciousness was already operating in many apparently unrelated disciplines. Individuals and small groups in urban and rural areas throughout the country were seeking to understand this creative and powerful dynamic.

"At the heart of all true spiritual awakening is a powerful dynamic -- the release of a new creative energy."

The seed was already germinating.

The Vision was ready to flower.





MOLLY HENRY



IRIS LAMBERT.

1983 One earth gathering FESTIVAL OF AWARENESS

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CONTEMPLATION AND CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW ECUMENISM

"Many Christians today are becoming aware of a great change taking place in religious consciousness. A growing number of people are searching for 'experimental wisdom' - a transformation of the personality through a deeper and more mystic unity with God. Some believe that the answer lies in the Eastern tradition or in popular psychology, while others feel that the Church can play a major role."

"Within the Church there is a movement from a state of devotionism to interior awareness; this is evidenced by a widespread desire for training in techniques of contemplative meditation and for renewed contact with the great Christian mystics. We can learn much from the Christian tradition of contemplative spirituality."

CANON PETER SPINK is a Canon of Coventry Cathedral in England, and is the founder of the Omega Order, a modern religious community concerned with meditation, mysticism and healing. He is author of "Spiritual Man in a New Age", "The Path of the Mystic", and "The End of an Age", as well as related courses on cassette tape.



Canon Spink . . . "gulf between consciousness of the New Age and traditional christianity."

ONE EARTH GATHERING
1983
FESTIVAL OF AWARENESS

Peter Spink was part of a 16-member team holding 16 workshops at each centre during the day, and a general gathering in the evenings throughout New Zealand in October/November 1983. The team represented a wide range of speakers with diverse experience and expertise.

The Festival had been greeted with enthusiasm by individuals and small groups in whom the spirit of prayer and contemplation was already alive.

Peter's visit with his message of *'the new awareness penetrating so many aspects and areas of life ... the Third Way ...'* was welcomed by many hungry for a way of understanding and relating to the age in which they lived with a true spiritual understanding.

A brochure dated Friday, 18th November, 1983 in Christchurch, advertised Canon Peter Spink as follows:

CONTEMPLATION & CHRISTIANITY ... a workshop offered by the founder of a modern religious order within the traditions of spirituality exemplified in the lives of such spiritual leaders as St Benedict and St Francis of Assisi.

Following the workshop Jacqueline Steincamp in the Christchurch PRESS under the heading: *ADVOCATE FOR ORDER FREE OF DOGMA*, reported Canon Peter Spink in these words:

"They (Christians) want to turn into their innermost selves, relaxing and quieting their bodies, quieting their minds to find a still centre where Christ is struggling to be born within them."

The reporter then devoted four columns to telling Peter's story and quoting him at length.

Peter's message was heard and responded to by many throughout New Zealand. Christians and others whose backgrounds had led them to search for a connectedness with the spirit alive in all things, found in Peter's words a resonance with their own faith journeys. The guiding principles of the Order

challenged traditional thinking yet had no argument with the doctrines of any ecclesiastical structure.

Peter Spink outlined the development of the Omega Order from its inception. He said: *"At the heart of the unfolding of the Omega Vision, the very pivot of every aspect of its development, has been the daily meditation, the practice of the presence of God. The style of meditation is that of contemplative seeing, a way of knowing and understanding which develops from a centring in the heart."*

His message affirmed for many a way of 'seeing' that they were already practising.

OMEGA NZ NEWS

Editor:
Helene Young
32 Waikawa Tce
NEW PLYMOUTH



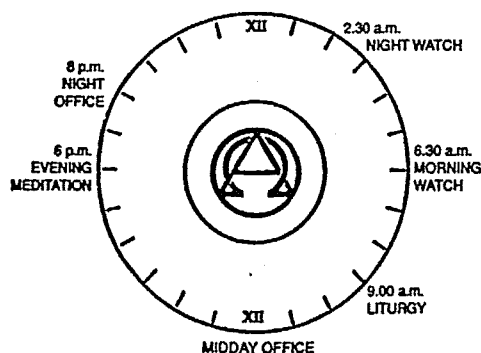
Number 2
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"IN SILENCE WE SHALL VISUALISE OURSELVES AGAIN AS JOINED TOGETHER AT THE LEVEL OF THE HEART IN A VAST NETWORK OF LIGHT . . .

REMEMBER THE GOLDEN THREADS WHICH GO FROM HEART TO HEART."

from "The Way of the Mystic" a taped address by Peter Spink

THE OMEGA CYCLE OF PRAYER AND MEDITATION AND PRAYER



At Winford Manor, the mother house of the Omega Order this cycle of prayer and meditation is practised by the community.

Here in New Zealand within this Omega cycle we join them, sometimes in groups, sometimes in twos or singly, as part of this rhythm of daily prayer and meditation. We fit the practice into times which best suit our lifestyles. It is a discipline which gives awareness of all the People of the Way in the "vast network of light" - the mystical Body of Christ.

CO-WORKERS
and a
NEW ZEALAND TRUST BOARD.

In 1984 Peter returned to New Zealand to hold weekend meetings for those working on the correspondence courses related to his teaching tapes, and to conduct retreats. These weekends were held in Taupo, Auckland, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Wellington and Christchurch and were attended by many. A national retreat was also held to commission co-workers. As Peter wrote in OMEGA INFO NZ, July 1984: *"A general plan and strategy is emerging for co-workers in the future -- co-workers within the Omega Vision. All who are seeking to give themselves to the transforming process will find themselves moving towards a common consciousness and thus becoming co-workers together with God. It is this reality to which we must relate our whole concept of co-workers within Omega. For those who are ready a clear ministry is now opening up. But such a ministry will be possible only to those who are prepared to listen and look in the present; to hear the Word of God in the age in which we live."*

By the following year a New Zealand Trust Board had been established with a national coordinator, area coordinators, and 100 dedicated co-workers, as well as several hundred people who had regular contact with the Order, particularly through group meetings and newsletters. The OMEGA NEWS N.Z. was officially issued and mailing lists were organised.

Before leaving New Zealand Peter wrote: *"The overall picture is without doubt one of very great encouragement. Numbers of themselves mean nothing, but in the context of a 'movement' they point in the direction of the steadily rising tide of inquiry. At the heart of everything, whether it be dance, music, celebrations, study groups or discussions there must be the still centre from which all discernment grows. Remember always that like calls to like. If we are operating on the right level then those who are searching on that same wavelength will be drawn. Conversely, others will go elsewhere. Omega is not for everybody. It is for those for whom it is right."*



Joyce Elizabeth Kelly
9th February 1920
7th March 1998



James





Elisabeth



Mollie

Plans were made for further visits from Peter and from other members of the Order from Kent House where the headquarters of the Omega Order were at that time. Sister Joyce, an Anglican nun from Belper, 'on loan' from her own religious order, had earlier been invited as (or 'dragooned into' being) housekeeper at Burrswood, and had become an indispensable member of the Order. James Fahey was working full time not only restoring and refurbishing and realising the actual property plans of Kent house but also teaching, running courses, and generally assisting Peter in every possible way.

Mollie Nettleton had been secretary to Doctor Aubert at Burrswood, and when Peter came as warden she remained his secretary, and as secretary at Kent House.

Sister Joyce, James and Mollie were to accompany Peter with other members of the Omega Order to New Zealand on later teaching Festivals.

In 1985 the Teaching Festival began in Auckland on 26th January, and until the 24th March sessions were held in New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Hawkes Bay, Taupo, Hamilton, Kerikeri, Whangarei, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin. Extracts from papers and newsletters indicated the great interest in the sessions. There was ample opportunity for relaxation and self-expression within the context of a clear sense of direction. Teach-in sessions and other activities were led by Peter and the team, and the enthusiastic response showed that people in various parts of New Zealand were tuned in to the message of the Omega Vision. The continuity and shape of the Festival was maintained by the daily practice of group meditation.

Recollections from these gatherings speak of the joy which many felt for ecumenism and the search for 'experiential wisdom.' Peter Spink's books and tapes were eagerly sought after and widely used by groups and individuals.

Following the Teaching Festival, Peter recorded a series of talks for Radio New Zealand. After the EASTER SERIES, Radio New Zealand wrote to Kent House: *"We entitled the series, "An Explosion of Energy." lifting what seemed a likely title from your text. They were very well received. We have 54 requests for scripts and 36 for tape copies. As this puts you up in the league of Rugby Test Broadcast requests you can certainly take it that the talks found their mark!"*

Groups that had Buddhist leanings as well as many other groups showed interest in becoming associated with Omega. The seminars, Festivals, books, tapes, newsletters and meetings of groups influenced thousands of New Zealanders. Some responded in their hearts without physically joining an existing group. Others continued to meet on a regular basis. Groups that had already been formed before Peter first came to New Zealand were affirmed in their search for discovering within 'the Light, the Love and the Power.' It would be impossible to begin to assess the effect the visits of the members of the Omega Order had on New Zealanders who opened their hearts to 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

May the Light that shows the Way illuminate the mind,
May the Love that knows the Truth unfold within the heart,
May the Power that gives true Life arise within the soul,
Let Light and Love and Power raise all in Christ to God.

OMEGA CENTRES IN NEW ZEALAND

During the period 1985 until the early 1990's suggestions were put forward to set up an Omega House in New Zealand. There were various opinions on its position and its function. It was clear a core group would have to live in it. Jo Howard, who had been appointed co-ordinator of the Order in New Zealand in 1988 said: *"First there must be a commitment from those who are prepared to live within the discipline of the heart."* Such a house would have to meet the needs of others. *"How well such a community meets these needs time will tell. If the community is wrongly centred it will not meet them and it will not last."*

Jo's task as co-ordinator was to provide a focus for communications within groups in New Zealand and to be the main link between the Order in New Zealand and the chapter in England. Another task was to look for a house or site to form the basis of a residential Omega community in New Zealand.

Reverend David Braddock was appointed chaplain to the Order in New Zealand. His responsibilities were to safeguard the integrity of the sacraments and to advise on theological and liturgical matters where appropriate.

Warwick Keyes, and later Shirley Savage edited OMEGA NEWS NZ. Areas contributed information and reflections and there were reprints from OMEGA NEWS UK as well as individual contributions from New Zealand writers.

Centres and sanctuaries continued to be used, and more were established throughout the country. Here people met to pray, meditate, listen to and work with Peter's tapes and books on a regular basis.

THE TUAHARA CENTRE, situated in a beautiful setting overlooking Lake Taupo, in an atmosphere uniquely its own, provided a key base for many a retreat and teaching weekend. It was available whenever needed, and simply waited to be made use of.

PUTARINGAMATOU, was set up as a sanctuary at their home in Riccarton when Kevin and Lynette Gallagher returned from England. The name means, 'place of an echo,' the Maori name for Riccarton Bush which borders their home. The sanctuary echoes the vision and work of the Omega Order.

Evening sessions are held here regularly.

WELLINGTON. A group began meeting in Kelburn in 1984 in the home of a retired couple, Fred and Joan Wood. Joan was confined to a wheelchair and her regular practice of reading and contemplation provided inspiration for the group as they prayed and discussed. The group had grown out of interest in meditation following Peter's visits to Wellington.

Each month the meeting began with a quietening exercise. Different people taking turns each time passages were read from modern spiritual writers, one of the classics, or spiritual teachers such as: "Eliás Chacour," "The Wind in the Willows," "The Tao of Pooh," or something the leader had found inspirational. Then followed a period of silence. Meditation concluded with a short prayer and informal discussion.

Shelley Angelo-Forrest described the group in these words: *"I was aware they had met for ten years and were a closely-knit group. Their openness in asking me proved they were not a 'holy huddle' but were open to sharing with others, listening and exploring ways of meaning. When asked why they had gathered together for so long they simply said, "Well, why have we!" They not only enjoyed each other's company but loved the simplicity of sharing and silence which each person brought to the group. Although the group is no longer obviously part of the Omega Order, the 'call to silence,' and the 'call to be a watchman' are still principles guiding this group."* June, 1995.

(Margaret Alington contributed notes on the group.)

Throughout New Zealand other homes and centres became places of meditation. The move to a national centre did not seem to be timely. But whenever Peter Spink or members of the Omega Order came to New Zealand over the next years retreats, teaching weekends, seminars and festivals were enthusiastically attended. New Zealanders in their turn visited Kent House, and later Winford Manor to stay and 'rest for a while.' They returned more deeply aware of an inner and outer harmony in their lives. The Omega Vision was indeed opening more and more clearly in New Zealand.

Changes inevitably occurred in the structure of Omega both in the UK and in New Zealand. As is the case with all structural changes some of the 'trappings' fell away, and other organisational features took place. As Peter had said at the outset: *"The Vision will unfold in its own way at the right time."*

Thea Braddock wrote in the OMEGA NEWS NZ: *"The Vision is all important. It opens doorways to a wide spectrum of spirituality shining through from many sources. It will continue to lead us on the path to God, and for this I am profoundly thankful."*

In 1994 I, (the editor), was one of a party of nine who went from Christchurch to Winford Manor for Easter. For me it was a second time and a 'coming home.' For some it was a first visit. For others it was a return to base. Some of the reflections included here spell out that Easter experience at Winford.

The Omega Vision which sprang from the openness to Christ within him which Peter allowed to 'come to birth' over a period of many years, accumulating in the setting up of Kent House and the inspiration revealed to him so forcefully that day in the church at Lew Trenchard, has been welcomed by many in Europe and 'Down-Under,' and will continue to unfold in the hearts of those who open themselves to it.

New Zealanders have been particularly blessed by the visits of not only Peter but all those friends at Winford Manor who have reached out to us with their giftedness and their presence, and who pray for us each day at midday, evening prayer and during the nighttime prayers of healing. They are too many to mention here but we are fortunate that they have touched our lives.

Every journey has its highways and valleys. New life comes through the dying of the seed. Pruning is an essential part of growth, and new growth comes after a crisis. My own spiritual journey has seemed more often than not to be out of my hands. I think it would be simpler if I just got out of my own way.

Those who respond to the Omega Vision are endeavouring to develop 'a mystical consciousness and find the God within.' And, as Peter Spink says in his latest book, *BEYOND BELIEF*, *"The contemplative looks not for survival but for transformation; not for an 'after-life' but rather to know reality in the present moment. This is to surrender to the Light, to be fulfilled by and perfected in 'agape.' All who have chosen to be participants in this cosmic journey -- and this is fundamental to the contemplative journey -- find themselves functioning within a paradox. The inner journey by its very nature is a secret and hidden way. At every stage the maxim applies: 'Those who know do not tell; those who tell do not know.' It is equally true that from commitment to the journey issues the responsibility for the exercise of prophetic ministry. Prayer can never be static. The affirmation of that which is already known inevitably leads to a conscious willingness to accept its implications and to work with those implications in terms of the Divine plan and purpose. Prayer cannot change the Divine will. Rather it does release it."*

The contributions that follow are from just a selection of the New Zealanders who were able to express something of their journey and the part Omega played in this. This is a small part of the whole story. As I listened to tapes from Winford Manor where those who were part of the first Omega group told their stories, and as I read OMEGA NEWS NZ and various newsletters and publications I touched upon something remarkable. We are told in Genesis the story of the creation in 'six days; and on the seventh God rested.' Here in the story of Omega is a 'creation' indeed. No single book could contain it.

There may no longer be 'co-workers' as had been planned. There is no official Omega Centre in New Zealand. Those who were designated companions in places outside Winford Manor are no longer companions. The OMEGA NEWS NZ no longer exists. The numbers who received and contributed to the newsletter and attended Omega meditation groups I know little about today. But the spirit of Omega lives in the hearts of many and influences their lives. As Peter said: 'Numbers in themselves mean nothing. Omega is not for everybody.'

The letters I received when I set out on this task indicated that the Omega Vision is still unfolding in the lives of many people. It is an ongoing tale, a never-ending tale. For me, and I'm sure for others, it has meant a ***'taking down of barriers and a drawing aside of veils.'***

*..... all this must we find ourselves, within ourselves,
And for that finding know - the readiness is all.
But how create a readiness to circumvent
The senses, take the barriers down
And draw aside the veils?*

*The answer lies within the space already there --
Ourselves within. But do not think that space
To be the word of thought or deep untried emotion.*

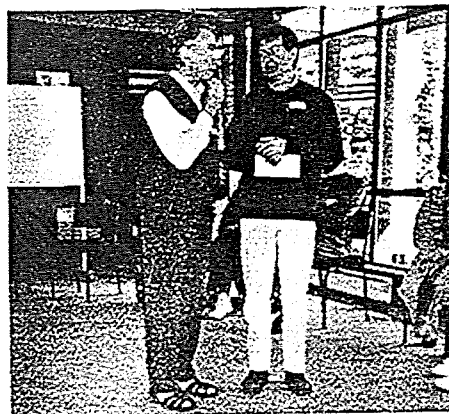
*.....The one who longs to see the vision --
And if we do not long we're not yet ready --
Must now begin to find,
The place of clear perception.*

(OMEGA VISION.)

Canon Peter Spink in Christchurch, New Zealand 1994.

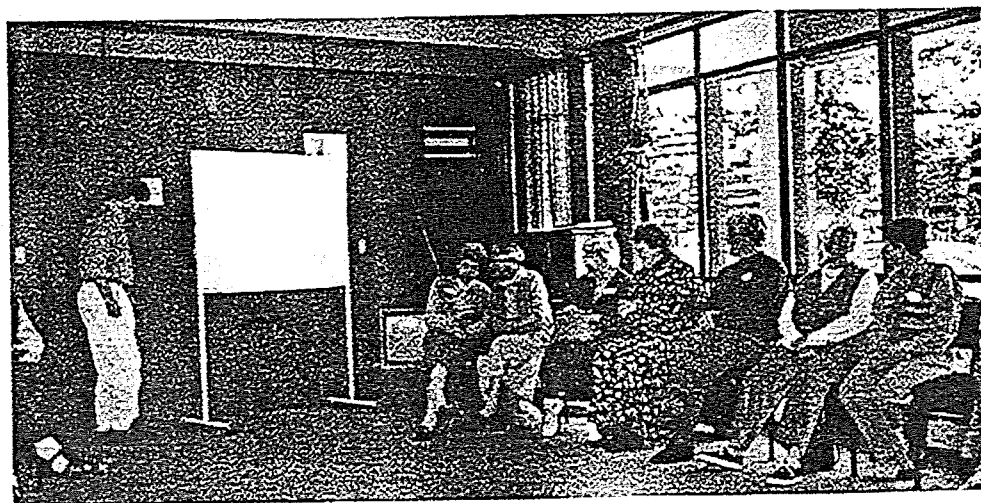


A relaxed sociable easy group!



*Keep a stiff upper lip, Peter.
The Canterbury folk are cool ...
real cool!*

*Now where's that
squeaky board! It's
around here
somewhere!*



*A good listener,
A good talker,
A good observer ...*

THE OMEGA IMPRINT.

Iris came as companion to Peter on the 1996 trip to Australia and New Zealand. When she returned to Winford she described her journey in the OMEGA NEWS. This excerpt is taken from the article.

"We arrived in New Zealand at 2.30pm to be met by Kevin. It was good to see him again not looking a day older than when he brought a New Zealand group to the Manor for Easter in 1994! We entered the household which was bursting with exuberant youth -- the Gallagher children, lovely teenagers and their friends -- with Lynette in quiet control. I stayed with Valerie the next-door neighbour who kindly gave me a cosy room in her house.

What stands out for me in my stay in (Australia and) New Zealand is the thoughtfulness and willingness to help that was shown us. It really lifts the heart. In the 'quiet room' at Kevin's and Lynette's home the Morning Watch was held every weekday morning. It was good to creep out of the house next door and join them.

At the regular group meeting it was special to meet again Betty and Jim Sams, looking very little changed from when they stayed at the Manor, and others, including Sister Leonie. The meetings stand out for me as a landmark on our healing journey, for Peter took the Night Office and afterwards spoke to us from his heart as only Peter can. On the evening before we left we met to share the 'agape' -- a coming together, a renewal of the unity that exists, and a dedication to service for the 'people of the Way.'

During this time I learned much about the early days of Omega in New Zealand, and the nucleus of Kevin and Lynette's group is still those who were part of it in the beginning. Bunty still has the newspaper cuttings, brochures and material from retreats, conferences and weekend seminars over the years. These will form a background for the story of Omega in New Zealand.

I know the influence Omega has on people who visit the Manor. I did not know until now the influence the Omega Order has had and is still having on people's lives in New Zealand, the other side of the world

I heard of new vision, of lives changed, of talents discovered, of groups meeting together to pray and meditate, not necessarily Omega groups, but bearing the Omega imprint. I realise with a feeling of humility that I am part of something far bigger than I will ever know.

"Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

"When there is a will and even a minimum of the right motivation, the path of the seeker will lead, without fail, in the right direction, and if the search for the perfect teacher is determined enough, then will the inner guru himself be manifested, for it is He who initiated the search." (A TIME for KNOWLEDGE.)

My thirty-eighth year was a watershed in my life.

I had had an orthodox Anglican upbringing and was actively involved in my parish church as a leader of a group and a Sunday school teacher. I was, however, becoming more and more uneasy about portraying the image of a committed Christian when I knew in my heart I was far from it.

I was a hypocrite, and I knew I had to do something about it. My conscience was telling me I could not continue on in the church as I was.

I asked God for some sign that He did indeed exist. I knew it was useless to ask our well-meaning but remote, intellectual vicar for guidance. I knew, having heard his sermons, he would be no help whatsoever. I continued on as I was waiting for something to happen.

Six months later I was lent a book by a friend who was one of the most committed Christians I had ever met. She told me a bit about the book, and if I had not known Joan so well, I would have said I was not interested. It was about a movement called Subud, the founder of which was Mohammed Bapak Subuh, an Indonesian who had had a profound spiritual experience at the age of twenty-five. At thirty-two it was revealed to him that his mission was to be the means whereby everyone who wished to do so could receive exactly the same contact.

I read the book over the weekend. I had a spiritual awakening for which there are no words. Suffice it to say I had my answer. We formed a Subud group, about sixteen people in all and most of us active church members. When my vicar heard about it he strongly advised me: 'to think very carefully before taking communion again.'!

About nine months later we went to live in Christchurch. I joined St Barnabas Church, and I have worshipped there for thirty-five years.

In November, 1983, on our national radio I listened to an interview with Canon Peter Spink who was visiting New Zealand for the ONE EARTH FESTIVAL. I knew I had to find out more about this man, and about Omega. I found he was to be speaking in Christchurch the following

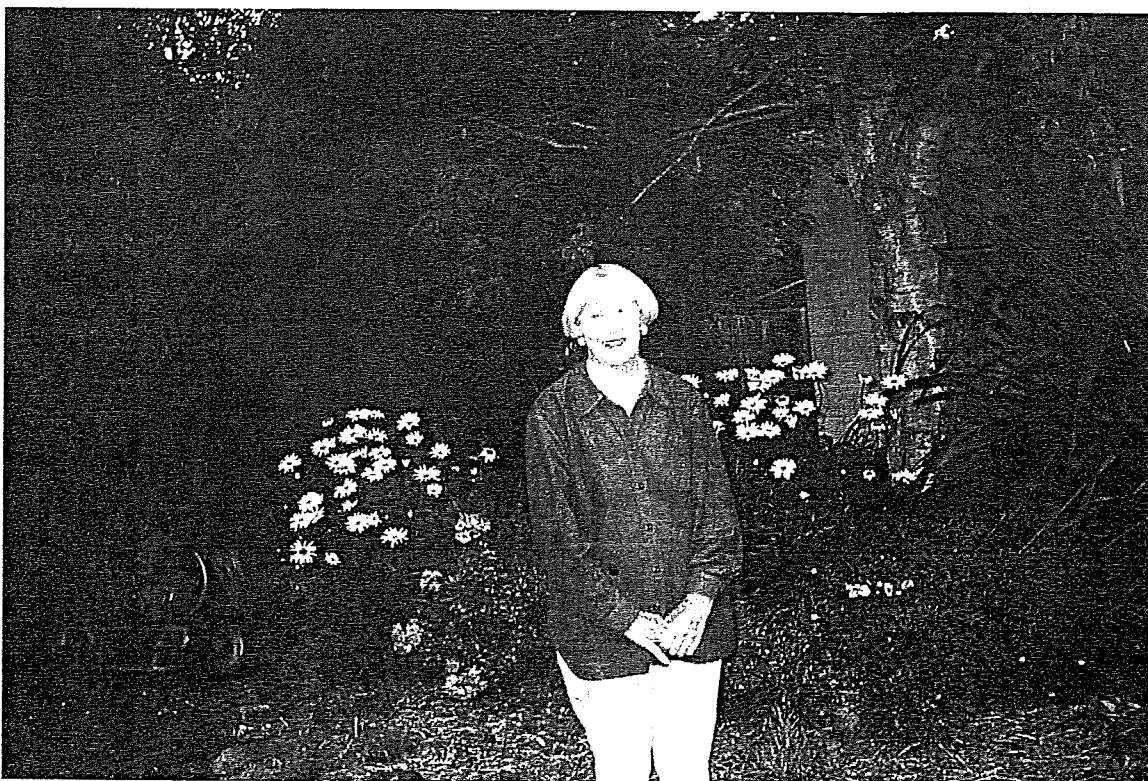
weekend. This was my first meeting with Peter. I attended his workshop. I knew Omega was for me.

In 1984 Peter returned to New Zealand and held a weekend seminar in Christchurch. In 1985 he came back again, and following that visit, groups were formed in Christchurch. I have been part of that group ever since.

In my opinion Omega is the perfect opportunity for true ecumenism, with no doctrine or dogma to divide us. Along with the personal transformation I experienced is the joy of gathering and sharing at great depth with members of other denominations and persuasions. We are blessed in our leaders, Lynette and Kevin, two special people in whose home our group meets in the chapel they have made for meditation and quietness -- a sanctuary indeed.

In 1988 I spent three months in England and Scotland. I had fondly imagined it would be a very meaningful experience to worship in 'Church of England' churches -- the very home of our Anglican faith. Sad to say I was very disillusioned. Perhaps I attended the wrong services, but in both London and Edinburgh those I went to were poorly attended, the service was hurried through as quickly as possible, and the churches and church-goers were completely lacking in warmth and welcome.

How different it was at Winford Manor where I spent three never-to-be-forgotten days. I was made so welcome, and experienced an atmosphere of caring love and a **sense of belonging**.



BUNTY PENNY

"THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE."

My journey with the Omega Order.

Coming from a family of nonconformists, my mother from a Christian background and my father from a Jewish family, I had been sent to a Theosophist School from the age of nine to twelve years. My father died when I was eight years old and my mother struggled to bring up three children in an atmosphere of strong Christian values and a deep belief in the spiritual life. I joined the Anglican church at age thirteen, more to belong to somewhere and be like others, than a wish to deepen my spiritual life. However, as time went by I realised I was different because I had a strong belief in the universality of God -- the God beyond all religions -- that others around me didn't seem to have. I continued with the church for a while but slowly drifted away after gaining only a superficial understanding of Christianity.

All my life I have had a strong drive from within myself to follow my own faith and this I continued to do. People, books, situations would appear in my life when they were needed, and when I had a deep desire to really understand how Christianity fitted in with my concept of a universal God, Omega appeared.

Three pointers one day directed me to a place where I was asked to listen to a set of tapes, "THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE," given by a Canon Peter Spink from England. On hearing explanations given so clearly and simply on the Gospel of St John that answered many of my unanswered questions, I immediately became interested. Prompted also by a certain vibration in the delivery voice that harmonised with my inner being, I went on to listen to the rest of the tapes. Here was someone talking to where 'I was at.' Understanding started to flood in and I knew I must hear more.

My first face-to-face introduction to Peter Spink was when he was speaking at the ONE EARTH GATHERING following a gruelling timetable round the country. He was brought around to my house one evening and after chatting for a while he took Night Office. Later I attended a talk he gave at Greenlane, and a weekend's retreat at Buckland's Beach. I knew it was right for me to become involved. A meeting was held to set up the organisational side of Omega in New Zealand but having no organisational tendencies I just attended the inauguration dinner in Auckland at the end of the New Zealand tour.

And so the Omega Order was born in New Zealand. I began a meditation group at my place where we listened to Peter's tapes and meditated afterwards.

Peter returned to Auckland many times, sometimes accompanied by James, Sister Joyce, and once by Mollie Nettleton and Elisabeth Calice. I remember a wonderful retreat in Taupo

where a big group from the Omega Order came to New Zealand and there were talks on diverse aspects of many subjects. One special trip I remember was when I drove Peter and Sister Joyce north for talks in Kerikeri and Whangarei.

The years rolled on and the tapes, Omega offices, books and meditation were a major part of my life. In 1987 I visited the U.K. and spent a few days at Winford Manor living the wonderful rhythm of the Omega offices with the community.

Through Peter's teaching both in the flesh and through his books and tapes my understanding of Christianity and the evolution of mankind's spiritual journey and growth deepened. I came to understand the universality of the teaching of Jesus Christ -- how he opened up a new dimension for mankind. I saw that Christ was a 'Way show-er' for what mankind could enter and become. The Bible began to come alive for me as the story of each one's spiritual journey. I saw the correlation between the Bible and my own inner state. I learned so much that the Bible has become for me the most wonderful book ever written. I saw how readings from it can become highly potent in the hands of a spiritual teacher who is in tune with the Spirit. I continually love to read extracts from the Bible with the understanding that I still have much to learn from it.

Through my journey with Omega also I was able to recognise the different levels within myself; to know which one I am working from and recognise the same in others. I learned about the potency of dance, of sound, of spiritual readings in the opening up of the spiritual dimension. I discovered the power of the rhythm of the Omega offices and the joy of living within that. I learned how to bring unresolved energies into the Light thus bringing about their resolution. Joy and peace became mine the further I progressed on the spiritual path. I learned the way of 'going in,' and 'coming out,' and the 'tuning in' to receive my spiritual food -- the manna from heaven.

I watched Omega grow in New Zealand and many lives being touched -- some for just a fleeting time, others for longer. I saw people's perimeters challenged. But the work still went on. For me, Peter had done his work well. He had confirmed the genuineness of my inner journey enabling me to have even more certainty in following my own inner promptings and directions.

After the last retreat I spent with Omega in Christchurch I had a very strong need to stand alone and consolidate all that had happened to me. My life reached a much better balance. Although I missed the fellowship, I knew I had to remain on my own.

Today I still stand alone in the sense that I do not belong to any group and have no contact with anyone from Omega. But in the greater sense I never feel alone. I know I walk hand in hand with God.

I thank Peter Spink and all those who support his work from the bottom of my heart for contributing to the joy, the enrichment, the peace and harmony that now fill my everyday life.

My walk with Omega is in truth a wonderful and enlightening journey. The tapes of Peter Spink: "THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE," were the springboard which threw me into this ongoing journey.



SHIRLEY DODD



BETTY and JIM SAMS

"GOD IS LOVE"

A New Beginning – like being 'born' again.

About 1983 my husband, Jim, and I learned that someone was coming to New Zealand who would unify all those different thoughts we had listened to over the years.

For many years before this time we had studied Gurdjieff, including his exposition on Time, and felt there was much to be valued (and evaluated) in his words. Then I began to be dissatisfied with Gurdjieff because there was no feeling of God in his words -- he spoke of the Absolute rather than of God. We welcomed, therefore, the new thoughts.

The visiting speaker was Canon Peter Spink who would be directing a weekend's retreat at St Andrew's College, Christchurch. We decided we would listen to his ideas. Both Jim and I became fully engrossed in his words.

To me it became something very important, and a new beginning -- like being 'born' again. I realised the importance of being silent, and of listening. From that time I have noticed a great change in myself: to listen, not to judge, to give everyone room to move; to be patient always, and to listen with understanding.

All these things I try to do -- always. Many times I have probably failed, but the effort is there.

From this time onward we always contacted Peter Spink when he returned to New Zealand. We met also the other members of the Omega team and talked with and listened to them. We became part of the unfolding story of Omega in New Zealand.

In 1994 we finally went to Winford, England, for several weeks. It was a very happy time for us and we felt we really belonged to the community at Winford.

In the words frequently sung at Winford:

*"Be silent, still, aware;
For there in your own heart
The Spirit is at prayer.
Listen and learn,
Open and find
Heart wisdom -- Christ.*

I am so grateful for Peter Spink's patience in instructing us in this work. I thank him too for all his articles in the OMEGA NEWS, and for his diligence in teaching us of love, for 'God is Love.' If we could only remember this all the time how different our lives would be.

Doreen Simpson

THE PLACE WITHIN.

My true resonance with life was O.K.

I remember clearly the first time I heard Peter Spink. It was on the radio in 1985 and quite by accident. I was so impressed -- as if his message was specially for me. since then I have read most of his books and received help from them.

It is amazing the way we are given the opportunity to intuitively respond to and know it is the message God has for us. Peter Spink has the gift of being able to lead me to catch a glimpse of wonder and eternity.

My first meeting with Peter himself was at the home of Alan and Jean Batham in the Coromandel, where Peter and James were taking time out before attending the ONE EARTH GATHERING at Tauhara in 1983. Although I did not attend that I remember well how the two small gatherings in Coromandel were so helpful and encouraging. By the time the 1985 Omega Festival in Tauhara had been arranged I was planning a trip to be with Omega at Kent House from May to August.

I had always been drawn to the contemplative life style and it was with great relief and gratitude that I felt by Omega teachings and BEING I was not the heretic some folk thought me to be. **My true resonance with life was O.K.** At last I was drawn into the supporting flow of the Spirit with many others. All were different -- yet I was more at ease as we travelled the 'Way' together, for I had felt pressured to conform, to be 'in a box' with the lid securely shut, when my spirit often longed to be free.

In 1985 while at Kent House I had the wonderful experience of living by the rhythm set by the Omega offices -- the consistent way of life upheld by all in residence. In 1986 - '87 I spent a year at Winford, being one of the first four to 'move in' with James, Joshi and Jo Howard. At that stage stopping for the offices made it just possible to live! It was all so hard.

Over that period I had many interesting experiences. I travelled all the way from heaven to hell, in fact. Now, after ten years, I choose to think on the things of grace and wonder at both Kent House and at Winford Manor. There were

experiences beyond description like the trip to Taize the four of us made, and the week we spent at Iona. There were Festivals with people from all over the world -- Festivals full of awe, challenge, fulfilment. There were many dear friends who showered me with hospitality, generosity and love as they showed me the beauty of England. There were churches, cathedrals, homes, gardens, carpets of bluebells -- glorious scenes and loving families whom I shall never forget.

All this and much more I owe to Omega. I still value greatly my Omega bond. I find strength still and fulfilment in sharing with others the offices and all the Omega tapes and books.

The ripples go on and on, and it surprises me still as I meet yet another person who has had connection with, or has been influenced by Omega. Some of us in New Zealand have kept strong contact and even now, after ten years, have been drawn to work together. We go easily and are thankful to God for the resonance to the call as again the ripples go on.

In a special place in my life and memory are the 'dear ones,' those exceptional people who gave all for the cause. Their spirituality and dedication to the Omega Order made it possible for thousands of people to find 'the place within,' a place to set their spirit free to the 'truth as it is in Jesus.'

(Doreen Simpson died in 1997. In OMEGA NEWS, 63, Mollie Nettleton writes: *A few weeks ago we received news of the death of Reverend Doreen Simpson. Her second visit to Omega coincided with our move to Winford. I have a clear memory of Doreen on her knees scrubbing the encrusted tiles in our now attractive conservatory. She is remembered with affection as one of our Omega pioneers. Quoting from a letter from Tony Sylvester-Clark: "Her illness was so very short, and her dying is a testimony to the certainty of her faith to which Omega contributed so much. We sat with her and read the Night Office. she asked for the window to be opened wide enough to allow her to leave." May she rest in peace and be in glory.*



The Late Revd. Doreen Simpson



SHIRLEY SHIPLEY

A JOURNEY INWARD.

All Parts are Woven into a Whole.

Omega was, for me, the commencement of a journey inward.

I first heard of Omega when at Evensong at St Barnabas' Church in 1984. Our vicar, Bob Lowe, invited Peter Spink to speak. Afterwards there was a meeting chaired by a teacher from St Andrew's College, Mr Johnston. Subsequently a small group of us attended a weekend at St Andrew's with Peter. A group was formed at St Barnabas and we began meeting twice a month. There were just seven or eight of us but we received some antagonism from a section of the congregation who saw us as 'evil.'

In 1985 I attended a week's Festival at Tauhara with about 150 people from all over New Zealand. At this event co-workers were inducted to the Omega Order. Later this form of connection was thought inappropriate by the community at Winford Manor and was discontinued. Since 1985 there have been welcome visits from Peter, Sister Joyce and other Omega members from the U.K.

Omega was, then, for me the start of a 'turning within' to discover the God within and the joy of this discovery. Peter's books and especially his tapes were powerfully instrumental in my eventually spending six weeks at Winford Manor. That was in 1989. This special time was a means of finally removing all doubts from my mind, and I came to embrace with confidence the living God within us all.

For the past eight years I have been deeply involved in a "Course of Miracles." The spiritual link with Omega, however, has remained intact.

We do but journey to the one God, **and all parts are woven into a whole.**

HIS WORDS BRING ME A PEACE AND TRANQUILITY.

The word 'sensitive' was on my lips as I woke this morning.

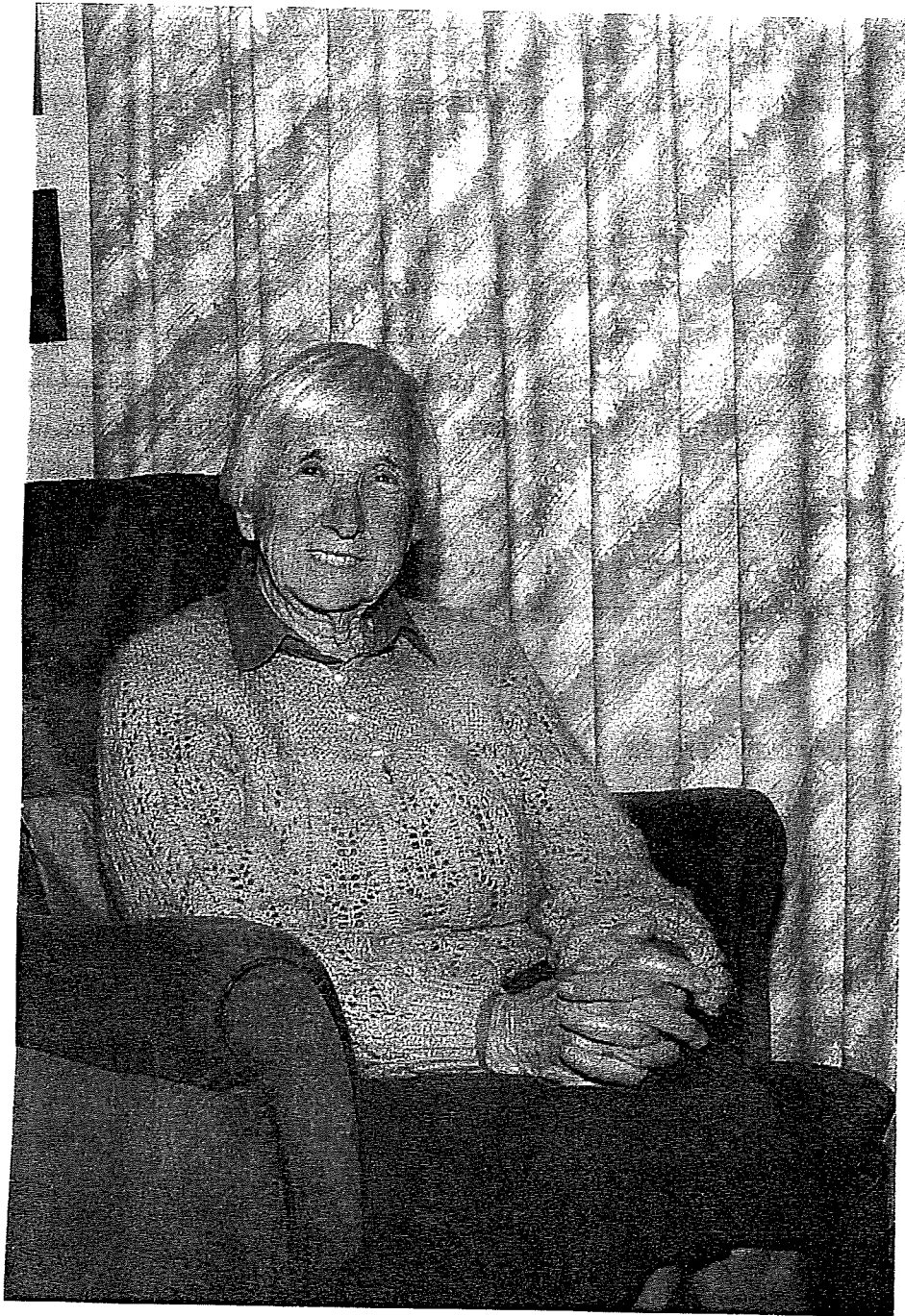
I am soon to be 89 years of age. Within the last four years or so I have lost a husband, a son, and great grandson. I have also moved to new surroundings and miss so much dear friends and activities once enjoyed.

My first contact with Peter Spink happened many years ago when he conducted a seminar in Auckland. It was of such a sincere manner that I attended more with an inquiring mind. That I enjoyed the seminar -- particularly the dance -- was true. In fact all who attended seemed most accepting of the whole seminar. I was impressed by the pleasure the sessions gave. I have often thought that some folk tend to take their Christianity too seriously -- I don't mean that to be facetious!

Later I met Doreen Simpson who had also attended the Auckland seminar. Our friendship grew and with it my interest in the Omega way. I do appreciate what Peter teaches. I love and have benefitted from the meditations, and listen to the tapes. When I get tense or depressed I find Peter's words **bring me a peace, tranquility and courage to go on, and I 'pull myself out of the bog.'**

I haven't written much lately but you might like this, written in 1992. The word 'sensitive' was on my lips when I woke this morning.

Sensitive are we, Lord,
to your Presence,
To the beauty of your
Creation around me;
Sensitive are we to your
Guidance, protection, blessings
in all circumstances;
IN all the hustle and rush
of our lives today.
Sensitive are we of your
Presence, Lord, within us
In our time of silence.



MERCY FREEMAN

Helene Young

CHRIST IN ALL TO THE EXCLUSION OF NONE.

The Omega Vision is now Part of Me.

Omega began for me one Easter morning when our minister announced the "I AM" tapes as a study guide. For me they were transformational.

Peter Spink had come to New Zealand with the ONE EARTH GATHERING in the early 80's. A teaching festival was arranged at Tauhara after several small teaching weekends. This was the beginning of my long journey with Omega and my renewal with God. It was a time of opening, listening, and expanding of boundaries. We explored dance, silence, the impact of art, science, medicine and politics on religion. We discovered the 'Christ in all to the exclusion of none.'

Later, time at Winford and then, being made Companions, we learned about community life, the rhythm of prayer, and had wonderful liturgical Easters with Tenebrae and High celebration on Easter Day. There were reinforcing little touches like Easter eggs on the table for breakfast and fresh daffodils to welcome the Risen Christ. We explored Teilhard's vision and its affect on Omega. We celebrated ten years of Omega with the community.

Coming back to New Zealand we began to share the vision with the Bishop and clerics in our area, and were part of a huge network of people across New Zealand, Australia and the U.K. We put lots of energy into networking and the festival in Palmerston north, and supported Kevin so that he could be part of the Omega Festival in Australia.

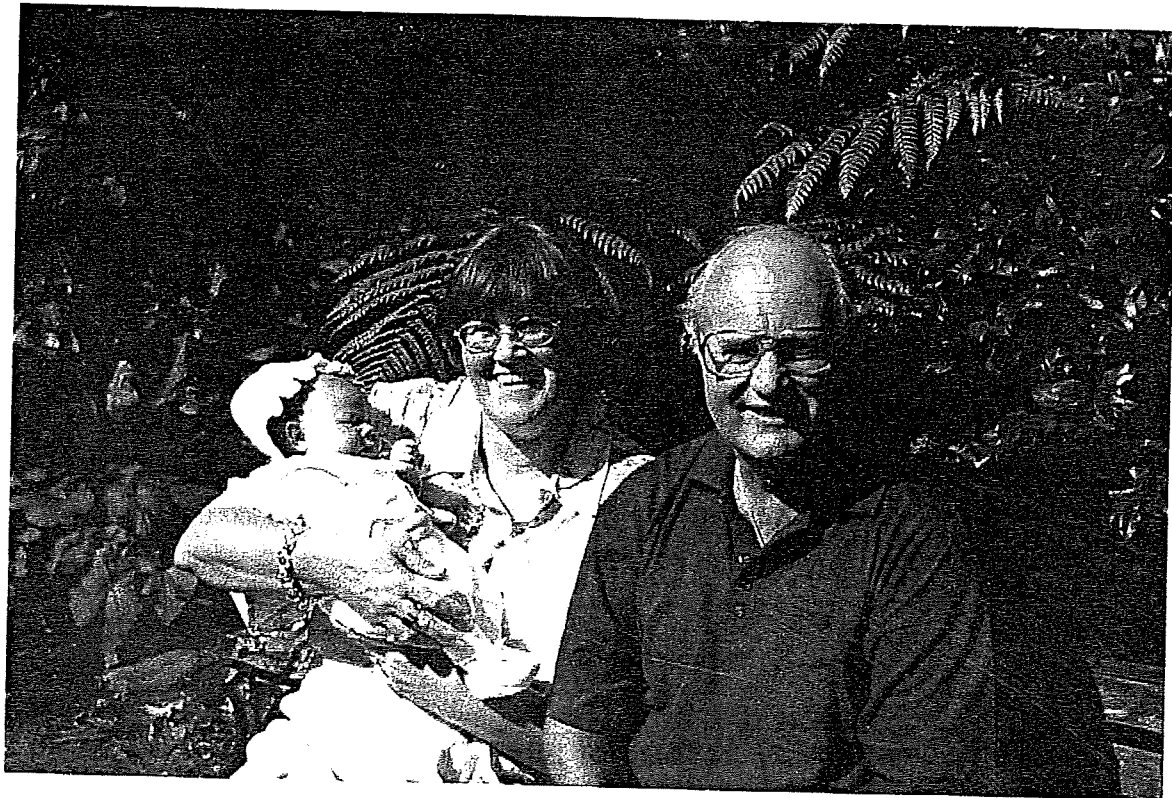
Good, encouraging and supporting times always linked at the heart level with the wider picture and concerns of Winford. I came to know myself as part of a larger family and vision, and looked forward to returning to Winford. Structural changes and decisions at Winford seemed to change that possibility and it was with deep regret that I sent my robes back, as only those living at Winford could in future be called Companions.

Robes are easy to return; the memories, the heart connections, the agape will never go.

I listen in church and hear long tracts of scripture and think how right Peter is in saying that scripture is 'dynamite; use it in small doses; listen deeply; share from your heart space.'

I find my thinking has been shaped and moulded by the Omega vision. In fact **this vision is now part of me**, and not something I think about or externalise. It just is.

For that gift I give thanks. For human frailty and infidelity I ask for understanding and compassion. Reflecting always that whatever has been has some bigger purpose I quote Hildegarde: "All will be well; and all will be well; and all manner of things will be well."



HELENE and DON YOUNG and first Grandchild

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The Art of Profound Meditation and Silence is a Comforter and Healer.

May, 1989, took me to Winford Manor where Helene had been a guest for a short period. Up until then my only contact with the Omega Order was through Helene who had been a co-worker for ten years.

My first impressions and thoughts were a little confused as I had been used to a very conservative Anglican structured way of worshipping and had not been aware of the wider perspective. However, I was comfortable enough with the Vision and the guidelines so made the effort to become involved. I endeavoured to understand where the members of Omega were coming from.

This did not take long as there were many workshops scheduled during that time, some of which I was in harmony with, and some I did not understand as they were quite mind-boggling.

All of this brought me to a wider understanding of my place on earth and of the universe as a whole through a clever man, Claude Curling. I, an Anglican, also became aware that other forms of worship were and are acceptable, whether they be Buddhist, Moslem, etc. Regular daily offices, I discovered while living at the Manor, are the strength of the community and a very important part of daily life, without which all would be lost.

In a very short period of time, then, my attitudes, beliefs, understandings and feelings towards new ideas, concepts and the wider vision of God's plan for me had greatly altered.

When we did arrive back in New Zealand it was difficult to find a parish prepared to listen to us, or even accept us. This was resolved by waiting, listening, talking, accepting. All good ways Omega has influenced me.

I find today in a world of pressure, tensions, stresses and strains **the art of profound meditation and silence is a comforter and healer**, for which I thank and admire the Omega Order.

THERE IS AN INMOST CENTRE IN US ALL

I was beginning to know myself and God.

When I first went on an Omega retreat I was living in a small town in the South Island with my husband and four young children. I had previously been involved in a charismatic prayer group and was active in the Catholic church. I had left the prayer group with many questions in my mind and a feeling of 'stuckness' and emptiness. At the retreat in Christchurch I felt my prayers had been answered. Through his experiential teaching Peter Spink answered my questionings and opened my mind to many more questions. I felt as though my heart was being awakened to an interior awareness of God.

Various readings and books supported this experience for me. Among them an extract from Robert Browning's PARACELSUS.

*"There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect clear perception -- which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error; and, to KNOW,
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without."*

I was learning to relate to 'seeing' from the 'observer platform,' and was aware of how I acted and reacted as I observed myself and others. I began to feel for the first time in my life **I was beginning to know myself and God.**

A growing desire to relate to this interior awareness and gain more learning led Kevin and me to the decision to visit Winford with our children. The one year visit became a two and a half year visit. I was privileged to learn a great deal at Winford through following the discipline of regular offices, seeing myself reflected through others, and being in a very prayerful environment. I felt a sense of 'belonging' in the community, and am greatly indebted to Peter and the community for their generosity and support while we were there.

On returning to New Zealand we settled in Christchurch. Much of our time since has been

spent re-establishing a home and economic base, supporting a growing family and meeting new people.

I am still active in the Catholic church in our local parish, and work part time in social services studying to become qualified in this area as I work. Once a fortnight our small but very special Omega group meets. As time goes on I value the privilege of being part of a group with such wisdom and knowledge. Our meetings have a simple pattern -- the intention being to 'relate to the heart' and practise the presence of God.

The universality of the teaching of Peter and the Omega Order expressed through the Christian tradition is the base from which I endeavour to live.

LYNETTE and KEVIN GALLAGHER



**GIVE BIRTH IN OUR HEARTS TO THAT WHICH WE CANNOT
OF OURSELVES CONCEIVE.**

He took me to the threshold of my own mind.

Morven, some would say, is a barren place -- flat dry land, divided up evenly by roads and fenced farms; few trees; some bunched where old houses have been, others hiding ramshackle houses soon to be renovated, like our own which, at the time I am reflecting, was nearly complete.

I rose early after having been away on retreat. This wasn't difficult, for much had happened within me. I sat in a chair in the front garden facing East to meditate as the sun rose. This time I didn't close my eyes as I usually do when meditating, but looked and saw in a sense for the first time. I knew that what I was looking at and what I was seeing within were one and the same thing. I wrote:

*The beauty I see in nature
is a reflection of that beauty
that lies within.
Nature is my teacher.
Like a mirror, I see myself reflected back
through nature;
in the sense of this self
I am -- God.*

*The beauty I see in others
is a reflection of the beauty
unfolding within myself;
everyone in this way is my teacher.
Like a mirror, I see myself
reflected back, through others;
in the sense of this self
I am -- God.*

I felt a burning in the centre of my chest, a deep peace, joy and tremendous energy coupled with a profound realisation of awe and responsibility.

At that time, also, I had a dream which was very vivid:

I was handed a precious nugget of gold which I tried desperately to toss to someone else. Everyone I approached was not in the slightest bit interested. In fact, each one seemed to be frightened. My precious nugget was 'too hot to handle.' It carried with it tremendous responsibility. I kept it.

The retreat I had attended had been at Sister Eveleen House in Sumner with Peter Spink in 1985. A group of us had come to experience 'life in community.' We danced, prayed, laughed, and learned how to centre in the heart under Peter's direction. I remember watching every detail until I came to be aware of my own boundaries being stretched. At the same time there was my struggle to find space and harmony apart from the intellectual chatter and emotional turmoil.

*"As soon as the priests stepped
into the river, the water
stopped flowing and the
people were able to cross." (Joshua 3. 14/15)*

This was the reading that propelled me to take the risk to step into the 'promised space' -- a different land, fondly referred to as the 'observer platform,' the heart centre, the Christ-centre of my own being

This retreat opened vistas of knowledge through experience not known to me before..

*I know
what it means to see
and not sleep
to be
I am
Oh, why contain it
Why bind it
The journey was
is
is to come;
I am.*

It is a journey about the here and now; about the business of living, knowing that the present moment is not just a fanciful notion of intellectual gymnastics but a reality. It is an experiential possibility, simple, yet touching profound complexity, a thread to wake up to.

The thought that I could spend my whole life 'asleep,' not for a moment being able to say "Yes, I know!" baffles me at times. That I find comfort in this state of not being present, of distracted separation from the present moment, compounds my bewilderment

Peter took me to the threshold of my own mind, pointing the way and directing me to the golden string of the inner teacher. For this, and for his love and guidance, I am and shall always be grateful.

*"I give you the end of a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall." William Blake.*

This string I still hold, not graspingly, but gently, with awe and responsibility.

Since this experience Omega has formed the spirituality which has remained at the core of who I am. My Catholic faith and indeed any orthodox belief was now able to be interpreted from an inner perspective -- I learned to touch the essence that lay beyond the crystalised form. My Catholic upbringing first formed the framework of how I lived my life. That living of the faith was now punctuated with Omega pointing the way to know Christ within, the faith of my ancestors and a truly universal faith

"The Omega Order has no doctrines of its own, but seeks through the disciplines of contemplative prayer and meditation to penetrate the essence of all doctrines. Its starting point is the Christian religion."

The cultic aspects in religion point to an impulse, a vision, a dynamic 'too hot to handle.' One needs to be able to look 'from the heart,' to develop an inner awareness, to see and touch this dynamic beyond the form.

But this was not the beginning of my own journey but a profound mystical experience along the way. It changed my life for ever.

Prior to this retreat Lynette and I had been sharing with another couple in Morven twice a month our faith, silent reflections, and insights from other faiths. This had been a big step for two charismatic Christians. The couple we shared with had Buddhist and Hindu backgrounds. I remember the moment of revelation when we realised that at the heart of our experience we thought the same. We found Peter Spink's tapes were articulating a framework where the universal faith experience of our small group found common ground. The retreat at Eveleen House was a natural progression, and we continued to meet together afterwards.

In 1987 after our convictions, intentions and circumstances perfectly aligned themselves, we knew it was right for us to go to Winford Manor.

To travel there with a family of four children aged 6, 8, 10 and 12 was no small task. There was resistance from some of our family members. How can you explain to those who do not share the same inner impulses that impel you the 'rightness' of a certain move?

There are times in our lives when the threads of circumstances align themselves with interior shifts in consciousness. The inner being knows there is no other decision that can be made. I discovered in myself a faculty I was not aware of. It was an attribute I had thought belonged only to 'wise women' like my mother. This decision to go to Winford drew from me an intuitive 'Yes!'

Times of intuitive knowing may be rare but through the practice of the disciplines of contemplative prayer and meditation the faculty of intuition develops. With it comes the awakening of a Christ consciousness. This can be the common experience of every moment.

One special memory at Winford Manor was when Peter brought back from Rome to Winford a beautiful carved statue of Mary holding the Christ child. My first thoughts were that it cluttered up the simplicity of the chapel where we prayed. Peter placed it in front of the big bay window in the oratory. I saw the symbolism of this statue as central to the heart of the Omega Order. Mary with the Christ child represented the feminine principle of intuition bringing the Christ consciousness to birth. As in our night office:

*O God, who art beyond all knowledge save that of love,
give birth in our hearts to that which we cannot of ourselves conceive;
and, as in blessed Mary, so in us, bring forth the wisdom of the ages.*

We spent two years and two months with the community at Winford. Practising as a physiotherapist enabled me to earn a living for the family and to take part in the rhythm of prayer life, as well as an active role in the renovating of the Manor, and other significant events. To integrate into the contemplative community a married couple with contemplative yearnings and their four children was typical of the open philosophy of Peter and the community where:

"all things are possible"

"all shall be well"

"work at your own point of intersection."

Central to the life of the Winford community was prayer with the offices continuing at fixed periods regardless of the practical activities and work needing to be done. The lives of the members of the community were focussed, single-pointed. Continually refocussing had a profound effect upon the dynamics of the group. Conflicts dissolved and emotional tensions eased. The wider picture was able to be seen when the community refocussed through community prayer.

My life was enriched by my time at Winford. Much happened within me. The three most striking features for me were:

- * I was never told to do anything;
- * the presence of great love emanated from every direction;
- * beneath the surface of structured order was contained great diversity of character.

It is possible to create a balance of contemplation and action even with the demands of a busy family life. This is very much the continual struggle that punctuates our lives here in Christchurch since our return eight years ago.

We have attempted to create some 'echo' of our experience at Winford here in our home by creating a physical space, *Putaringamotou*, (place of an echo), more frequently referred to as the 'quiet room.'

Here we meet with a small but dedicated group fortnightly for meditation and the night office of the Omega Order. Some in the group are founding members such as Bill, Jim, Betty and Bunty who have been meeting for meditation since Peter's first visit to New Zealand several years before the involvement of Lynette and myself.

The creation of space, heart-centred prayer of quiet, learning to relate to stillness -- these are the threads of simplicity propelling the group to meet, and indeed, intertwining every moment of my story.

What if this group had never begun to meet?

*To you who gaze
A lamp am I
To you who know
A mirror
To you who knock
A door am I
To you who fare
The Way.*

GOD IS A PRESENCE WHICH PERMEATES EVERY LIVING THING.

My Roots were more deeply imbedded in my own Calling

I am a Catholic, a Sister of Mercy. A few years ago I was invited to take part in a festival of contemplative prayer. I liked what I read on the brochure I was given -- it seemed to say: "This is for you." I felt drawn to explore the ideas of the Omega Order.

I arrived at the Pastoral Centre in Palmerston North and was greeted very warmly. This centre is in a beautiful setting beside a lake and sheltered by numerous trees. The environment seemed conducive to 'getting away from it all.'

We were a group of Christians from all walks of life and from different denominations. As the days passed it was evident that contemplative prayer was the main draw-string for this retreat. Many of us were attracted to the 'way of simplicity,' the 'still centre of the heart -- the Christ centre.' We wanted to know more about wholeness and healing. We were aware of the 'oneness at the level of the heart,' of our individuality and our differences, and our creative potential.

Many of us were aware of stirrings within our hearts -- an individual awareness -- searching for ways to involve our whole being in prayer. At this point many of us could see ourselves standing on the brink of the widening horizons, feeling ourselves being drawn into a whole cosmic PRESENCE, more at one with ourselves and each other.

Personally, I believe that God is a PRESENCE which permeates every living thing. I have become even more aware of this and more conscious of the Christ centre in my own heart since I have taken up art. Peter's statement that : 'all work carried out with contemplative awareness is meditation' truly resonated with me.

Each morning Peter took us on a 'reflection journey' through Genesis. I was fascinated by the life stories of these men and women and their relationship with God in their life journeys. This book of history I now read with a new vision and deeper understanding.

Elisabeth shared her insights on how to use music as meditation. She communicated the place of music in spiritual awakening. Getting in touch with Greek and Indian music especially helped me realise that spirituality is not exclusively Christian.

James' slides on our planet as seen from the moon and in relation to the other planets were powerful images for reflection on how small we are compared with the mighty universe.

Joshi led us in the singing of the daily offices, his beautiful voice giving a special quality to this time of prayer.

In her presentation of women mystics, Sr Anne Marie reviewed the lives of Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila. This gave a balance to the reflections on the patriarchs of the Old Testament.

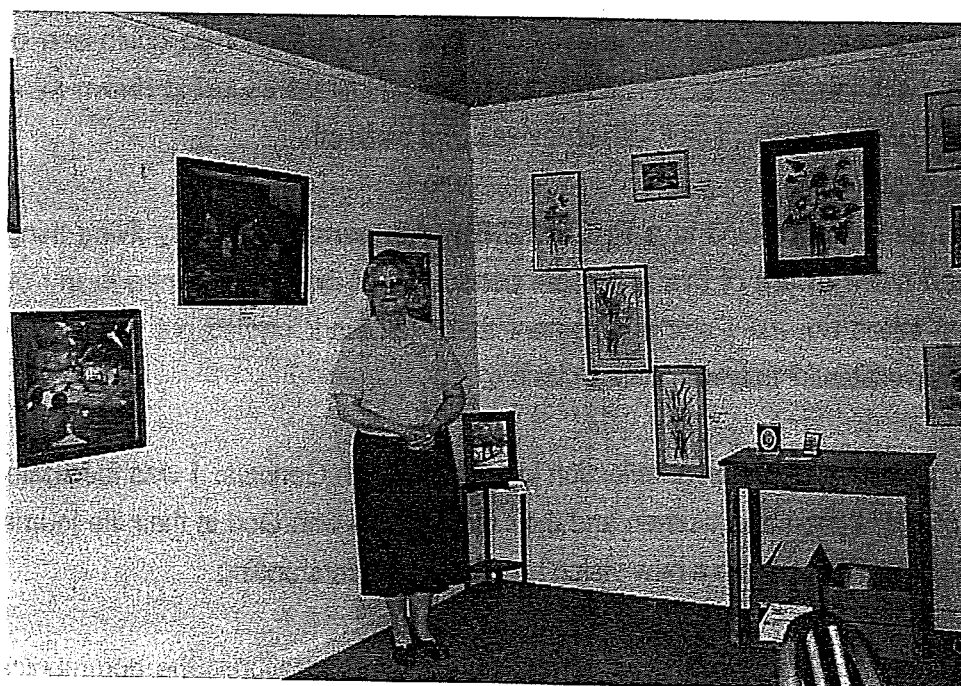
The relationship of prayer with art was another dimension offered at the festival. Father Gerard Mills, SM, shared his learning and experience in this field with a workshop on painting and clay modelling.

Another discovery was using contemplative dance to lead to inner stillness.

I came away from this festival with my roots more deeply imbedded in my own calling. I had a wider vision of how exciting our life journeys could be if we have conscious awareness of harmony within ourselves -- harmony with our world and harmony with God.

Thank you, Omega, for coming to New Zealand. I know I am a richer person through being part of this festival.

(This was adapted from an article Sister Adrienne wrote in OMEGA NEWS U.K. no. 43, 1991)



Sr ADRIENNE and her paintings

VALUE THE STILL CENTRE OF OUR BEING.

"Who or Where is your God!"

The days of retreat with Peter Spink at Sumner were something of an opening up and a drawing together of the Omega Vision for those of us privileged to be present. Peter led us to becoming aware of the place of clear perception, inviting us to stand still and step back. From this perspective we were enabled to see that we have intellect (head), emotions (deep down within us), and heart (the centre of our being where the space is.) We were encouraged to ponder, to hold these things as Mary did, and to use our faculties of perception to unearth the spirituality within us. As I struggled, and hearing at a deeper level I concluded that this ME is growing through intellect and emotions to guide my thoughts, words and actions as the essential lifebeat of true integration.

The next step of the retreat was to introduce us to the practice of self-observation, contemplative seeing. Peter explained how vehicles of power can easily become obsolete. We were led to see and accept others as they are, human beings with different movements in their wills, thoughts and emotions. Because Christ is in our hearts we are enabled to widen our horizons to see the truths of others open for us, and though we cannot often touch their essence we realise their dynamic is present.

Through creative, reflective and contemplative meditation we reached areas of energy which stimulated a freeing enabling us to release love, wisdom and faith. Peter showed us how to breathe upwards, bringing the energy from our emotions in the solar plexus to expel as light through the heart. We breathed in through the crown of the head, down through the throat and out through the heart to radiate light to all. This helped us to value the still centre of our being.

In this God-centred atmosphere we spent the last day of the retreat awakening our faculty of perception and discovering the tremendous energy there is in the stillness of God-centredness.

As a final climax of this retreat we were invited to answer this question: **Who or where is your God?"** What a search this proved to be with human senses the only guide to reality. The cosmic expression and the history of the Gospel with the God of Gaps (healing) and the God of Space (man going to the moon) and even the possibility of God losing his manhood in this non-sex world of language, intensified the problem. We had to work hard and expand our discerning powers. The reciprocal energies for discernment proved to be our treasury of merit as expressed in the heart, in harmony, balance, and the conscious hearing of the senses. We experienced prayer as focussing of the will towards the greater good as we breathed and

pondered this vital question.

The understanding of silence is the expression of the heart as the answer comes before us in the words of Jesus:

"I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." (John 14:6)

This question remains with me unvoiced.

(Adapted from OMEGA NEWS NZ 199)



Peter

TO LIVE FROM THAT PLACE OF CLEAR PERCEPTION.

The gift of the Omega experience has been a coming home.

I sit gazing out of the window at the landscape wondering how to begin to describe a journey that has continued for more than twelve years since first coming into contact with the Omega Order through the writings of Peter Spink. On Friday, as I was driving into the city to work I saw the winter sun burst out in an array of brilliant colour from behind the clouds that have been so frequent this winter. The response throughout my being was to sing the words of the Charles Wesley hymn used in the Morning Watch in the Omega offices--

*Christ whose glory fills the skies
Christ the true the only Light
Sun of healing now arise
Triumph o'er the shades of night
Dayspring from on high draw near
Christlight in our hearts appear.*

So the journey continues -- with the challenge to be 'awake' to each moment to live from that 'place of clear perception.'

It all began one day in 1984 when I went out to buy a scone for morning tea. I met a friend in the street who, after we had talked, suggested I might be interested in reading Peter's books. Shortly after this a visit by Canon Spink was announced at the church I sometimes attended. From an introductory evening talk to a weekend silent retreat then a week long teaching festival and an involvement in several more retreats I made my decision to test my commitment to becoming a Companion of the Order. From the end of one New Zealand winter I entered the darkness of the northern winter to return four months later to the southern hemisphere and my third winter on end. This cut short my intended stay at Kent House by eight months.

What happened? Listening to the readings on Christmas Eve at Kent House I heard the question asked: "How is Christ born in you this Christmas?" Reflecting on that question the reading from St John's Gospel in the Night office vibrated through my being:

*"God is Love. Those who dwell in love dwell in God and God in them.
Let us love one another for love is of God,
and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
Those who do not love know not God for God is love."*

Here I was on the other side of the world confronted by my own inability to allow love into my life (or was it being reborn?) and yet held and loved by the community with whom I shared 'the common life.' Reeling from my inability to fully engage lovingly with those close to me in New Zealand I left the community in Tunbridge Wells to pick up the relationship with my

children and wife-to-be (Beverley, whom I met through my involvement with Omega) with a new level of awareness and commitment.

Now, with the value of hindsight, I can see my silent departure was premature. There was no where to go and nothing to do and much to learn.

The Omega experience continues to live on within, guarded by 'sealed lips,' contained within my thoughts and acting as a guide for me along the way. Paulo Coelho in his fable, THE ALCHEMIST, writes of learning to understand the language of the universe. For me this is seeing 'the pattern' woven by the 'Master weaver' and coming to understand the texture and colour of the 'threads' with which I am called to 'weave.' In recognising that I am not alone on the journey participation as a co-creator means I must be prepared to commit and fully engage, willing with the whole. This I have come to understand to be 'the yielding of the one to all, the all to One. The laying down and finding of a life.'

So what does this all mean in terms of my life right now? From the 'moment of my apprehending' ten years ago until now I have been unravelling the tapestry of my life to understand and reconsider the 'threads' and 'colours.' It is time to weave again the contemplative activity, the place, the community, and my work in the world into a new whole, this time with knowledge.

We have recently hosted a workshop on Icon painting and undertaken a weekend retreat at Te Moata, a retreat centre established by Tim Win-Harris, with other people whom I met through Omega -- Doreen Simpson and Jill and Keith King. I find myself, at the time of writing, standing with those I have known these last ten or so years, seeking to hear, and knowing that:

*And not to each shall all the picture
In its every part be clear,
But all will find their parts within its forming
The shaping of a pattern shall they see
Of which they are a shape
Yet are they now not central to its parts or shape
Though to its wholeness is their giving central."*

and .. 'to know God in time and space we must regularly seek to find God in one time and space that enables us to recognise God more easily in every other one.'

Some other threads that I recognise in the tapestry of my life are: an understanding of what commitment means; that the spiritual life completely reorders my values, priorities, and my life leading to change; and a focus that leads me to see the world differently from the way I ever did before.

It is the process of a lifetime. I must allow myself to be formed again recognising that to cling to the past means the future is closed to me.

The gift of the Omega experience has been a 'coming home,' the ability to begin 'that hearing at a deeper level,' and the challenge to move 'out beyond the limitations which have constricted and constrained us.'

AS I write this and scan the Omega Vision again, I find a new understanding of 'persistence, single-pointedness, direction,' and the ease with which the vision may 'not hold.'

Bless to me, God, the path whereon I go Maranatha.



Tony Sylvester-Clarke gifted this ICON of Our Lady of Compassion to Winford Manor. It holds an honoured place in the Michael chapel.

Tony completed this Icon in one year under the guidance of an expert teacher.

THE QUIET POOL.

*There is within each of us
a quiet clear pool of living water
fed by the one deep Source
and inseparable from it,
but so often hidden
by a tangle of activity
that we may not know
of its existence.*

*We can spend the proverbial forty years
wandering in strange deserts,
sinking unrewarding wells
and moving on, driven by our thirst,
but when we stop still long enough
to look inside ourselves, really look
beyond our ideas about water
and what and where it should be,
we discover it was with us all the time,
that quiet clear pool which is ageless,
the meaning of our existence
and the answer to all wanderings.*

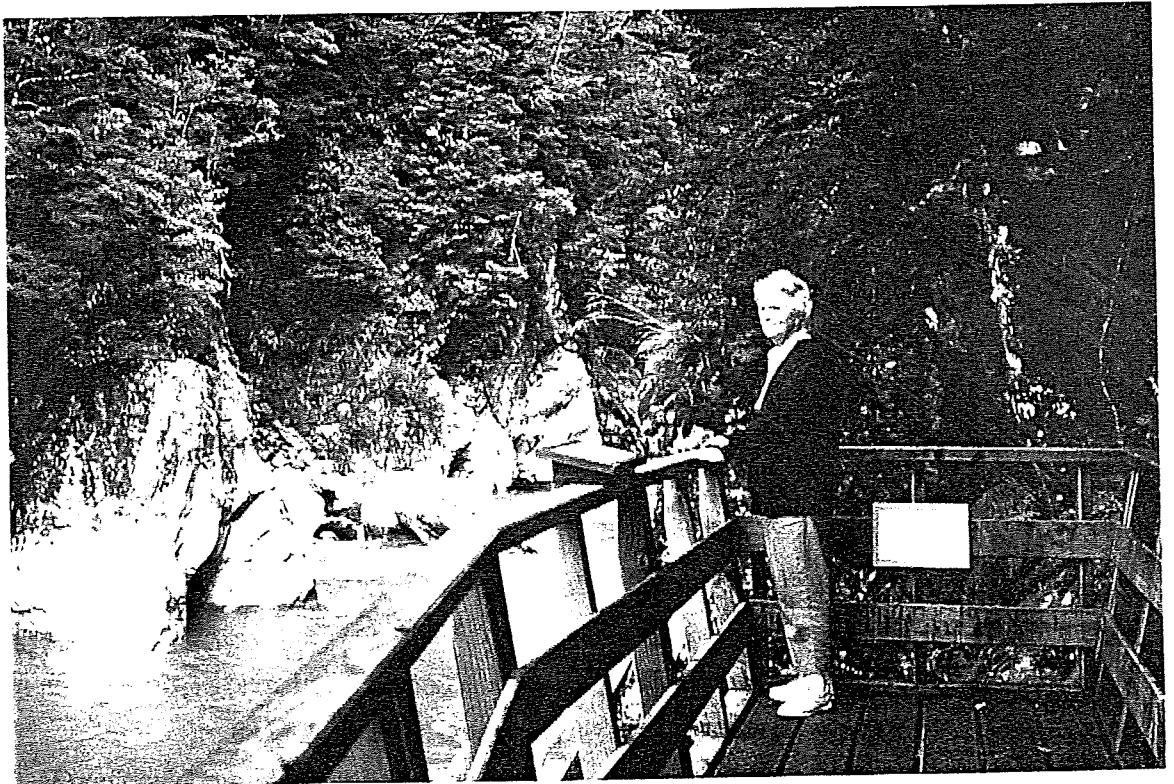
*And as we drink
we know what Jesus meant when he said
we'd never be thirsty again.*

(On the wall in my Studio I have a copy of Joy Cowley's *RECIPE FOR ICE CREAM*, given to me by a 7 year old. I have a photocopier, you see, and he wanted copies for all his friends! But I also have on my shelves, (when they are not away being borrowed!) many of Joy's absorbing and delightful books for children, as well as her *AOTEAROA PSALMS*, from which the above poem was taken.

In a letter giving me permission to include this poem in this book Joy says: "I work hard at trying to clear the weeds of 'busyness' from my own quiet pool. I think the term 'active contemplation' is a bit of an oxymoron round here. But all of it is sacred and all of it is good." Joy lives at Te Manawa, Fish Bay, Picton, in the beautiful Marlborough Sounds.) Editor.



JOY COWLEY



PHYLLIS CAMERON

FROM ISOLATION TO UNITY.

Stepping into the Unknown into Omega.

I shall always treasure the memory of my introduction to Canon Peter Spink and Omega.

Sister Juliana Gallagher, to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude, invited me to join her at Eveleen House in June, 1991, for a short retreat. I had had no previous knowledge of Omega so I was stepping into the unknown.

I loved Eveleen House the moment I saw it. It was set back close to the hillside and facing a perfect panorama encompassing the coastline and Pegasus Bay with the majestic mountains in the far distance. What could be more inspiring or more conducive to 'going apart and resting for a while.'

Each day during the quiet period we were able to take walks on the paths wandering up the hills past gardens and homes; or along and up the edge of the cliff. The weather was kind; each day was perfect. In this setting of peace and tranquillity I was given an opportunity to meet, talk with and listen to Peter, and members of the Omega New Zealand group.

It was a momentous time for me. It had come in a time in my life when I felt isolated. Yet, after only a few days the feeling of isolation was changing into a wonderful sense of unity.

From isolation to unity to explain that is difficult.

Let me quote from two sources:

*"What lies behind us and what lies before us
are tiny matters compared with what lies within us"* Ralph Emerson.

*"We can never hope for too much from the growing unity
of mankind."* Teilhard de Chardin.

It was in that chapel at Sister Eveleen House for two periods a day that Peter gave his talks and I received my introduction to the Omega Vision:

*"Let your meditation now become a hearing at a deeper level:
In some measure, as you have already learnt
Hear and see with those perceptions already given you by God
But long forgotten or neglected."*

OMEGA VISION.

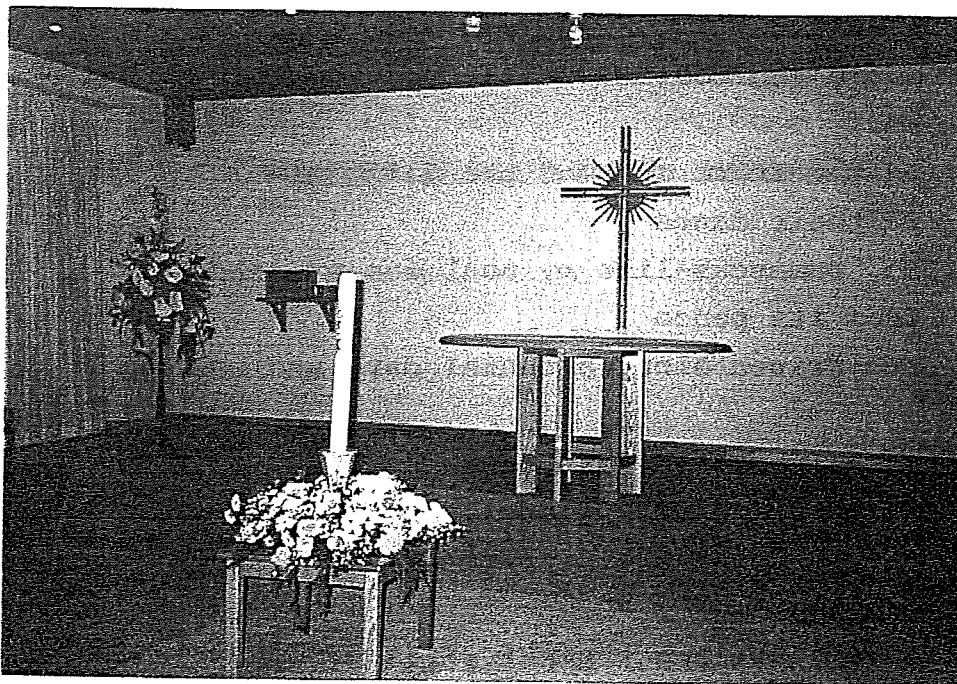
I had been meditating for nearly twenty years focussing only on breathing, so the wonder of learning of this 'still centre,' the **heart** centre, was for me a miracle. I could see the path leading out of the space I was at, on with a few stumbles, slowly up, -- the moving forth -- .

Learning to pray through the heart, to think and feel through the heart, to find time and time again more treasures; and to find my God who had been away 'out there,' or 'beside' me, or behind' me, or in front of' me, now **within** me, -- so deeply within me -- just the wonder of it is a source of immediate joy and thanksgiving.

The sense of unity gradually developed with the vision of the 'golden threads' linking all; and the channel of Light, Love and Power. I had always felt a longing for inner peace, and an acceptance of all that was. That is there now in the heart, instead of in the head and in my thinking.

It is difficult to describe exactly what happened. I fell into reality. I see the vision of channels of light encompassing the world and the 'golden threads' that go from heart to heart.

I am no longer isolated but live in unity.



The Michael Chapel
at Winford.

SPRING IS STILL HERE!

Daffodils -- gentle heralds of Spring,
announced our arrival in '94,
bowing and dancing in the crisp peaceable breeze.
The sprawly arms of the Manor opened wide
inviting us to come inside
for rest

People from here and there, near and far
filled the Michael chapel.
The retreat began.
Two whole weeks of meditating, prayer, silences,
sermons, liturgies, dancing, walks;
watching the daffodils continue to be
Peaceful thought

The storm raged all one night --
battered the outside walls
wrenched tiles from the roof
crushed the daffodils.

"A place of tranquillity,"
I was told the Manor would be,
where you could move 'at your own pace.'
No!
As the storm stopped the daffodils
in their dance
So, Damascus-like my soul was wrenched
from its peace
and driven along a tunnel dark and narrow.

Broken, bruised and battered, the daffodils
truly reflected my soul.
Yet, through a pin-prick of light at the tunnel's
end,
a small yellow trumpet still strained to announce
"Spring is still here.....!"

Our Lady in her chapel on the second floor
with outstretched arms and open heart
beckons all to face first themselves,
then share the beauty that is themselves
redeemed, ransomed, saved by her Son.

Outside

the daffodils stretching towards the sun
gaining strength from its light and warmth
waved encouragingly as I walked among them.
Their silence was a soothing balm
to a struggling
spirit.

Easter night! New light!
Christ is risen! Alleluia!
Peace be to you!
Light! Song! Colour! Joy!
and among the flowers --
gentle daffodils
Spring IS here!
Christ is risen! Amen! Alleluia!



VERONICA CUDDY

ALL THIS MUST WE FIND OURSELVES, WITHIN OURSELVES
AND FOR THAT FINDING KNOW -- THE READINESS IS ALL.

MY QUEST FOR ENLIGHTENMENT.

I grew up in a family of Anglican fundamentalists, and my parents could go to the Bible and pick out a vague verse which they would consider the last word on the subject.

I never doubted them until the mid Eighties when, at the age of 36, I had a nervous break-down (or mid-life crisis). To cut a long story short this led me to an examination of the beliefs of other religions along with the study of Christian theology.

At the end of it all i came away with a vaguely 'new age' outlook and a continued belief in the historical truth of virtually all the Bible, but with unanswered questions about the doctrines I had grown up with, the Atonement in particular. Considering myself a simple seeker of truth , I have since continued on my **quest for enlightenment**.

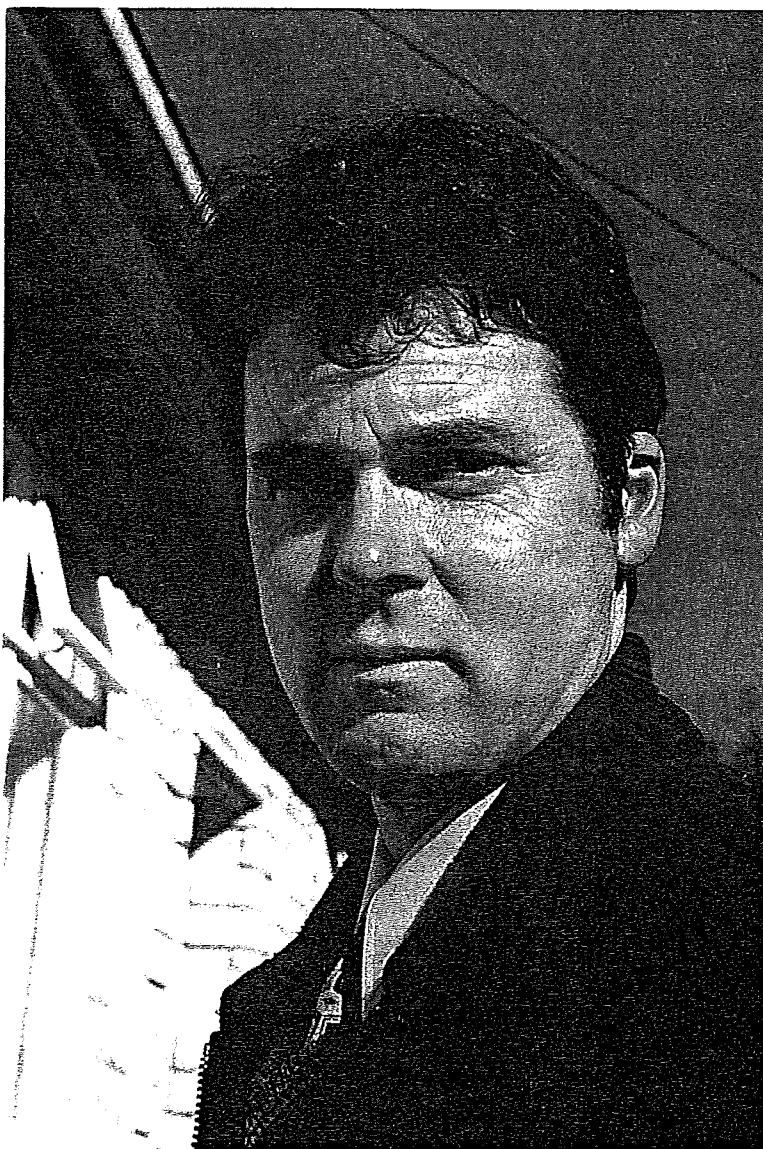
In the early Nineties, I became aware that the local Omega group held meetings at my church. I recalled seeing John Lennon and George Harrison describing the benefits of meditation on T.V. in the 1960's and thought it might be worth trying. Being somewhat socially phobic, I hesitated to go, but eventually attended a meeting at the prompting of the vicar.

My first impression of the Omega group was that it was a kind of society of followers of Peter Spink who seemed to be regarded as some sort of guru. What I liked about it was not so much what we did at the meetings but rather the people themselves. Here, I felt, I had come across a group of people travelling the same road as I was. At first I was unsure what to make of Peter. Although I did not doubt that he was a wise and intelligent person, when we listened to his tapes I found them hard to follow, mainly because his gentle tones made me a little drowsy. I could hear every word but at the end have no idea what he was talking about.

When I met Peter, however, I found that he was everything I had heard he was. If I spoke privately with him I found he instinctively spoke to me on my level and knew exactly what I wanted from him. One Saturday he took a seminar in which every time a question started forming in my mind, he answered it straight away without being asked.

I think I have made some progress in my personal journey since I have been in the group, and especially since I have known Peter. The actual meditation has, I must admit, been a little disappointing, but that, I assume, is a matter of practice. I still have a long way to go.

From various sources I have been getting the message that my progress depends upon being more involved with other people. I can see nowhere better to start than in a group such as this where I can be accepted without having to have a particular set of beliefs and where I can learn from the experiences and reflections of others who are, perhaps, further along the path to enlightenment than I am right now.



MICHAEL BRATHWAITE

As I read again the journeys these friends of Omega have described I see a pattern emerging. It is similar to the pattern Peter saw, and is still seeing as depicted in his vision for Winford Manor. It is also a 'spelling out' of the Omega Vision. Different lines or phrases or stanzas of the Vision compelled different people to search within to find the Christ-centre. Whatever the path or route or byway the traveller took the end of the journey was the same.

The three months I spent at Winford Manor in 1990 are indescribable. Outwardly I appeared cheerful, I think, busy, I hope, adaptable, perhaps. Inwardly I had no idea what was happening. It was only much later that the 'inner confusion' was revealed as a shifting of focus, a consolidation of what I always believed, an understanding that I had never really been in that 'inner space' before. It was like what must happen to a monarch butterfly while he lies patiently awaiting those indescribable changes. Although I must admit I am definitely not patient! To be honest it was a scary time! And when things are scary I move on up into my head and hope the rest of me will cope!

My second visit to the Manor with the Christchurch group was a time of creative writing and activity! I was in the 'seventh heaven' most of the time. I did plumb the depths occasionally and it felt 'good.'

Since then, when I am able to be at Putaringamatou with our group, or when I devour the Omega News, or when Peter visited and spoke to my inner self, the veils are beginning to be drawn aside for a time, as the barriers begin to tumble. I know my many responsibilities to many people intercept and the mind clutters again, the emotions froth and bubble, and the tensions mount. I sometimes feel I am drowning in my own thoughts, projects, ambitions, plans, busy-ness.

This project that Peter entrusted to me has been a gift. I have been privileged to touch into the spiritual journeys of other people. I have had to read again the early NEWS and literature of the Omega Order. I now feel ready to respond to a painting that Sister Adrienne Whitehead showed in her exhibition, and which I bought because it spoke to me that day.



THE ROAD TO SOMEWHERE.

The broad sweep of my present moment
manageable, with a slight incline,
belies the path I've come.
My yesterdays were tears, bewilderment, desolation;
yet there were sweeps at times of
intuition and
perception,
a sense of travelling as though
guided from within.

My past journey is
what I am now --
those who have walked beside,
carried me,
strode ahead showing a way,
smooth and rough,
cloud and shine,
mistakes, disasters, triumphs.
Each moment dealt by time
I played or squandered.
I am all of these.

The road ahead,
The Road to Somewhere,
I can not see.
Tomorrow's mists or rainbows,
unknowable bends and obstacles
lie hidden.
It is better so.
I have not yet the wisdom, or strength or
measure of joy
to deal with tomorrow's road.

Today's road is
a sacrament,
a eucharist.

I am and have all I need,
today's bread,
sufficient for the journey.
This is my moment on my journey
to be my most ready.
This time is mine. I have it only for this moment.

The road around the bend,
the Road to Somewhere
has no fears if I remember as I travel
to take down the barriers along the route,
barriers
that clutter up my mind --
if only's, buts, what if's --
the self-deluding thoughts that
make me stumble,
old tapes replayed,
and fantasies disguised as facts,
the 'looking outside,' craving otherwise,
when all I need is
seek the space within,
the open tranquil pool
where Christ is
now.
For now is manageable,
the incline safely graded,
the colours clear and bright and true.
My Road to Somewhere is to
draw aside the veils of Truth.

SISTER LEONIE O'NEILL



WHERE IS WINFORD?

Winford Manor is in the village of Winford south of Bristol, it can be reached by turning off the A38 onto the B3130, signposted to Chew Magna and Winford. Opposite the Prince of Waterloo in Winford is a signpost to Winford Manor (turn right, bear left) go to top of Parsonage Lane, approx. 3/4 mile. Entrance is just to the right.

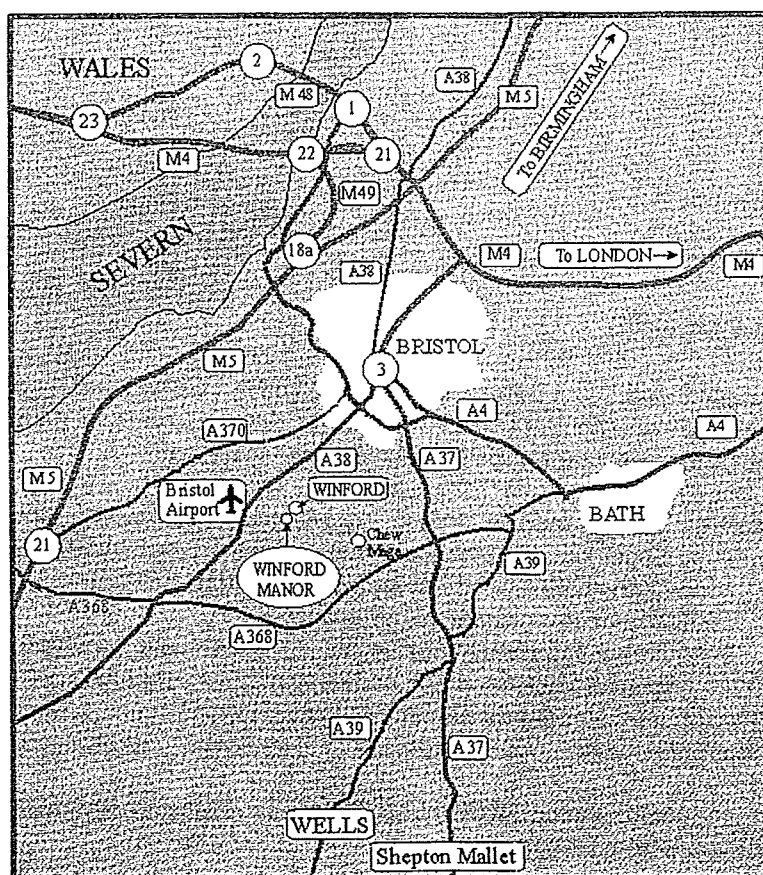
Rail: Nearest rail station is **Bristol Temple Meads** Tel: 0345 484950

Bus: From Bristol Bus Station and Temple Meads Rail Station. Bus Timetable Tel: 0117 9555111

National Express Buses: Tel: 0990 808080

Air: Bristol International Airport Tel: 01275 474441

Taxi: 20 minutes / approx. 7 miles from Bristol to Manor



The following books by PETER SPINK are available from:

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Winford Manor,
Winford, nr Bristol,
Avon, BS18, 8DW,
U.K.

OR:

Kevin & Lynette Gallagher,
85a Totara Street,
Christchurch. 4 N.Z.
Ph: (03) 348 3912

- | | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| * THE END OF AN AGE. | Pub. 1983 | \$10.00 |
| * A TIME FOR KNOWLEDGE. | Pub. 1984 | \$8.00 |
| * THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST:
Daily Readings; with Bede Griffiths, (Ed. Peter Spink) | Pub. 1990 | \$10.00 |
| * A CHRISTIAN IN THE NEW AGE. | Pub. 1991 | \$15.00 |
| * NO PLACE TO HIDE: Journeys in Faith;
Introduced by Peter Spink. | Pub. 1993 | \$12.00 |
| * BEYOND BELIEF. | Pub. 1996 | \$25.00 |

Other books and the Daily Offices may also be available.
If interested please write to Winford Manor, or Kevin Gallagher.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

In the compiling of this book I have freely used OMEGA NEWS U.K., OMEGA NEWS N.Z., newsletters, programmes, articles, Peter's books, and writings, especially the OMEGA VISION. Without these resources I would not have been able to tell the story.

I am grateful also to: Bunty Penny, who kept valuable material from the time of Peter's first visit; Shelley and Athol Angelo-Forest for the box of tapes and other material; Warwick Keys for his helpful information and letters; Bill Cox for addresses of contacts; Kevin and Lynette Gallagher for advice and reading the script; Winford Manor for tapes which clarified the Omega story; and to all those who replied to my letters and filled in little pieces of this incredible story.: David and Thea Braddock, Dominique Davaux, Anne Shirley, Margaret Alington.

The video: INNER JOURNEYS .. Peter Spink was also an inspiration when I couldn't see where I was going.

Let your meditation now become a hearing at a deeper level:
 In some measure, as you have already learnt
 Hear and see with those perceptions already given you by God
 But long forgotten or neglected.

Such hearing, listening then becomes a sharing
 In that very thing which we would grasp —
 Not graspingly — for from such strivings to possess
 The vision flees, evaporates, is gone.

No, hold by holding not, and find
 by losing those securities in which is vested
 All that crumbles with the body.
 So shall you find — your seeking quick reveal
 That you already have and know and see.

The paradox is clear, for this shall be a linking
 To that strong reality, already holding YOU
 So shall you make that most ready of responses
 “YES, I know”

Those who would know that world and enter in
 Must first the entrance find
 And here the paradox is great;
 For finding this and moving out beyond
 The limitations which have till now
 Constricted and constrained us
 We find a ‘coming home’.

And all this must we find ourselves, within ourselves,
 And for that finding know — the readiness is all.
 But how create a readiness to circumvent
 The senses, take the barriers down
 And draw aside the veils?

The answer lies within the space already there —
 Ourselves within, But do not think that space
 To be the world of thought or deep untried emotion
 These two do both indeed exist. and in the first there lurks
 The ever ready power of self-delusion
 Where thoughts feed thought . . . divorced from all but thinking:

And in the second, fantasies do readily spring up
 To take the guise of deep and fervent faith.
 The one who longs to see the vision —
 And if we do not ‘long’ we’re not yet ready,
 Must now begin to find, beyond these two

The place of clear perception:
 The space to see, to be, to move and quickly to outgrow
 Those limitations which the pattern of our living
 has imposed upon us.

It is from here the vision stems, and only here.
 There is no other place from which to see,
 No other eyes to penetrate the veils. And he who sees
 From this clear space, will, if he now persist
 Along the road which stretches straight ahead
 See not the static forms, the husks and masks
 That hide and clothe the beings we call human —
 The movements of their wills, emotions, thoughts
 Like opening books, their contents clear
 Will rise before him. Yet such seeing and such knowing
 Will not give birth to pride, but rather
 Will it seal his lips, contain his thoughts —
 And through a clear directed will
 Bring feeling into single-pointedness.
 And if direction is not thus maintained
 The vision will in this its part, not hold.
 For only when such seers without guile or judgement look
 May they proceed along this secret way.

And not to each, shall all the picture in it's every part be clear
 But all will find their parts within its forming,
 The shaping of a pattern shall they see of which they are a shape
 Yet are they now not central to its parts or shape
 Though to its wholeness is their giving central.

The measure of the pattern's growing and its fast becoming
 Are all determined by a Master Weaver —
 And yet the Master does not weave alone;
 For all are master who in that shape are weaving.
 The threads, the colours and the constitution of its myriad parts
 Are those, who being many now are one.
 And in this willing giving to the whole
 Is comprehended all communion that is holy.
 It is the yielding of the one to all, the all to One.
 The laying down and finding of a life.

But such a vision of the whole must take us now
 Beyond those parts called falsely 'human'
 For humankind is clearly something more
 Than shapes we know by touch and sight and hearing.
 These are but patterns printed on our senses
 The shadows of a substance which is hidden.
 The real is not a separation but a union,
 And here we touch both sorrow and great joy.
 The parts, the shadows and the shapes
 Are but a showing forth in time
 Of that which may be . . . can be
 But without the vision never shall be.

Within the shapes and shadows we call human
Are mirrored all those parts
Which science and the senses have divided.
The essences of all creation there exist
Each giving to the other, yet not all
For that is mirrored only, which to the mirror
Shows its face. When in that mirror
The One and ALL is shown, then does the shadow fade
Its ghost-like fibres shrink and in its place
A substance rises, growing into manhood and the pattern
And where the fortress of our separation stood
Is nothing . . . yet . . . stands everything.

What are those essences which all pervade creation
The forms they take, their giving to the whole?
The life of rock, of vegetation and of animal
Are through creation's order but a flowering forth
Of energy in space. Faces of consciousness shown in time
Which out of time, rises through man to permeate the pattern
They too, are giving to the whole,
Their essences together are one power;
A power to be distilled by us.
Each occupies a field of force,
Where each with other interacts
And drawn, as by a pre-determined power
All bend themselves towards
The human shadow; as though
Into the shadow they would their ready
Substance yield, and wait upon its seeing.

And in the moment of our apprehending
The lower to the higher gives its life.
Eternity is now, and all things mortal
Are changed, as in the twinkling of an eye.
Thus we in time, now join the timeless dance which
Out of time, takes up the cosmic rhythm.
And passing time, no longer marks the rule
By which creation's measurements are made.

Length, breadth and depth and height,
Themselves outgrowing
Do give themselves into a larger space
All opposites are reconciled, and death itself now dies.
And by this dying, resurrection life is lifted
Into the all-embracing spiral of ascension.
This is the eucharist of all that finds its life
Through crucifixion.

Where every broken, wounded thing is drawn
 Into the healing of that true light
 Which lighteth everyone.

And look, those far infinities, which for the senses fixed
 The boundaries of the Universe, are gone.
 They too were shadows
 Which, with the dawning of the Light,
 Turn in upon themselves
 And with the speed of that same Light,
 Are all encompassed
 In the human heart.

Thus is the Son of Man become the Lord of every Universe
 Where Lordliness becomes the rule of perfect love.
 And thus is our divinity begotten and Parenthood
 Conceives eternal sons
 All this is seen within that image
 Once displayed in time.

There, in the once begetting of the One was shaped
 A clear and early promise of the whole, which must
 Within the heart of all mankind, in times own fullness
 Out of time, be born,
 So, in the Word made flesh, is confirmation
 Made, of a begetting which can never cease.

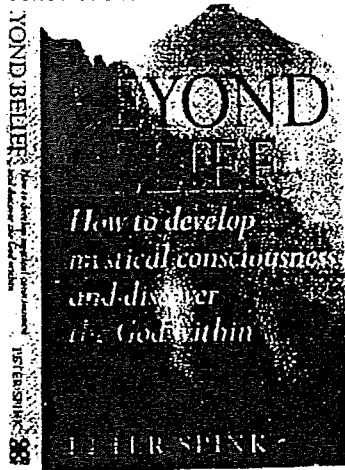
Born of this timeless, ceaseless motion
 The Godlike child in everyone shall raise its head
 And of a perfect Love begotten
 Utter the holy name 'I AM'

Here is the secret of the vision's flowering
 Its full fruition and its harvest home
 When, from earth's every hidden part
 Shall sound those sacred words, and every atom
 Of this rolling sphere, surrender to the Light.
 Like shall be like, and breaking all fast bonds
 Each child of Light shall raise its' head as one
 And in a mighty unison, return into the Sun.

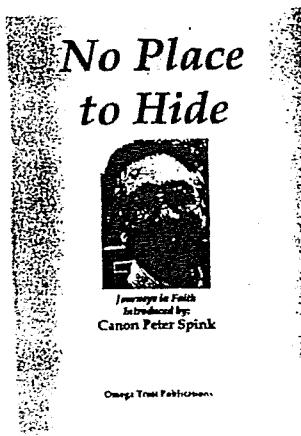
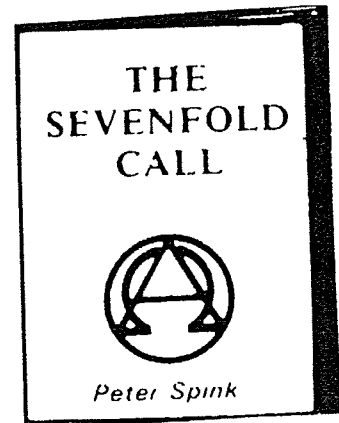
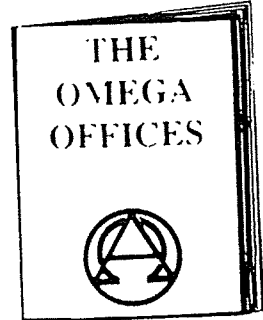
Here is the promised clear unveiling
 Where past and future now fill out the whole
 For He who is Himself the Sun's true splendour
 With Light and Love and Power, fills all in all.

Beyond Belief

As Peter Spink writes "Today's great discovery for many on a spiritual search is that in the context of the shaking of the foundations, old images of remote and capricious gods are toppling and giving way to one who is within us and who cries out for recognition". 'Beyond Belief' offers guidelines and clues leading to knowledge which you already have, to perceptions which lie just beneath the surface of your mind, waiting to emerge. This book offers encouragement to those on a spiritual journey with practical advice which will enable you to awaken to, and cultivate mystical consciousness.



The Universal Christ
DAILY READINGS WITH
BEDE GRIFFITHS



A Time For Knowledge

