



## Auckland Community Church

### **Roy Steven Nathan 1944-2005**

#### ***A Memorial for Roy***

##### ***Roy was a long standing and valued member of our congregation :***

Roy passed away in September 2005 after a struggle with cancer of the throat, and was farewelled by a large crowd at St Matthews in the City on the 24th of September.

Roy had great courage, determination and compassion, and displayed these strengths in the groups he was involved in both inside and outside the gay community. In the gay community he was best known for helping to organise and run the Laetus social group which ran from the mid 1970's to the early 1980's, catering for the 1989 National Gay Rights Conference in Auckland, and later on helping to launch the Men Loving Men group.

He surmounted his difficult beginnings with courage and tenacity, and constantly sought to expand and enlarge beyond what might have been boundaries for others.

He was raised in an orphanage, left school at 15 (as far as can be ascertained) and became a cook. He was a life-long socialist, proudly identifying as working class, passing through the Progressive Youth Movement and the Communist Party. It was through these connections that he was able to visit China in the mid 1970's. He also visited Australia and Fiji, later telling many lurid stories of his adventures in the latter. However it was his experiences in China that led him to start to question some aspects of communism, particularly it's anti-Christian ideology.

At the age of fifty he began study at university, gaining a qualification in counselling after also rediscovering and exploring his Maori origins, graduating from the Hoani Waititi Marae. This he found very rewarding and enriching, and led him into a new sense of spirituality. He became a member of Auckland Community Church in his mid fifties.

He always had a great sense of compassion for the many casualties of our society, was very generous with his time and what little money he had. This was proved by the very diverse crowd that came to bid him goodbye. He also had a great sense of humour and a flair for the ribald which enlivened many an over-solemn occasion (ours included!)

He was a committed and active member of ACC, always willing to help out with jobs big and small, whether it was on the worship roster or helping out with the dishes. His contribution has been missed by all of us who knew and worked with him.

It was so sad that throat cancer ultimately prevented him from enjoying a rewarding and well-deserved retirement.