

## OBITUARY

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### **David Given (1943-2005) – *Science & Christian Belief* Editorial Board Member**

After an 18-month battle, David Given, of Christchurch, New Zealand, submitted to cancer on 27 November 2005. David was a leading figure in plant conservation, both in New Zealand and internationally. As Associate Professor and Chief Adviser at Lincoln University's Isaac Centre for Nature Conservation, and more recently, curator of Christchurch Botanic Gardens, David founded New Zealand's native plant conservation movement. David was also well known for his contribution to the international rescue effort for endangered plants. His 230 publications, including international textbooks, and a wide range of peer-reviewed papers and reports have been translated into six languages. He has chaired the Plant Conservation Committee of IUCN's Species Survival Commission, and has been a tireless presenter, lobbyist and networker at international conferences and with international agencies. At their 2004 World Conservation Congress in Bangkok, IUCN recognised David's contributions by awarding him the Sir Peter Scott medal, regarded as one of the world's top awards for species conservation.

David was also well known for his Christian faith; he was always eager to explain that it was his love for the Creator that inspired him to care for the creation. He was also a wonderful mentor who inspired many of his students to pursue their faith in the Creator and their love for his creation together, as a life calling. Encouraged by his enthusiastic lectures, his students have gone on to such diverse forms of service as volunteer work in Borneo rainforests and Green Party politics in New Zealand.

For the past few years David has wanted to go beyond inspiring individuals, to uniting New Zealand Christians in a common cause to care for our natural world. He was one of the keynote speakers at a landmark conference at Auckland University in February 2005 that explored the integration of Christian faith and conservation. Though speaking as an accomplished scientist, David also inspired his audience to marvel at the vastness and wonder of God's creation. He said about himself, 'I have never lost this fascination, or the sense of mystery, or the sense of awe at the creator of this world. I am a rational scientist – but also a fascinated child.'

Members of New Zealand's conservation community, particularly those who are Christian, will remember David as a mentor, a scholar, a favourite lecturer, an example of love for God and his world, a gentleman and a dear friend. Though we are sad to lose him, we take comfort in knowing that he will now be with Jesus, free from all infirmities, able to spend the rest of eternity marvelling in God's amazingly diverse creation.

David, we will see you again at the restoration of all things.

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**Dr Richard Storey, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, Hamilton, New Zealand**

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