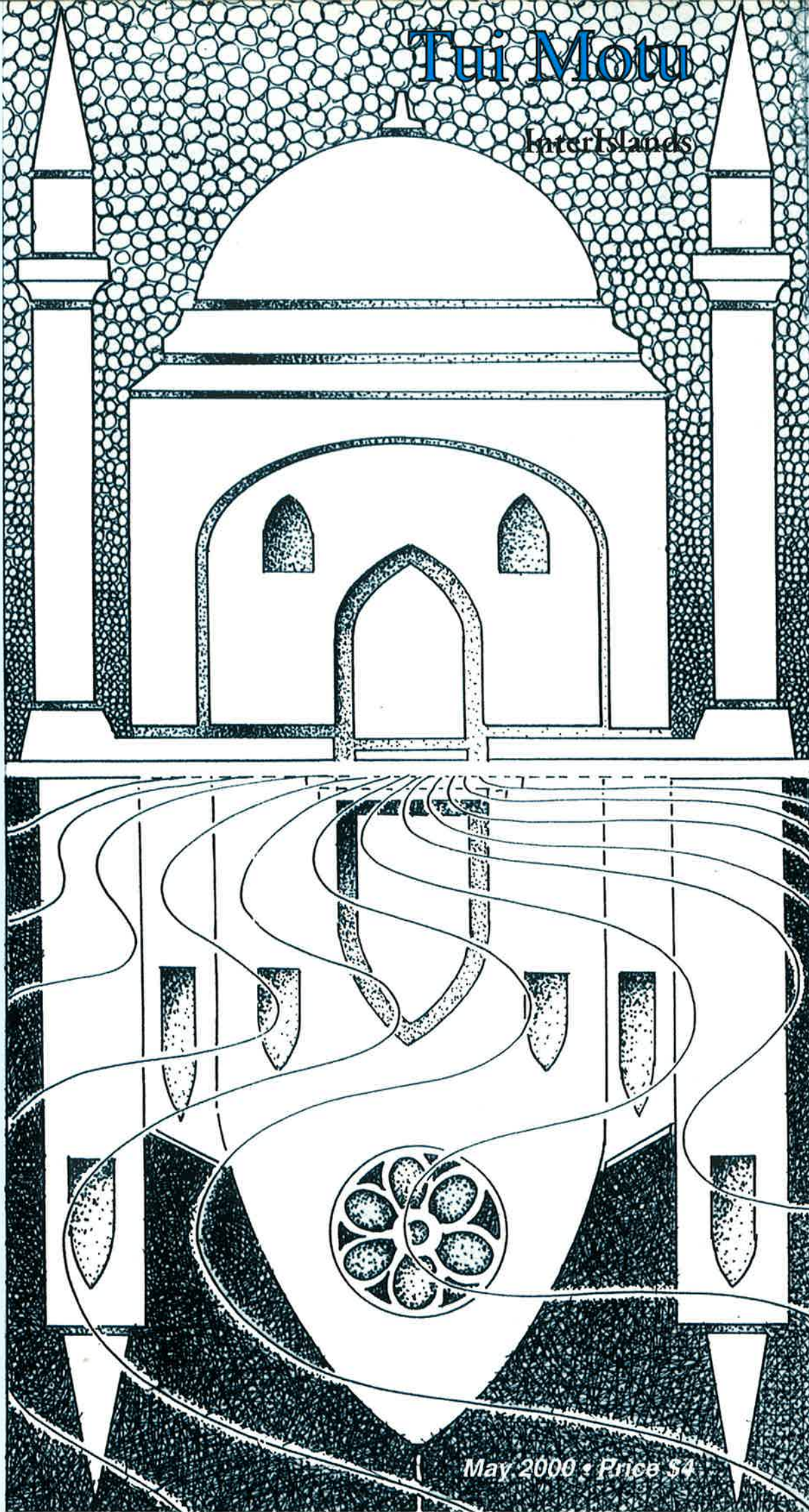


# Tui Motu

InterIslands



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 Illustrated by Dunedin artist,  
*Donald Moorhead*

# A Time for Reconciliation

Kosovo, Bosnia, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, East Timor, the Lebanon, southern Sudan: all these names spell out for us images of war, destruction and innocent human suffering. Seldom in recent times have they been out of the world's headlines. But there is also a common thread linking these zones of human conflict: in each case Muslims are pitted against Christians.

For this reason we have made Christian-Muslim relations the principal theme of this issue. Eastertide is a season of hope and reconciliation. May is the month of Mary, Queen of Peace. Yet how easy it is for us Christians to demonise the Islamic fanaticism which has often inspired the ethnic cleansing and genocide in those afflicted corners of the earth. Such judgment is superficial, unproductive – and often, simply false. Gregory Dawes (pages 9-11) challenges us to rethink the causes behind the global antagonism between two great faiths. Succeeding articles (pages 12-17) flesh out what he suggests.

A book referred to several times is William Dalrymple's *From the Holy Mountain*, a fascinating tale of a journey through the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean. Dalrymple says: *Today the West often views Islam as a civilisation very different from and indeed innately hostile to Christianity. Only when you travel in Christianity's Eastern homelands do you realise how closely the two religions are really linked. For the former grew directly out of the latter and still, to this day, embodies many aspects and practices of the early Christian world now lost in Christianity's modern Western incarnation* (page 168).

*Christianity's modern Western incarnation.* That phrase is perhaps the key. We have only to look at our own country to see how much we in the West have sold out to secularism and the commercial imperative driven by the insidious forces of global greed. Christian symbols in our city centres have been largely supplanted by the emblems of

Mammon: banks, insurance offices and the stadia of sport have displaced cathedrals and sacred shrines. Once where church bells would ring to remind people regularly that even time itself is a gift of God, now our senses are bombarded by the glitter of seductive advertising, the blare of pop music and the throb of quadraphonic amplifiers in passing cars.

Little wonder that devout Muslims visiting a western city will shrug their shoulders in disbelief and long for the call of the muezzin to prayer five times a day. While no one would dispute that Islam has much to answer for in terms of the oppression of women and the intolerance at times of other beliefs, it is also true that we in the West have a lot to learn from a culture which permeates every aspect of living with the consciousness of duty to God and the search for a God-fearing ethic. The great divide of our age is not Mohammed versus Christ: it is God versus Mammon. In such a struggle the Muslims could be our most fervent allies.

Two recent events challenge us to check out our knee-jerk reactions. How many of us were initially embarrassed by the publicity and scorn provoked by Bishop Pat Dunn's public utterances? The fact is it is rare for an episcopal voice to speak out and to be actually listened to. Likewise, many people reacted against the prospect of the Holy Father's pilgrimage to Palestine. Why can't the old man stay at home? But, in the event, the world was agog not only at what he had to say, but was profoundly moved by that frail figure depicting – for all to see – the weakness of the suffering Christ and the eternal challenge and paradox of the Christian message.

Was it not Gandhi, a good Hindu, who commented how profound was the message of Christ – and what a pity so few Christians ever bothered to heed it or practice it?

M.H.



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*The name Tui Motu was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God.*

*Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.*

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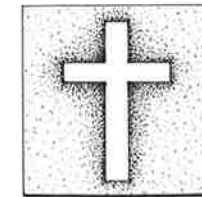
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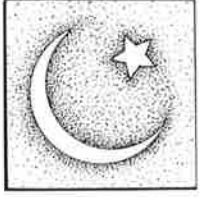
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## Cross and Crescent



It is timely that *Tui Motu* has chosen the theme of reconciliation for this issue while the images of Pope John Paul's recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land are still fresh in our minds. Every word the Pope uttered on that momentous visit spoke of reconciliation and the healing of hurt – deep, indescribable hurt inflicted over centuries and continued into our own era.

To the Jews, the Pope expressed his sorrow for the Holocaust and on behalf of the whole church, asked forgiveness for our failure to do more to prevent the Nazis carrying out what they chose to call their final solution – the extermination of all Jews from the face of the earth.

He stood, a frail old man at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem and inserted in its hallowed stones a signed statement expressing sorrow for all the suffering that Christians have inflicted on the Jewish people.

Karol Wojtyla has always been passionately opposed to anti-Semitism and on this occasion he seemed determined to erase for all time whatever remnant remained of the belief, harboured and perpetrated by Christians for centuries, that it was the Jews who had to carry the guilt for the death of Jesus. As early as 1985, when he had been Pope for scarcely seven years, he boldly refuted this dreadful libel: *Christian sinners are more to blame for the death of Christ than those few Jews who brought it about.* For, 'Christian sinners' simply read, 'you and I' (are more to blame...).

The sheer drama of the Pope's words and actions, reaching out to be reconciled to the Jews, might well overshadow for us the even more startling images of the Pope of Rome with arms outstretched in love and reconciliation to the Muslims. To hear the head of the Catholic church speaking to the inmates

of the Deheisha refugee camp, was as if to hear a father speaking to his children. It would be easy to overlook that virtually every one of his hearers was a Muslim. He told them: *Throughout my pontificate I have felt close to the Palestinian people in their suffering.* Not the Palestinian Christians note, but the Palestinian people. He was speaking to our Muslim sisters and brothers.

It is easy, here in Aotearoa New Zealand, to convince ourselves that we have never known prejudice against either Jew or Muslim. We would do well to examine that assumption. Catholics of my generation were fully exposed to the two great Catholic poets, Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton. I can recall being vastly amused by Belloc's witty epigram:

*How odd of God  
 to choose the Jews!*

without being remotely aware of its impact on my subconscious perception. More than that, I took aboard, without question, the theory propounded by St Augustine that, because the Jews had killed God, they were doomed to wander the earth until the end of time.

As for the Muslims, I have only to recall there was a time when I knew virtually all of Chesterton's poem, *Lepanto*, by heart. I thrilled to that stirring account of Don John of Austria's triumphant Crusade. I was less conscious of the subtle stereotypes that I was imbibing.

*And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile  
 And settles back the blade  
 Don John of Austria  
 rides home from the Crusade.*

For today's generation, the stereotypes from which prejudice springs are couched in less lyrical terms. The modern media presents Islam to us almost exclusively in terms of fanatical forms of fundamentalism. But fundamental extremists do not represent true religion, be it Islam or Christianity. Last month Tony Blair, the British Prime



## Sisters of Mercy 150th Jubilee

*Tui Motu extends its warmest congratulations to the Sisters of Mercy on completing 150 years of dedicated service to the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.*

To commemorate the event, a seven foot sculpture in bronze (right) has been erected near their very first property in the corner of College Hill and New St, in Auckland. The sculptor is Gael O'Leary, RSM. She describes what was in her mind as she created the work:

*I see the sculpture as a contemporary New Zealand Madonna and child image - amongst other meanings of the work.*

*The sculpture celebrates the early request from Maori women to Bishop Pompallier for Wahine Tapu to come to New Zealand to teach their children. To celebrate that call I have depicted a Maori woman with her mokapuna. As she emerged from the clay, the first process in creating a bronze sculpture, I named her Aroha. She was created in love, and symbolises too that beautiful aspect of Mercy which has no boundary of race or creed. Around her neck she wears a pendant which signifies eternity.*

*A wise, far-seeing woman, she also represents the Maori we honour today through our commitment to Te Tiriti O Waitangi. This partnership with the Tangata Whenua is symbolised by the hand-like forms which support Aroha and her son.*

*At the back of the sculpture are three unfurling fern fronds. They are symbols of life, growth and development and the ongoing journey we are called to make. The child is holding the world, signifying our commitment to care for and nurture out planet, respecting its fragile ecosystem. ■*



▷▷ Minister, made this very point. Speaking to an interfaith gathering he described Islam as "a deeply reflective, peaceful and very beautiful religious faith". He noted that too often we accept extreme fundamentalism as the true Islamic faith, adding "It is no more the Islamic religion than the Spanish Inquisition was the Christian one". It was well said.

The truth is that Christianity and Islam are not all that far apart. To realise this we have only to listen to David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus*. He brings together the two traditions of worship in beautiful sacred music – a profound expression of reconciliation.

*Allahu akbar! Allahu Akbar!  
Kyrie, eleison.*

*Hayya 'ala 's-salati!  
Christe, eleison.*

*La ilaha illa 'llah!  
Kyrie, eleison.*

*God is most great!  
Lord, have mercy!*

*Come to Prayer!  
Christ, have mercy!*

*There is no god but God!  
Lord, have mercy.*

Pauline O'Regan

### Promoter's Corner

Good news!

*Tui Motu* has received its first legacy: not a fortune, mind you, in case any reader/supporter is tempted to imagine that our financial challenges are over. But it is significant don't you think?

After all we're just a little beyond toddler class – a three-year-old – but not many three-year-olds get an inheritance. What it betokens is very encouraging. This kind donor decided:

(1) that TM was worthy of lasting consideration; and  
(2) was voting some funds based on the conviction that TM was no fly-by-night but was here to stay. The gift itself is appreciated but the implications of such giving, even more so.

People with vision and generosity are a boon to us all.

Tom Cloher

# Mary: virgin and mother

## ... saying a right thing rightly

*The virgin birth is a non-negotiable doctrine of the church.  
Tina Beattie discusses the implications of this teaching. It is not susceptible to analysis and reason, but she invites us to go beyond the narrow confines of rationalism to discover our capacity for new ways of knowing and to conceive new ways of being in the world*

There is a saying: *as Mary goes, so goes the church*. The turbulence of two thousand years of Christian history has been reflected in the controversies surrounding Mary's role in the incarnation. The images and sexual stereotypes perpetuated by the Mariology of generations of male theologians are being called into question. Many third world Christians are looking anew at Mary and recognising in her faith, life and suffering something of their own experience of poverty, oppression and hope. Today there is also a growing ecumenical movement towards exploring Mary's rightful place in the Christian story.

What relevance might the Virgin Birth, as a central symbol of the Christian faith, have for the church of the third millennium? Karl Rahner, writing about Mary's virginity, says: *The Church has the duty, not only of saying the right thing, but also of saying this right thing 'rightly'*. Many Christians today argue that the virgin birth is an outmoded doctrine which is anti-sex, anti-woman, unscientific, and detrimental to the cause of the Christian faith in the modern world. The reason for much modern scepticism might be largely because the church has failed to say *this right thing 'rightly'*.

The virgin birth is one of the non-negotiable tenets of the Christian faith, and it is fundamental to Christianity's beliefs about the significance of the

Incarnation. Patristic writers appealed repeatedly to Mary's virginal conception of Christ to defend the Incarnation against those who denied the human and divine personhood of Christ. Gerald O'Collins writes: *Traditionally, the major value of his virginal conception has been to express Jesus' divine origin. The fact that he was born of a woman pointed to his humanity. The fact that he was born of a virgin pointed to his divinity.*

### Christological significance

The symbolic significance of the virgin birth is only secondarily concerned with Mary herself, and not until the late 4th century does it begin to function as an example of sexual morality for women to emulate. As the virgin Mother of God, Mary positions Christ in relation to time and eternity, to creation and creator, to humanity and God. She is the place of fertile encounter between incompatible opposites, and through the mystery of this encounter the new Adam is conceived and the cosmos is reconciled to God through the God-child she bears.

The term *virgin mother* is a conceptual impossibility (or was, until the advent of modern fertility treatments!), and therefore it reminds us that the Incarnation is an event of reconciling paradox which requires an act of faith. It is not susceptible to the laws of logic and rationality which order the fallen world, but marks the beginning of a new creation which requires a new way of knowing and a new way of speaking.

### Dualistic differences reconciled

In *Genesis*, God creates a world of harmony in difference which falls apart into rivalry and discord in the Fall. The knowledge of good and evil plunges us into a dualistic world where difference becomes conflict and the struggle to survive sets humanity against nature, man against woman, and creation against God. In Mary's virginal motherhood, we see difference reconciled without loss of distinction. Mary remains both virgin and mother, reminding us that with God all things are possible.

The language of the virgin birth is an example of the same kind of language which tries, and necessarily fails, to describe the two natures in the one person of Christ, or the three persons in the one God. We cannot rationalise, we can only believe. Anything we say about the virgin birth is not by way of explanation. It is by way of faith seeking understanding.

As a human mother, Mary embodies Christ in history reaching all the way back to *Genesis*. It was in taking flesh from a woman that God became one with us, sharing in all the contingencies and vulnerabilities of human existence. To quote Athanasius: *the Lord's body was a real one – real, because it was the same as ours. This was so because Mary was our sister, since we are all descended from Adam*. This means that the Church's faith is by nature an incarnational faith, ▷▷



▷▷ responsive to and concerned for all the immanent realities of bodily existence. Irenaeus argued that by being conceived, born, working, suffering, dying and rising again, Christ redeemed every aspect of our humanity.

To be true to her vocation, the church must incarnate Christ in the world in a way which reflects this all-encompassing relevance of the Incarnation. So often, the church has seen her mission only in terms of saving souls, of escaping the demands and desires of the flesh to find God in some transcendent spiritual realm.

Christianity has colluded in the creation of political, social and sexual values that have oppressed and stifled the embodied human being, ignoring the realities of this world in favour of an other-worldly ideal. This is religion as the *opium of the people*, urging the poor to accept avoidable suffering and exploitation by promising them their reward in heaven. We forget that Christ taught us to pray for God's Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. When God takes flesh from Mary, he invests the smallest details of human life with eternal significance and value.

#### Virginity and divine fatherhood

But there is also a tendency, particularly in the last two centuries, to emphasise the humanity of the historical Jesus at the expense of his divinity. That is why we need to remember that Mary is virgin as well as mother. If Mary's maternity roots Christ in time, history and the body, her virginity attests to the divinity and eternal significance of Christ. Ambrose of Milan writes: *That a virgin should give birth is sign of no human, but of divine mystery.* Mary's motherhood is a sign of the continuity of the Incarnation with history, while her virginity is a sign of God's interruption and transformation of history.

When we feel overwhelmed and defeated by our vulnerability and failure, Mary's virginity reminds us that God can and does break in anew to our human condition, redeeming and

transforming beyond the capacities of mortal endeavour and will. So long as we are, like Mary, open and obedient to God, so long as we say '*fiat*' in the face of the impossible, the unbearable, the terror of the unknown, the life of Christ will grow within us beyond the manipulation and destruction of worldly power, and perhaps more specifically of the masculine, phallic power which rules this world.

### as symbol of the virgin earth Mary represents creation redeemed and renewed in Christ

Christian writers often compared Mary with the virgin earth of paradise from which the second Adam was made. Understood in this sense, virginity is not a symbol of sexual restraint. On the contrary, it is a symbol of the unrestrained fecundity of nature beyond human cultivation and interference. Sarah Maitland, in her novel *Virgin Territory*, captures this sense of virginity as something fertile and life-giving:

*The virgin forest is not barren or unfertilised, but rather a place that is specially fruitful and has multiplied because it has taken life into itself and transformed it, giving birth naturally and taking dead things back to be re-cycled. It is virgin because it is unexploited, not in man's control.*

As symbol of the virgin earth, Mary represents creation redeemed and renewed in Christ, and she reminds us that the Incarnation is not only of human significance. Today, when we face increasingly urgent questions about our stewardship of the environment, these aspects of Marian theology might provide us with a rich language of the redemption of creation and the goodness of the earth.

#### Not just biological

Mary is recognised in Catholic Christianity as the person appointed by

God in a way that does not violate her freedom or her will. Some of the fathers called her 'the rational paradise', referring to her significance as the body of the new creation and the person of faith. Like Eve, Mary has a choice between obedience and disobedience and her choice determines the fate of creation.

Since the Middle Ages there has been an increasing tendency to see Mary, the New Eve, in opposition to the 'old' Eve, so that the symbol of woman is polarised between the good woman and the bad woman, the madonna and the whore. In the early Church, however, Mary was a symbol of Eve's redemption, not of Eve's condemnation. Dante's *Paradise* retains this insight when he describes Eve as she who sits *at Mary's feet, and is so beautiful.* Mary is the sign that woman as well as man belongs within the community of the redeemed, and that she plays an active part in our redemption as well as in the fall.

#### The priest of all creation

Pope John Paul II points out: *the absolute originality of the Gospel lies in the fact that at the beginning of the New Covenant, which is to be eternal and irrevocable, there is a woman*.

### Mary is the sign that woman as well as man belongs within the community of the redeemed

The woman, oppressed and excluded by patriarchal history since the fall, moves into centre-stage in the Incarnation. She is the one to whom God gives the authority to speak on behalf of all humankind. She is *the representative and the archetype of the whole human race.*

But if this is so, what is it about her that she cannot represent the human redeemer of the whole human race when we re-enact his life and death in the Mass? Mary's '*fiat*' anticipates the

Eucharist. She becomes the priest of all creation consecrating the material world by incarnating Christ among us. I refuse to believe that another millennium will pass before the men of the church wake up to the implications of Mary's virginal conception of Christ for the priesthood.

#### The links of sex and death

As an eschatological symbol, the Virgin Mary symbolises our liberation from the cycle of procreation and death, for where there is no death there is no need for reproduction. It is easy to see how such ideas lead to an anti-body, anti-sex theology, but that is not the only way to interpret them.

### in the early church Mary's virginity represented the triumph of life over death, not of celibacy over sexuality

In the West today, we live in a culture which is caught up in a collective sexual fantasy which would be laughable if it were not so tragic. On the one hand, we are daily confronted with the dark and violent aspects of our sexuality which form the shadow side of modern life, and the media panders to our obsessive fascination with sexual violence, abuse and pornography. Yet at the same time, we are sold the myth that sex has all the significance and pleasure of a fairground ride, and so long as we take the right precautions we should go ahead and enjoy the experience.

In a society which offers women access to health care, contraception and a decent standard of living for our children, we might well find ourselves liberated to thank God for the joy of sex. But we also need to remember that God is revealed and encountered among the lost, the broken-hearted and the sick.

For many women today, their lives are little different from those of women in the early Church, and sex and death are still intimately bound up together. The

natural consequence of an active sex life for poor and malnourished women without access to birth control is not a feel-good factor and a rosy afterglow. It is more likely to mean an early death for oneself and the children one has neither the money nor the energy to care for.

This is particularly true as the AIDS pandemic sweeps across Africa. Maggie O'Kane, writing on childbirth in Nigeria, describes a hospital ward: *There is no air in the room, just the heavy sweet smell of urine from leaking mothers and a wet floor with jade green tiles. Their babies are dead. They are the Fistules, the Torn Ones, the sickness of poor, illiterate African women.* She goes on to say, *In the time it takes to read this article, 29 women somewhere in the world will be ripped apart giving birth.*

When men and women in the early and medieval Church celebrated the virgin birth, they saw in Mary's conception and painless birth the fulfilment of Eve's redemption. In Mary, the suffering mother sees the anticipation of her own restoration to wholeness and life in Christ.

If the Incarnation calls us to incarnate Christ's Kingdom on earth, then our honouring of Mary calls us to do all that we can to alleviate the suffering associated with childbirth in the poor countries of the world. Giving women access to reliable methods of birth control and liberating their sexual bodies from the tyranny of death is no small part of this calling to incarnate the life of Christ in the lives of the poor.

#### Bodies and sexuality – redeemed

The Incarnation represents the redemption of the body through Christ's triumph over death. Christianity celebrates the end of death, not the end of sex, although one would hardly think so. Christians can be relied upon to have something vociferous to say on issues of sexual morality, but how often do Christians speak out against the outrages of war and the implicit or explicit violence which informs what John Paul II refers to as the *culture of death*?

Our sexual misdemeanours are often misguided expressions of love, and these belong within the story of our life in Christ, in however painful and complex a sense. But our pacts with violence and death, whether it be the open violence of militarism and war, the insidious violence of global economics, or the sexual violence of bodies turned into instruments of hatred and abuse, are always under condemnation.

Death has no place in the Kingdom of God, but sexuality seems to symbolise something essential about the nature of that Kingdom. God invites us to a wedding feast at which we celebrate the reconciliation between humankind and god, creation and creator, man and woman, in all the joy of our risen male and female bodies.

#### The terrorism of modern thought

René Girard suggests that the virgin birth belongs at the heart of the Christian revelation of peace and non-violent love of God. Referring to theologians who dismiss belief in the virgin birth, he writes: *A great many modern theologians succumb to the terrorism of modern thought and condemn without a hearing something they are not capable of experiencing even as 'poetry' any more – the final trace in the world of a spiritual intuition that is fading fast.*

### the virgin birth is part of the poetry of our faith

The virgin birth is part of the poetry of our faith. It is not susceptible to analysis and reason, but invites us to go beyond the narrow confines of rationalism and scientific literalism, to discover our capacity for new ways of knowing and to conceive new ways of being in the world.

It is, I believe, one of the right things about the Church's message. The challenge for the millennium is to say this right thing rightly. ■

*Tina Beattie is an author, lecturer in theology. She is married, with four children. The article is reproduced with permission from Priests & People*



# Meeting of faiths. . .

## *clash of cultures*



The Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem. A most sacred place for the world's three great monotheistic faiths

The mosque covers the top of Mount Moriah:

- traditional site of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham;
- site of both the First and Second Jewish Temples
- the place where Jesus preached
- also the traditional site where Mohammed was swept up to heaven on a winged steed.

The golden-domed mosque was constructed in 691 AD after the Mohammedan capture of the city

If you look at the conflicts across the globe, often there are Muslims lined up on one side and Christian on the other. Recently Pope John Paul went to Israel and sought to dialogue with Jews and Muslims – but he succeeded better with the Jews.

*Tui Motu* looks behind this apparent clash of culture and faith, and speaks to two people who have lived and worked in Muslim lands

## Christians and Muslims in the contemporary world

*A scholar looks at the apparent hostility between Christians and Muslims across the world and suggests the causes are social and political rather than religious*

Gregory Dawes

One of the most important issues facing the religious world of the late 20th century is the relationship of Christianity and Islam. On both sides of what has always been a tense religious divide there are voices suggesting that Christian and Muslim societies are once again headed for conflict.

To many observers in the Western world, Islam appears to be a religion of violence and intolerance. Such people draw their picture of Islam from the Iranian revolution of 1979, the continuing actions of Muslim extremists in many countries, and the strict policies enforced by governments such as that of Saudi Arabia. If this is what Islam represents, they argue, the spread of Islam would surely threaten the principles of liberty and democracy which we hold dear in the West.

To many Muslims, on the other hand, modern Western societies seem to have lost their moral and religious roots, and stand for little more than a life of shallow hedonism. Worse still, many Muslim observers see Western governments as determined to force their secularised lifestyle and institutions upon the Muslim world. Western powers oppose Muslim governments even when they have widespread popular support, and appear to condone atrocities committed against Muslims in places such as Bosnia.

Before committing ourselves to either view and concluding that conflict is inevitable, it would be wise to look more closely at some of the forces which have shaped both Christianity and Islam in the last couple of hundred years. After all, in terms of their religious beliefs

Christians and Muslims ought to have much in common. The Second Vatican Council noted that Muslims, like Christians, adore the one God, believe in the self-revelation of God to humankind, trace their faith back to Abraham, revere Jesus as a Prophet and messenger of God, honour Mary his mother, and await the Day of Judgement with fear and hope (cf. Vatican II, *Nostra Aetate*, n.3).



Opposite the Dome of the Rock on the Mount of Olives is the 19th century Russian church of St Mary Magdalen

Given this common religious heritage, how has this perceived conflict arisen? What has happened to give rise to the hostilities and tensions we see today?

Both Christianity and Islam have faced serious challenges since the beginning of the modern age. However, while the challenge to Christianity was gradual and came from within, the challenge to

the Muslim world has been much more sudden and was associated with an invasion from without.

### CHRISTIANITY AND MODERNITY

There are at least two serious challenges which European Christians have had to face over the last 200 years.

#### (1) The Challenge of the Sciences

The first is probably the best known and has to do with the rise of the modern sciences.

The event which – rightly or wrongly – has come to symbolise the conflict between the claims of religion and those of science was the trial of Galileo in Rome in 1633. Similarly, the 19th century conflicts over Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory have also become symbols of an alleged conflict between scientific and religious worldviews.

The sciences have been enormously successful in enabling human beings to predict the workings of the natural world and thus manipulate that world (by way of technology) to their own advantage. They could do this without any appeal to the divine. A recent thinker, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), points out that the sciences work by a kind of "idealisation" of experience which abstracts those aspects of our world which can be dealt with arithmetically or geometrically.

It is hardly surprising that this way of thinking is unable to deal with metaphysical or religious claims. Nonetheless, given the enormous success of the sciences and the way in which they reshaped our world, the scientific consciousness has come to dominate our way of thinking.



▷▷ (2) The Challenge of Social Change

The second major challenge to Christianity in the modern age has been that of social change. One element is the *secularisation* of the world. The word “secularisation” was first used referring to the loss of church properties to central political power during the Reformation. However, the word soon came to be used in an extended sense, to refer to “that process by which religious institutions, actions, and consciousness, lose their social significance.” (Bryan R Wilson)

Secularisation refers to the *social* significance of religion: the decline in the public role of religion may go hand-in-hand with a maintenance or even an increase in its personal significance. Secularisation did *not* mean that religious belief or practice became less significant, but that its significance was now a significance *for individuals* (a shift aided by the strong emphasis on individual belief found within Protestantism). Signs of secularisation in this sense are the reduction of churches to voluntary associations and reduction of religious observance to a leisure activity (a process often known as the “privatisation of religion”).

The process of secularisation has gone hand-in-hand with the growth of what Max Weber (1864-1920) has described as *instrumental rationality*. A person's thinking is dominated by instrumental rationality. Here the criterion for action is not any established custom or worldview (*tradition*), nor is it what individuals might ‘feel’ to be right. The important thing is *what can be proven* and *what works*; in the search for that, everything is up for grabs. Everything is questionable: not only the means by which one attains specific goals, but even the goals themselves.

We seem to be witnessing an upsurge in this way of thinking in the social and political life of New Zealand at the present time. Traditional institutions (such as the medical profession and the universities) are being questioned, and

there are whole teams of experts, ‘technocrats’ or ‘bureaucrats’, drawing up plans for the “more efficient delivery” (as they say) of healthcare and education. Nothing is to be left as it was; everything is to be subject to an increasingly rational process of planning, execution and assessment. The growth of academic subjects such as Education or Management or Marketing bears witness to the fact that what were formerly believed to be skills, with which one was born or into which one could be initiated by a kind of apprenticeship, are increasingly seen as the subject of systematic inquiry and instruction.

*in the West,  
the public life of our  
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has “lost its soul”*

Weber notes that the dominance in our age of instrumental rationality has brought with it disenchantment of our world, first of all our public world, and then (to some degree) our private world as well:

“The increasing intellectualisation and rationalisation means... principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service...”

For Weber, this was a mixed blessing. The ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations. In a very real sense, the public life of our secularised and rationalised societies has “lost its soul”.

ISLAM AND MODERNITY

The Christian world has had a considerable time to try to adapt to these changes. Despite this, the impact of modernity has been traumatic and has had a devastating effect on religious thought and practice. In the Muslim world, however, the impact of modernity was much more sudden, and its effects were (in the first place) political and social rather than intellectual. Modernity was associated, not with changes emerging from within Muslim societies, but with a military and cultural invasion from without. This helps us to understand the current revival of resistance (or *fundamentalist*) movements.

Of Islam's relations with the Christian West, John Esposito of Georgetown University points out that “if the first ten centuries seemed a lopsided contest in which Christendom was more often than not literally or figuratively under siege, the dawn of European colonialism signalled a shift in power: thereafter colonialism would dominate the history and psyche of Muslims...”

“The effects of the Western colonisation of the Muslim world in the 19th century were dramatic. The map of the Muslim world after World War 1 revealed the extent of foreign dominance: the French in North, West, and equatorial Africa and the Levant (Lebanon and Syria); the British in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, and the Dutch in Indonesia.”

The colonisation of Muslim societies led to a breakdown in existing social institutions, and in particular in those institutions which represent what sociologists call civil society which lie “beyond the boundaries of the family and the clan and beyond the locality” but also “short of the state”. There were several such institutions in pre-modern Islamic societies: the religious scholars (*ulama*), the “notables” (*al-ashraff*), the guilds of craftsmen, and the *Sufi* brotherhoods.

For centuries these institutions had played a more important role in the smooth functioning of Muslim societies

than had the central government. All were greatly weakened, and some were effectively destroyed, during the colonial period. Central government was also affected, with traditional codes of Islamic and civil law replaced by legal codes drawn up on Western models, and traditional institutions of government replaced by Western-style assemblies.

*the impact of the West  
on Muslim countries –  
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has proved much more  
successful than military  
invasions*

It is hardly surprising if we are now witnessing a backlash to this process of colonisation and Westernisation. The movements of active resistance are currently undergoing a revival, fuelled by disillusionment with transplanted, Western-style forms of government and economic life, which have (in practice) failed to share power or to improve the lot of the population at large. One might argue that the failure to share power is scarcely surprising, since a liberal democracy can only be built on top of a thriving civil society, and it was those institutions which were weakened or destroyed during the colonial period.

Just how widespread this resistance is may be judged by a recent BBC television documentary in the series *Living Islam*, in which even a moderate Muslim scholar such as Akbar Ahmed describes the impact of the West on Muslim countries as “the last crusade”, a crusade which has proved tragically much more successful than the military invasions traditionally known by that name. These movements of active resistance to Westernisation are those which are often described in the West as *fundamentalist*. While they do urge a religious revival, their aims are also – at times primarily – political and social, as they seek to reshape their societies in a distinctively Muslim way.

It is easy to see the differences between the impact of modernity on Christian societies and the impact of modernity on the Muslim world. Rather than (as in Christian societies) a gradual erosion of the intellectual plausibility and social role of religion from within, Muslims face an overturning of their traditional social and political structures (as well as a sheer blow to their collective pride) from without. Religion retained something of its power to motivate, and could easily become a banner under which forces of resistance could unite. Saddam Hussein, otherwise not known for his religious fervour, knew how to tap into this sentiment when he made the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) and added the words *allahu akbar* (“God is greater”) to the Iraqi flag shortly before the Gulf War.

Moreover, these forces of resistance could – and do – meet with a great deal of popular support, since Westernisation was a more powerful force among the élites of Muslim societies than among the population at large. Hence the degree of popular support for Saddam Hussein among the populations of countries which officially oppose him. While the resistance movements use a great deal of anti-Western rhetoric, their immediate target is not the West itself (which many such activists regard as irredeemably corrupt), but rather the Western influence upon their own societies, especially upon their leaders.

Some final questions for reflection

- What would a useful Western reaction be to those religious revival and resistance movements in Muslim countries which go by the name of ‘fundamentalist’?
- What issues are likely to arise when Western companies, for instance, seek to do business within the Muslim world, or when Western tourists visit Muslim countries?
- Are the changes which have happened in the West – particularly the secularisation and rationalisation of the world – inevitable changes associated with the onset of modernity; or are they the product of a particular history peculiar to our own societies?
- Is the Muslim world destined (despite its religious revival and resistance movements) to follow the West in its privatisation and indeed trivialisation of religion, or could Muslims develop an alternative model of social life from which we, too, could learn?

For either Christians or Muslims to suggest that we are headed towards a clash of civilisations is hardly helpful. Some serious attempts to answer these questions, on the other hand, would do much to encourage a better understanding of our complex religious world. ■

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# Living at peace with Muslims

*Retired lawyer Peter Mooney (right) describes how Christians and Muslims can co-exist happily*

There was a Catholic congress on Islamic-Christian Relations at Granada in southern Spain some years ago. Bishops, priests and religious from all over the world attended – some Arab. I was the only lay person invited. I spoke of my personal experience of living among Islamic people in Malaysia. It went down like a lead balloon!

What I stressed were the points of similarity: what we have in common with the Muslim faith including a whole system of morality. I indicated my respect for Islamic beliefs – but all that was not what congress members wanted to hear. Every other speaker talked about *what are we going to do about the Islamic threat*. Many of the Arab speakers present were inimical towards Islam, describing their difficulties. They were not receptive to the notion there could be positive aspects.

To me a major flaw in this Congress was the very fact that no Muslims were invited. I would say that not one of the other speakers knew what it was like to actually live *with* Muslims. They might live *among* Muslims, but in separate communities. You can live in a little ghetto of your own. It is like being part of an army garrison – you simply do not mix with the people.

Building this bridge between the two traditions has been part of the pattern of my life. I first went to the East in the British Colonial Service; I was Crown Counsel in Sarawak and then, Attorney General. Subsequently I went into private practice, and latterly I have become involved in health care in Malaysia. As a law officer I encountered the Islamic law: I was asked to assist in codifying the Shariah Law, and this brought me in close contact with Muslim ways of thinking and to the practice of the Koranic law.

In Sarawak my relationship with Islam was on an official basis, but when I moved to Kuala Lumpur it became personal. I set up my own household. They were all Muslims including the children of the family. The Malay language is rather formal. The head of the family used to address me in the manner of an inferior to a superior. I found this rather uncomfortable. I asked him not to use this form of address, so he switched to addressing me as the father, or *paterfamilias*, and the rest of the

household followed suit. Little by little they became part of my family! The fact I was a Christian and they were Muslims made no difference.

I have never experienced conflict between the religions as such. Over nearly 50 years in Malaysia I have never personally suffered from prejudice or bigotry. I have observed it in petty officialdom where things may be made difficult for the church, but never at a personal level. The great conflict between Islam and Christianity seems to me to have been caused by factors which are not religious, but political or economic.

The Muslims I live with are very devout. They have set times of prayer during the day, rather like the Benedictines who recite the Divine Office; in so far as they can fit these prayers in with their work they do so. They go to the mosque on a Friday just as we Catholics go to Mass on Sunday. There is a dawn prayer and a night prayer, like Compline.

In our household in Kuala Lumpur we devised forms of prayer together in which we eliminated references to Mohammed and to Jesus. We simply prayed to God. With that very simple rule everything falls into place. Some prayers we used came direct from Islamic sources, yet were very close to the Catholic tradition. Other prayers were Catholic, translated into Malay.

I have for many years seen prayer as an essential basis for everyday life. I found my life in the practice of the law to be a way of expressing my faith. When I began to live in a household of Muslims, I didn't join in the ritual prayer, but at meals or other occasions we would give thanks to God as a family. That was our regular practice. Every morning after six I open my windows and hear the call of the mosque, the dawn prayer when the official cries out "God is Great, *allahu akbar!* – it is better to pray than to sleep".

When I spoke at the Granada congress, I said that Muslims show us a good example in their public prayer, something we in the West have lost. Indeed we have a lot to learn from Islam. Everywhere in the country at the appointed hours you hear the call from the mosque.



In Malaysia the small Catholic minority lives quite happily among the largely Muslim community. The same attitude of tolerance is extended also to Buddhism and Hinduism. Interestingly, people might certainly comment on someone being an atheist, never a Catholic or a Buddhist. Being atheist betokens the absence of a culture or a morality.

The Koran is very respectful of Jesus as the greatest of the prophets before Mohammed; Our Lady too is spoken of in the Koran several times with great honour. There is this sense that we all belong to the community of the faithful: we are all *People of the Book*, the Book being the Old and New Testament and the Koran. For instance, in Islamic law marrying someone 'of the Book' differs from marrying someone who is not. Under Islamic law a marriage between a Muslim male and a Christian woman is permissible. But for a marriage between a Muslim woman and a Christian man, the man has to convert.

There are quite a few religious orders of nuns working in Malaysia, and their work in hospitals and education for girls is greatly esteemed. For instance, there are institutions run by the Good Shepherd Sisters, who care for girls who have become pregnant outside marriage. There are no such institutions run by the Muslims, and the Islamic people greatly admire this work. There was no question of these women being pressured by the Sisters to convert: they were being looked after until able to live independently again.

Muslims are very sensitive to the issue of conversion. Recently however, the Grand Sheik of Azhar University in Cairo, a great Islamic authority, visited Malaysia and said that if a Muslim genuinely wished to convert to Christianity or to any other religion they were entitled to do so; it should be kept quiet so there is no scandal. He was echoing something Pope John Paul II has recently said.

People sometimes generalise about Islam, for instance that women are always dressed in black from head to foot. That has little to do with Islam – it is simply the culture of one particular place. In Malaysia, the women tend to wear long dresses. Malay dress is like that anyway. And they would generally wear a head covering. It is a graceful costume. Others, such as the Prime Minister's wife, wear European dress.

As regards the treatment of women, there is a separation of the sexes, not uncommon among Christians until relatively recently. In some Muslim countries women's rights are less than they should be, but that is not Koranic teaching.

In practice, women are in a weaker position; for instance if a marriage fails or there is a break-up. That is more the way the law is administered by men than codified in the law itself. The patriarchal tradition keeps men in control, although there are movements on the part of women which try to bridge this gap.

Women are making considerable progress in the professions, just as they have done in Europe during the last 50 years or more. Now for instance there are lots of women lawyers in Malaysia; and they are increasingly present in the medical profession, even among consultants. There is no legal discrimination against them, and the social discrimination which did exist is on the wane.

Polygamy among Muslims arose from the social conditions of times of the Prophet. The Koran lays down that a man may take four wives. This practice survives, but it is not common. Often a man takes a second wife because there are no children by the original marriage: increasingly this is done with the consent of the first wife. It would, I think, be out of the question for a woman to have two husbands.

The Shariah law includes severe – we might say *horrific* – penalties against crime. But one has to remember that this law goes back to the 8th Century. The Koran is seen as the work of God, transcribed by the Prophet. In Europe, only 100 years ago a person could be hanged for sheep-stealing or deported to Australia for the theft of a loaf.

The threat to cut off a person's hand for stealing sounds barbarous – but, then, there is much less theft in Islamic society than, for example, in New Zealand now. In Malaysia we do not have these horrendous penalties: the Federal Government would oppose it because of the plural nature of Malay society.

In my opinion the Muslim and Christian ethic are virtually identical, both arising from the Ten Commandments and a common Hebrew tradition. For instance as regards charity: you seldom hear Muslims comment unfavourably of others. Christians often tend to be judgmental of others, something I have rarely come across among my Muslim friends. They rarely speak ill of anybody else: indeed they are embarrassed when it happens, and they will seek to palliate what is said. Personally, I have learned a very great deal from living among Muslims. ■



# Christians in Asia

*Living as a Christian in many Asian countries today reminds Dominican priest Kevin Toomey of early days for the Irish in New Zealand*

As my sister and I ran down the hill to St. Brigid's primary school in Dunedin, we often ran the gauntlet of kids going to the State primary school who ground out their pre-set Protestant chant:

*Catholic dogs stink like frogs  
in their mother's bathing togs...*

Occasionally stones were thrown. This is my only such pre-Vatican II memory. Fifteen years later I entered a non-Catholic church for the first time, the Presbyterian church at Alexandra. It was to attend the funeral service for my holiday-job boss's father, a man well respected in the district. As we walked into the Church I felt strange, and wondered would I be struck dead for disobeying the Catholic Church's rule: *no participation in Protestant Church services*. During the service I struggled to decide should I pray the *Our Father* aloud with my Presbyterian friends. I did. We Catholics were slowly adjusting to the new vision of the Council. It was 1965, but I remember as though it were yesterday.

Looking back at these things now they seem quite ludicrous, but the residual feelings flow back easily! I was privileged to live through the end of 400 years of determined prejudice and discrimination, drummed up on both sides of the Protestant-Catholic divide. These experiences, however, are as nothing to the continual discrimination, prejudice and conflict, often matched by a remarkable toleration, which have plagued the relationships between Christianity and Islam since the tenth century. Recently I read Thomas Friedmann's recounting of the history of Israeli-Lebanese and Palestinian relationships; and the wonderfully evocative *From the Holy Mountain* by

William Dalrymple. From these it is clear that we are at the end of one period of Christian-Islamic relations. But what will happen in the foreseeable future, is, as yet, too early to predict with any great accuracy.

Over the past seven years, my work in the Asia-Pacific region as assistant to the Dominican Master-General has meant varied and enriching experiences of this fragile Islamic-Christian relationship. Sharing a few of these may give another sense of what it is to be a Christian in an Asian Islamic setting. It is always to belong to a tiny minority; growing smaller by the day in most places; always to be under pressure from the dominant Islamic culture; and always unsure of what the future might bring. But at the same time these Christians have a great love for the land of their birth, and, as good citizens, are proud of their country's heritage and achievements. What Pakistani, for example, is not an ardent fan of their cricket team!

*to be Christian in an  
Asian Islamic setting is  
to be always under  
pressure from the  
dominant culture*

## Iran

The most recent of these experiences was a five-day visit to the sole Italian Dominican who has restarted the mission of the Irish Dominican friars in Iran, some 20 years after their expulsion during the Ayatollah Khomeini's fundamentalist Islamic revolution. At the time of the Shah, there were thousands of Latin Rite

Catholics, many of them foreigners on contract to the Persian oil fields; now the Archdiocese of Isfahan of the Latins has a tiny remnant of some 1,500 faithful – six priests and a bishop. Uniquely in Iran, it is possible for a Catholic woman to retain and practice her faith while being married to a practising Muslim. Further, it is possible for their children to be brought up as Catholics.

The people took the occasion of my visit to celebrate their Sunday Eucharist (on Friday, of course, as Sunday is a normal workday!) in slap-up Iranian style. The choir sang well, there were five altar servers (two girls included), and all the trappings, including incense. Afterwards, around 100 people gathered in the priory refectory to drink tea, and eat scrumptious kebabs and sweets. The young fooled outside, while the adults talked inside: a typical Catholic function. The Filipina mother of two handsome adolescent boys told me "Father, it is only here that my boys can be truly themselves. Here they are free": a fascinating insight, I thought, into the nature of Iranian Christianity.

The Iranian political situation was tense. The KLM crew checked the plane's cabin three times before we landed at Tehran, searching for 'subversive' literature: any newspapers or other Western journals. The stewardesses were paranoid for good reason. They would be subject to instant arrest if any such literature were found.

Next day, I found the smouldering unrest of the students quite palpable. They greeted me, the rare foreigner, in good American English. Walking along the streets of Tehran near the university was like walking along the streets of

inner Auckland. The young were dressed in the latest jeans, with a great variety of hairstyles. Many of the beautiful young women also sported the tell-tale blue jeans under the *burka*, the black veil which completely covered them from head to toe.

The feeling of rebelliousness was borne out dramatically when all the Iranian women who boarded the same flight as me leaving Iran hurriedly divested themselves of their *burkas* as soon as the plane's doors were closed. There was a clear sense of headlong conflict between a western culture denied the young and an Islamic society asserting itself, but scarcely in control of what was going on. Christianity swims in this uncertain and stifling sea.

## Pakistan

As four million of some 130 million Muslim people, Christians form a tiny minority among their Muslim brothers and sisters. Since the dictatorship of Zia-ul-huq, Islamic *sharia* law has been in force. Among these laws is the blasphemy law, sections 295 B and C of the Pakistan Penal Code. This has become the basis of a form of controlled terror against minority religions. It is so badly formulated that it allows people who are calculating enough to use it to their own advantage, and to ensure, for instance, that a Christian can at least be 'got out of the way', and most probably killed by an angry crowd.

I visited a small camp of refugees, two families of farmers thrown off their land after they had applied for it to be freeholded. The Muslim people of their village were determined that no Christian people would be able to establish themselves as landowners rather than day-labourers. Hence an accusation was made against one illiterate Christian man of having read Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. What to us seems an absurdity so incensed the local villagers that the whole Christian community was driven out. As far as I know these two families are still refugees in their own land.

The campaign to change the blasphemy law has been supported by many Pakistani Muslim intellectuals who are clear that the law is unjust. However, the clout of the *imams* (Muslim clerics) is so strong that the only way that some justice can be brought for minorities is to set up some procedural norms restricting the initial process of arrest and bringing to trial when accusations are made under this law. These norms have been supported from outside the country, and have been partly brought into effect by the recently deposed Sharif government. It is too early to say how effective they will be.

*the recent history of  
tolerance and peaceful  
co-existence of  
Christians and Muslims is  
becoming more fragile*

This is only one of the ways in which the Christian community has been discriminated against. Christians are treated as second class citizens in their own country. The attempt to impose an identity card on minority people was effectively pushed into oblivion in 1993-4 because of pressure both within the country and from outside. Such identification by card would have meant that the already strong pressure against minority people when applying for jobs would have intensified: there would be little hope for Christians of future government or other public employment. This campaign showed that some form of determined pressure from outside the country has a marked effect on the government, and is important to help maintain the rights of minorities, including Christians.

The recent coup by General Musharaf gives hope so far that there may be no further erosion of the rights of minorities, but the history of past governments is such that such hopes can quickly vanish.

## Conclusion

The situation of each country is so different that it is difficult to generalize. However, it is clear that the recent rise of Islamic, mainly Shiite, fundamentalist movements and governments, which followed the successful Iranian revolution of 1975, is slowly being spread around the world. It is fuelled by vigorous evangelizing and the unlimited financing of mosques by Muslim petro-dollars. This means that the recent history of tolerance towards minorities and peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in many countries, including Pakistan and Indonesia, is becoming more fragile. In this climate, the Christian minority retreats back into its shell, and those who can do so, migrate. In Iraq, Iran, and Indonesia there have been sizeable migrations of Christian people, leaving often only the poor and old to fend for themselves in this more difficult situation.

Presently it is becoming harder for Christians to maintain that optimistic, hopeful faith stance which would allow them not only to survive, but to flourish. They would like to continue

*in the Islamic world  
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to live the beatitudes is  
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of heroic proportions*

to relate to their non-Christian neighbours as the strong light of gospel beatitudes would show them. All areas of life can be reached by the 'good news', and nothing is foreign to it. That is the nature of the Gospel they live. But for Christian minorities in the Islamic world, to live the Beatitudes is becoming, as it was at the beginning of the church, a way of life of heroic proportions. ■

*One time parish priest and university chaplain, Kevin Toomey OP now represents his Order through the Asia-Pacific region*



# ... and how is Christianity faring through the lands of the Bible?

From the 4th to the 7th Century the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean – the Levant – were largely Christian. Then came Mohammed ... Yet even a hundred years ago there were substantial Christian minorities through the whole region

## Istanbul

A dwindling Greek minority is left in Istanbul, once their capital city. In 1900 the population was still almost 50 percent Christian. By the terms of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, 400,000 Greeks were allowed to remain in the city. All this changed in 1955 when Istanbul played host to the worst race riot in Europe since *Kristallnacht*. In a single night shops were looted, cemeteries desecrated, the tombs of the Patriarchs destroyed, 73 Orthodox churches gutted. The Greeks used to control the commerce of the city; the Turks wanted to drive them out and take over the businesses; and they succeeded. Today there are about 5000 Greeks remaining. A decade from now there will be no clergy left. After 1,500 years the Ecumenical Patriarch will have to leave Constantinople. On a good Sunday the Patriarch may get a hundred people in church. On a bad one there will not be two filled pews.

## Lebanon

The civil war in Lebanon left between 100,000 and 150,000 dead, and no one came out of it well; but the Maronites certainly emerged with their reputation for ruthlessness, brutality and political incompetence enormously enhanced. They also came out of it fatally weakened. By the final stage of the war, which set Christian against Christian, a third of a million Maronites - over a quarter of the entire Christian community in Lebanon - had fled the Middle East for good, joining the haemorrhage of Christians leaving virtually every country of the region.

## Coptic Egypt

Once some 700 monasteries filled the desert between Jerusalem and the southern border of the Byzantine Empire. Since the Coptic Pope, Shenoudah III, assumed office in 1982, there has been a massive revival of monasticism in Egypt, and many ancient monastery ruins, abandoned for hundreds of years, are being brought back into use. The Copts have suffered petty discrimination for centuries, but the recent revival of Islamist insurgency in Upper Egypt has made their position more dangerous and uncertain. Hundreds of years of living as a minority under Muslim rule has taught them to keep their heads down. But it is estimated that in the past decade as many as half a million Coptic professionals had left Egypt, mainly for Australia, Canada and the U.S.A.

## Deir el-Zaferan, E Turkey

Until the First World War the city was the headquarters of the Syrian Orthodox Church, the ancient church of Antioch; they split off from the Byzantine mainstream because they refused to accept the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). Persecuted as heretical Monophysites, far from the centres of power, 300 Syrian Orthodox monasteries successfully maintained the ancient Antiochene liturgies. By the end of the 19th century only 200,000 Suriani were left in the Middle East, most concentrated around the patriarchal seat of Deir el-Zaferan. By 1990 barely 4,000 Suriani were left in the whole region. Today there are about 900. Two monks rattle around in the echoing expanse of 6th century buildings, caretakers of a religious relic. "Two hundred years ago there were 700 monks on this mountain... Now there are just two of us left."

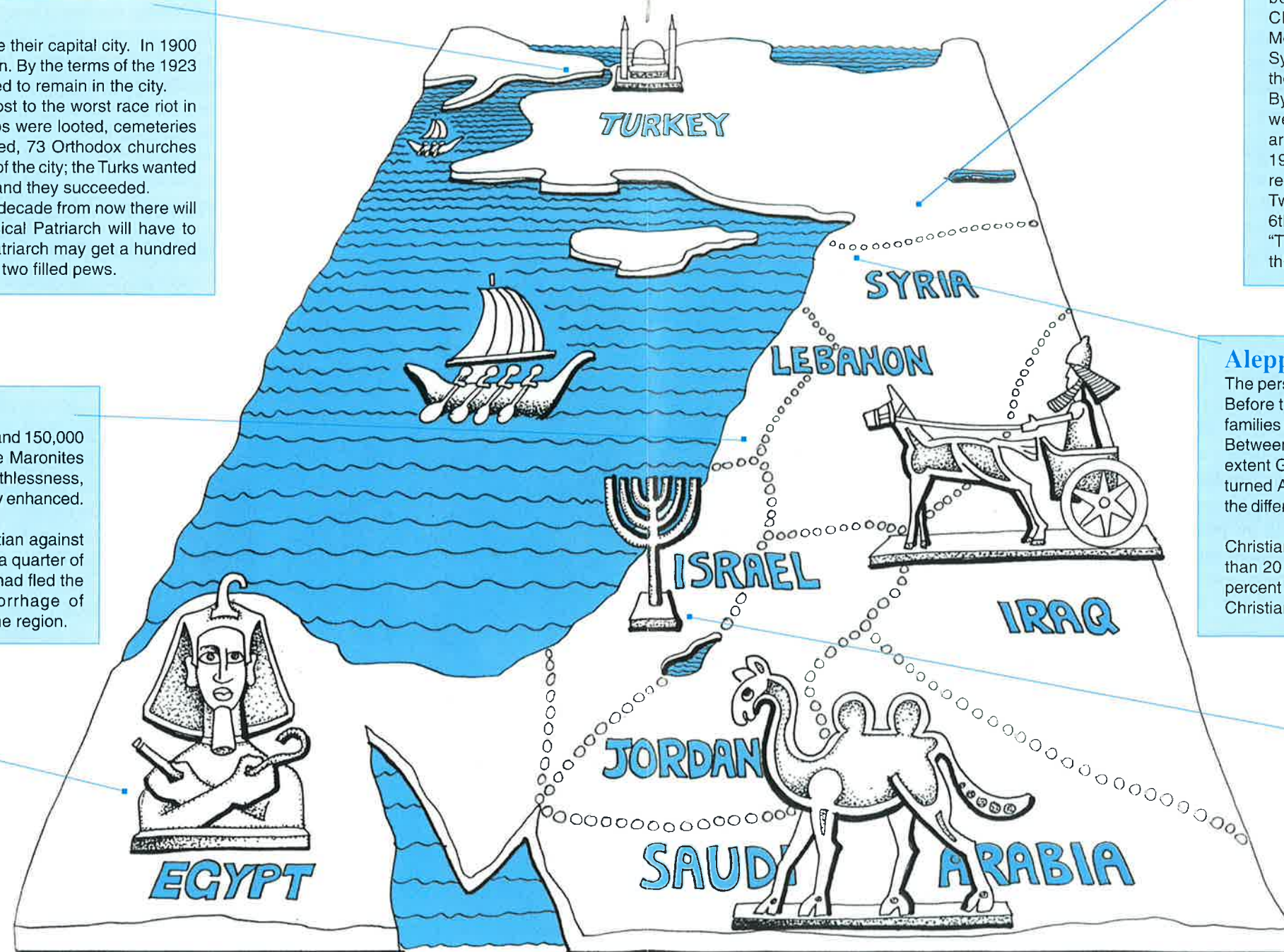
## Aleppo, Syria

The persecutions of the Armenians had changed the face of Aleppo. Before the First World War there were only three hundred Armenian families in the town; by 1943 Armenian numbers had topped 400,000. Between 1914 and 1924 similar waves of Suriani (and to a smaller extent Greek Orthodox) refugees followed in their wake. The influx turned Aleppo into a Noah's Ark, place of shelter and safety for all the different Christian communities driven out of Anatolia by the Turks.

Christians themselves estimated that they now formed slightly less than 20 percent of Syria's total population, and between 20 and 30 percent of the population of Aleppo, giving that city one of the largest Christian populations anywhere in the Middle East.

## Israel

Combined Palestinian and Israeli statistics suggest that 180,000 Christians live in the Holy Land: many are Eastern Orthodox. The Christian population of the Holy Land has dwindled because of emigration, and it accounts for about 2 percent of the overall population, down from 13 percent in 1900.



This information was put together by Fr Aidan Cunningham IC. A valuable reference for a study of Christian-Islamic relations in the Middle East is the recent book of William Dalrymple: *From the Holy Mountain* (Harper Collins 1997). ▷▷



# Reconciliation: Forgiveness and Accountability

*In view of the violence and land invasions in Zimbabwe, what Easter message can we apply to such racial and religious conflicts?*

Mary Eastham

The picture of Pope John Paul II forgiving his attempted assassin, Mehmet Ali Agca, in his jail cell in Italy stirred the conscience of the world and taught many people the meaning of forgiveness. So too did Nelson Mandela's heroic posture toward those who had imprisoned him for 27 years. Both incidents reveal the moral and spiritual power of the victim to stop the cycle of hatred and violence and transform it into peace.

The moral consciousness of the oppressor may have been piqued, if not raised dramatically. Morality and legality frequently appear to be 'black and white' for those caught up in violent situations, as we have seen recently in Zimbabwe. We saw the anguish and anger of the white farmers and their families who have worked very hard to develop their properties and live in peace

with the black majority. And we also saw the anger of the indigenous people who want what they believe has been taken from them.

In the long view, we know we may have Cecil Rhodes and Ian Smith to blame for originating today's mess in Zimbabwe, as well as Mugabe's ineffective government. But John Locke should appear in the dock as well. Though considered the father of the English Enlightenment, Locke plainly did not perceive the cross-cultural disaster he was creating with his notion of 'private property' when it was applied to cultures for whom land/Earth had such a different meaning. In his *Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent and End of Civil Government*, Locke's central discourse on property set up a two-pronged argument for the inherent right to property ownership. On the one

hand, he cited the authority of Genesis to affirm that everyone had a divine right to own property because the land belonged to all. On the other hand, he argued fervently that those who 'improved' the value of property through their labour had the right to own more, provided they didn't hoard resources others may need for survival. In short, Locke argued that God had given the world to its most industrious and rational citizens. The values of labour and industry reign supreme.

Locke resolved the tension between individual self-interest (the right to private property, especially property one has 'developed') and concern for the common good through his concept of law, because good law in his view is both rational and moral. This premise held true in countries where there were plenty of people with money and

commercial interests. In short, Locke did not want to enclose or appropriate any part of the public commons without the consent of all fellow 'commoners'.

John Locke was a devout Christian and a very decent man who fought against authoritarian concepts like Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which in effect sanctioned tyranny. Locke wanted to establish the superiority of concepts like the freedom of a sovereign people to govern themselves by rational and moral laws they themselves had made. It may also be of interest to know that Locke wished to dispossess native Americans of their land, so that English colonists could more readily develop cash crops and foster a thriving business economy. How could Locke reconcile his Christian faith and his commitment to freedom with his attitude toward native Americans? He simply had a huge blind spot when it came to other peoples and cultures.

Applied to the newly emerging United States of America, Locke's philosophy of property rights through economic development provided a strong legitimization for destroying the cultures and ways of life of native peoples, who had lived in harmony with the Earth for thousands of years. The Earth was never 'property' to them, but a living organism with whom they had a reciprocal relationship. The successful policy of genocide against the native peoples has made it difficult if not impossible for native Americans to fight back. But this is not true in other parts of the world. *White man's burden*, indeed.

When we think of philosophers like John Locke, we must keep in mind that their ideas were ultimately intended to help the dispossessed working classes of Europe who were forced to emigrate. The ruling classes first did to their own countrymen what the English settlers then turned around and did to the indigenous peoples of colonised countries. It is not easy to leave home and loved ones, travel to remote areas of the world, and forge a new life for

yourself and your family. Many of the early settlers knew they would never see their homeland or family again. There must be something very deep in the cultural DNA of the European immigrant when it comes to owning property. This is why buying, owning and defending land has become so important. If you've ever been dispossessed, it haunts you – it happened once, it could easily happen again. Look at Israel today – or Ireland.

It's all very grey, is it not? Very painful and very grey. It may take another hundred years to reconcile such deep wounds between 'victims' and 'oppressors'.

The Easter season prompts us to pray for victims of violence and injustice throughout the world: to pray that people can find the strength and courage to forgive the unforgivable – in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo,

*reconciliation  
based on forgiveness  
and accountability is a  
most powerful source of  
inspiration for many*

Rwanda, Chechnya and East Timor. Since people in these countries have been scarred by the savage butchery of one ethnic group by another, the only way forward is to forgive the unforgivable. Wrongs like this can never be righted; the score can never be settled. To begin again, one can only forgive.

The approach of Pentecost suggests another prayer: that people can learn to embrace a vision of reconciliation that stresses *accountability* as well, not just forgiveness. For unless the ruling classes – be they black or white – become morally accountable for their crimes, an authentic peace based on justice is not possible. A vision of reconciliation based



Pope John Paul speaking with Mehmet Ali Agca in his cell at Regina Coeli prison in Rome, 1982

on forgiveness and accountability is a most powerful source of inspiration for many throughout the world. People inspired by this vision are almost always on the cutting edge of education for justice and ecological awareness.

The 'word' is out; a butterfly finally emerging from the chrysalis, but one can scarcely feel triumphant when we have yet so far to go. In many respects, 2000 years after Christ, the healing process he inaugurated is just beginning. As the great Indian poet Tagore once put it: *You can't make the flower bloom faster by pulling on its petals.* ■

## The plight of Christians in the Middle East

▷▷ The problems faced by Christians right across the Middle East are surprisingly diverse. ...I expected that Islamic fundamentalism would be the main enemy in every country I visited. But it turned out to be more complicated than that.

In south-east Turkey the Syrian Christians were caught in the crossfire of a civil war, a distinct ethnic group trodden underfoot in the scrumage between two rival nationalisms, one Kurdish, the other Turkish. Here it was their ethnicity as much as their religion which counted against the Christians: they were not Kurds and not Turks, therefore they did not fit in.

In Lebanon, the Maronites have reaped a bitter harvest of their own sowing: their failure to compromise with the country's Muslim majority led to a destructive civil war that ended in a mass emigration of Christians and a proportional diminution of Maronite power.

The dilemma of Palestinian Christians was quite different again. Like their Muslim compatriots they were Arabs in a Jewish state, and as such suffered as second-class citizens in their own country, regarded with a mixture of suspicion and contempt by their Jewish masters. However, unlike most of the Muslims, they were educated professionals and found it relatively easy to emigrate – which they did *en masse*. Only in Egypt is the Christian population unambiguously threatened by a straightforward resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism. If the pattern of Christian suffering was more complex than I could possibly have guessed, it was also more desperate. Only in Syria had I seen the Christian population looking happy and confident – and even their future looked decidedly uncertain. ■

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*Do parents come closer to God by raising children?  
Priest-psychologist Paul Andrews looks at  
the Christian vocation of parenthood*

## God and Parents

Do parents come closer to God through their children? St Thomas Aquinas was asked a similar question at a time when nuns and monks were linking schools with their convents or monasteries. Is caring for children compatible with the search for God? The monks thought of religious life as requiring quiet, the peace of the monastery garden, the opportunity to pray without being interrupted. When children arrived, the peace was shattered. There was noise and constant movement. Things were broken, ink was spilled. Children, unlike roses or cabbages, did not stay where you planted them or follow instructions. If they didn't like you, they told you so. They demanded so much energy and thought that there was little left for 'religious duties'.

Aquinas considered the question fairly, and his answer made an impact. Educating children was a work of mercy, a giving of oneself. Even if prayer and peace of soul suffered, it was a work of God.

What teachers go through is nothing compared with the experience of parents. The mother of a newborn simply cannot give thought or energy to anything except her child; and the demands on her husband are nearly as great, if he is ready to meet them. A 'retreat' on one's own, such as Religious enjoy, would be an unthinkable luxury for a young mother. If God is to reach such people, who are carrying out *the* most important job in our society, it cannot be through 'spiritual duties', but in other ways.

God touches parents through their children, and in ways that change drastically as the children grow. At first it is a touch that fills you. Kate draws out of you an energy, responsiveness, and love that you did not imagine yourself capable of. She fills your life, changes it. You invest hugely in her, and she rewards you, from the first smile to the day when you stand beside her as a bride or graduate or whatever. She fills your conversation, hangs out of you, wants into your bed in the morning, needs you to think of her body, sleep, food, warmth, clothes, dangers. For her you are larger than life, immortal. You must survive, never get sick. You are the universe for her.

How that changes as she grows into her teens! She reduces you to life-size, then cuts you down still further, takes you off your pedestal. She grows tall, sexy, quick-witted, in touch,

feels she can take on the world, doesn't want to know about bedtime, claims she can plan her own life, take her own risks, spar with her friends, share their passions, spurn your advice but quote the same message with awe when it is uttered by some young idiot in her group. She starts to earn money, plan her own holidays, pull away from the family. Once you could do everything for her, now she seems to need you for nothing except bed and board.

Here is the emptying that St Paul placed at the heart of the Christian life. Mary faced it when she found Jesus in the Temple and heard his *Did you not know I must be about my father's business?* She pondered the words as parents still brood on their daughter's words. Letting go, finding joy in her new skills and independence while holding the limits.

Not sharing Kate's grandiose notions of her own power and wisdom, yet neither treating her as a child. Allowing her to make you feel fuddy-duddy, Victorian, three-piece-suited, antediluvian, slow-witted, redundant, *old*, yet remaining what she needs, a parenthood of presence rather than power, setting limits even if they are defied, not living through her, nor trumpeting her triumphs or misdemeanours to your friends. She needs to know that you have a life of your own without her. Now that she needs you less, she does not want to find that you need her more. When Jesus spoke of *losing your life in order to find it*, he was not talking about exotic martyrdoms, but about the daily life of teenagers' parents. They are asked to love without sensing a return of love, to forgive when they feel their forgiveness is being taken for granted, taken advantage of.

Here is a reversal of the joy that young parents feel when they have created a cocoon of love and security for their little ones. Now the cocoon is broken, the umbilical cord is painfully cut, and parents may feel a grief like that of Jesus when the rich young man spurned his invitation and turned away, or even the betrayal as he felt the kiss of Judas on his cheek. In these moments of pain God still touches you.

Sad, disillusioned adults can pray too. Those whose style of prayer has not matured with their years, are like businessmen who still rely on piggy-banks. Nobody can put the words or silence of prayer into our hearts except God, who is touching us even when prayer seems impossible. But some of the

## A Bishop's Barrow Story

Br Ray Kelleher

Towards the end of 1997 Hurricane *Martin* hit the northern Cook Islands. The people of Manihiki were the worst hit. In fact a number lost their lives, some had amazing escapes.

After the hurricane many were evacuated to Rarotonga and even as far as New Zealand. But gradually normality started to return to Manihiki and people started to return. The Diocese of Rarotonga was supported by many of its New Zealand friends; but sometimes it is not always told how the help ends up with the people. We become so involved with the urgent present that sometimes other things get lost.

This story I would like to share with you as I think it illustrates how simple things are so helpful.

One day a few months after the disaster, a lady from Manihiki called to see the bishop in Rarotonga. The conversation went a bit like this:

"Now, what can we do to help at this stage – what is it that people could really find helpful?"

The visitor sat and thought, then said, "Bishop, we have no transport; all was lost. If we had wheelbarrows it would be so helpful."

"Great! Some people in New Zealand have sent me some money. You will get your wheelbarrows."

They went up as soon as the bishop could find 50 wheelbarrows. There were 50 families on Manihiki. Thank you, our New Zealand friends.

Some time later the Bishop visited the Island. He reported that wheelbarrows have many uses.

"Many of the Manihiki people have returned together with some of the children. They were keen to get back and rebuild their homes and get their families together again. The place is rich with fish so that side of life will not be too difficult. With very little motorised transport on the atoll, they use boats to ferry things around.

On land, they have to carry their loads any way they can. A wheelbarrow makes for light work when carting fish up to the house, or fuel down to their boats. Mixing small amounts of concrete; the children use them to collect coconuts and firewood. Wheelbarrows also double as a washing tub; for clothes; to bath the baby; to collect water when it rains – and as a pram!

I would never have thought of buying a wheelbarrow for anyone. Maybe it would make a good wedding present for a couple starting off with very little!!"



concerns of a parent at prayer find voice in these lines from a nameless father for his son:

*I pray that I may let my child live his own life,  
and not the one I wish I had lived.  
Therefore, guard me against burdening him with  
doing what I failed to do.*

*Help me to see his mis-steps today  
in perspective against the long road he must travel,  
and grant me the grace to be patient with his slow pace.  
Give me the wisdom to know when to smile at the small  
mischiefs of his age  
and when to show firmness against the impulses  
he fears and cannot handle.*

*Help me to hear the anguish in his heart through the  
din of angry words, or across the gulf of brooding silence;  
and, having heard, grant me the ability to bridge the gap  
between us with understanding.*

*I pray that I may raise my voice more in joy at what he is  
than in vexation at what he is not,  
so that each day he may grow in sureness of himself.*

*Help me to regard him with genuine affection,  
so that he will feel affection for others.  
Then give me strength, O Lord, to free him  
so that he can move strongly on his way.*

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*In the public eye...*

*Bishop Pat Dunn of Auckland has recently received the sort of media exposure normally reserved to maverick politicians. Two Aucklanders (quite independently) sent us their comments – and their support for his courage in speaking out*

Offering material help to prospective mothers under financial pressure sounded both reasonable and kind. However it evoked howls of protest from some organisations with a declared interest in the matter. Some were chagrined that such an offer should be voiced by a man and, worse still, a bishop. Suddenly Bishop Patrick Dunn was in the eye of a storm. One columnist in the NZ *Herald* was vitriolic and almost apoplectic. The bishop I understand offered to meet the columnist to discuss the issue on a personal basis (something of an example to those of us who had less charitable reactions).

Hardly had this furore abated than a radio report announced that the bishop was in favour of artificial contraception. In the context of a discussion about the reckless use of sex he implied that people so determined ought to take responsibility for outcomes and not resort to drastic alternatives such as abortion to deal with the consequences. He put it rather forcefully, but in context it made sound sense. Only the ill-informed, the ill-intentioned, or the ultra-sensitive conclude that he was making a comprehensive case for contraception.

By now Bishop Dunn had become entirely newsworthy. Newspapers wanted him to tell people how and why he became a priest and what it was like to be a bishop, Television programmes wanted to hear his views on contemporary religious practice.

Suddenly he is part of the public discourse. This is likely to

remain the case. Not because he seeks publicity but because the media will seek him.

Such a prediction may not be much consolation for the Bishop. Being pursued by journalists is not a happy prospect as it is intrusive, time consuming and fraught with perils aforementioned. Many prominent citizens shun the media because they believe (often rightly) that they are quoted selectively, inaccurately, or the less important is given prominence. They feel it is better to withdraw and be safe rather than be misunderstood. The problem with this reaction is the space will be taken by lesser voices, and there are quite enough of those already.

The community has to be patient and allow its leaders a generous discount when reading media reports. So what, if the bishop has to explain that what he really meant was this, not that. At least he's out there and people are interested.

Not everyone can survive media attention. It's exacting, television especially. There is nowhere to hide. You make yourself accessible and vulnerable when you get involved. You need to be open, honest, courteous, good humoured, and above all, unpretentious. You need to talk *with* people, not *at* them. This array of talent and discipline is exceptional. It's a tough call and not many can answer it.

Bishop Patrick Dunn is one who can. Whatever the occasional hazard, Catholics ought to be pleased that he is able to share these gifts with the wider community.

*Tom Cloher*

*Dear Bishop Pat...*

Congratulations on putting the debate in public, both about abortion and contraception in a way that people can get a grip of and understand. The church has so often marginalised itself by not addressing the real but difficult issues of personal moral choice that don't conform with the set of moral norms it considers important. You are doing that, and in my view doing it well.

Some personal reflection might be useful to you in how you continue to frame these issues for public discussion. I have for the last ten-plus years helped with the business planning to set up primary health care centres for low income populations. The organisation I do this for is *Health Care Aotearoa*. The centres are community owned and controlled, and half of them are Maori for Maori services. Some 150,000 patients are looked after nationwide.

The most frequent requests for abortion come from Maori and Pacific Island women. In a large number of those cases the reason for pregnancy is incest, rape or forced intercourse within marriage. Invariably the women are poor. The prohibitions against contraception supported by religious norms make it almost impossible for those women to prevent pregnancy if they believe it to be necessary. Furthermore, they seek abortions without the benefit of support because stealth is necessary if they are to conceal it from their families. They are clear that the pressures (church and family) that prohibit exposure of incest and rape are identical to those that sanction neither contraception nor abortion. They are caught in the classic bind.

The benefit of your comment to date is two-fold. First you are explicit about not blaming people for their choices. This is hugely important in my view. Experience has been a hard teacher in this field for me and I think this is exactly the right starting point. We are much better as church to affirm people's right to make moral choices.

Secondly, your approach to offering alternatives is practical and hopeful. The church stands for care for the vulnerable and financial support is appropriate. While this element of your contribution has received some derisory responses it is a tangible stake in the ground signifying that we wish to do better here than we have done in the past.

One area you may look to pick up on as you progress this debate is the area where abortions come from the experiences of rape, incest and forced sex within marriage. Of themselves none of these would cause us to be less resistant to abortion within our own moral framework, but they do challenge us as church to articulate more clearly the essential human right

to be free of sexual violation. This is the area that is most hidden in human relationships and the suspicion among those affected is that the church wishes to keep it hidden so that nothing interferes with the sanctity of marriage and family. A fresh approach to this issue would provide much needed moral support for those currently facing this real affliction in their lives.

On the contraception issue I think you have touched the pulse of every family raising children. We all know and appreciate that the sexual norms that are prized by the church are some light years from the moral grab-bag available to young teenagers. Yet I have significant hope in the moral courage of my children to work out how best to experience authentic relationships that move towards the best experience of love and intimacy that we experience in our own marriage. Our children will indeed use contraception, they will experience sexual intimacy at a frequency and an age that is significantly earlier than our own experience. They will not be married as early as we were probably. They also have a compelling honesty about these matters that was almost absent in my own youth. They talk with Jo and me in a way I would never have talked to my own parents.

The key point here for all of us in moral leadership is to point the way, not to harangue, but to encourage and to resist sacrificing the good in pursuit of the perfect. It seems to me that you are striking the tone right, neither dismissive of the church view of ideal moral arrangements but realistic about the issues that face us all today. In that respect you give the church the possibility of wider credence.

Debate about sexuality has always been the Achilles heel in the public dialogue led by the church because it is widely viewed as lacking touch with the lives of most of us. You are doing a nice job of changing that view. Keep at it, there is much yet to be said and done.

*Pat Snedden*

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# Women, Sex and War

Peace activist Brian Wicker offers an unusual slant on why humans go to war

The theme chosen by the Pope for the 1995 *World Day of Peace* was that of woman as 'educator to peace'. There were great matters which, I had fondly hoped, the Pope would address in his message. The theme has the advantage of addressing women on a topic which appears to have nothing to do with abortion, contraception, *in vitro* fertilisation or women's ordination. It hints at female empowerment while diverting attention to apparently neutral ground. However, I think it is possible to make more of the Pope's choice of theme. Perhaps the effort should be made to get an essential point across, namely the intimate link between war and sex.

A fundamental cause of war is male sexuality. The celebration of masculinity at women's expense has been both a cause of and a consequence of warfare from time immemorial. As long as fighting and killing people required superior physical strength, it was necessarily men's work and a principal source of male pride. Boadicea and a few Amazons excepted, women stayed at home while their menfolk went out to fight each other.

But, more profoundly, war has its source in lust. I mean of course that 'lust for domination' (*libido dominandi*) which St Augustine – and Aquinas following him – recognised as a common cause of fighting, and which both condemned as an unworthy and illegitimate basis for going to war. Now the lust for domination over an enemy 'abroad' cannot be wholly separated from the lust to dominate at home. For lust is lust: the sexual source of the desire to dominate another is undeniable, whether it comes to expression in the bedroom, on the battlefield or in the signing of a 'peace' treaty amid the mirrors of the Palace at Versailles.

For most of history women in war have been regarded as *booty*. They have been stolen, along with the rest of the loot for which warfare has been undertaken, and installed in the houses of the victors as part of the spoils of war. Often rape too has been regarded as a normal, if not exactly a morally approved, accompaniment to the bellicose tune. There is nothing surprising about this.

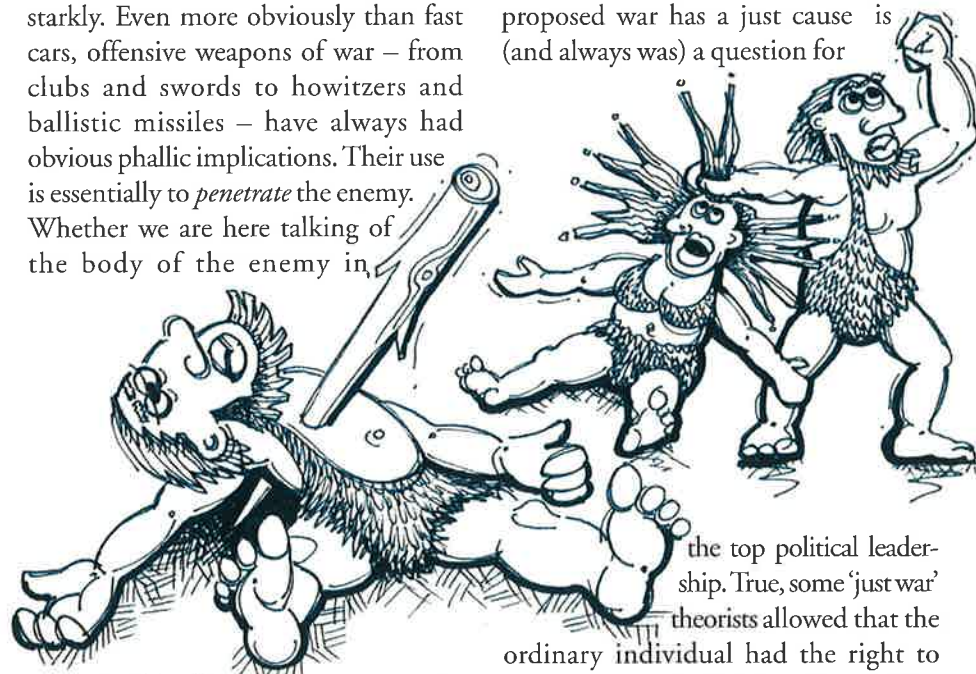
The *libido dominandi* has long been a principal reason for going to war, and that it is indeed *libido* that we are dealing with here. Perhaps in St Augustine's case what helped him to recognise and understand the moral horror of warfare undertaken out of the lust to dominate was his own licentious sexual past as recorded in the *Confessions*.

But the point can be made even more starkly. Even more obviously than fast cars, offensive weapons of war – from clubs and swords to howitzers and ballistic missiles – have always had obvious phallic implications. Their use is essentially to *penetrate* the enemy. Whether we are here talking of the body of the enemy in

What in modern times has prevented us from recognising the sexuality of war? After all, we have tended to see sex in everything else, so why not here? Why is it that neither papal encyclicals, nor pastoral letters, nor even learned works on war by scholars and military historians, have alluded much to the sexual point? I think the answer is plain. We have been deceived, or rather we have deceived ourselves, by our success in *politicising* and then *dehumanising* war. Let us look at each of these processes in turn.

## Politicising war

The classic treatises on the theory of justice in war from St Augustine onwards have dealt with war, quite correctly, as if it were simply an extension of politics. Whether some proposed war has a just cause is (and always was) a question for



the top political leadership. True, some 'just war' theorists allowed that the ordinary individual had the right to make a judgment for himself, and if his conscience so dictated, should refuse to support his leader. Nevertheless, going to war has always been a matter of high political policy, to be decided by men (certainly not by women, unless they happened to be queens) inhabiting the palaces of the great.

For this reason, since the close of the era of warrior kings the decision for war has been far removed from the dirty work of actually inflicting physical pain, maiming and killing other people. For the last 200 years or so, political leaders for the most part have not expected personally to be required to stab, shoot or brain their opposite numbers on the battlefield. The actual fighting and dying has been done for them, by proxy as it were. Their job is to survive, so as to be able to dominate the subsequent peace if they can. In other words, having to penetrate other people's bodies with quasi-phallic weapons, and taking into account all the male implications such actions entail, has not been an activity they have had to confront for themselves.

Thus war in the modern age has become a gigantic self-deception. The 'pity' of it has turned into something of which politicians, and even staff officers, have to be reminded by the cries – in poems, letters, diaries – of those articulate enough to describe it before, after, or while they suffer and die.

Going to war ceases to appear to be what it really is: namely the exercise of lust – to win, to conquer, to dictate terms, to dominate the peace process. But every so often this lust pokes through the veil, as when Mrs Thatcher wanted to organise, in St Paul's Cathedral, a kind of national whoop of victory after the Falklands war, and was only prevented by the combined efforts of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Hume. For the most part, however, the lust remains hidden: part of ourselves we do not wish to know. This concealment is politically and culturally necessary if we are to continue in the belief that in some places and at some moments war can still be an exercise of justice.

## Dehumanising war

In the modern era war has not only been politicised, it has been dehumanised as well. Poking your sword into somebody else's belly is obviously a quasi-sexual act.

But firing a rocket into a tank full of soldiers from 20 miles away is not quite the same thing, psychologically speaking. Letting off an intercontinental missile from the other side of the globe is something else again. These apparently mechanical acts, disconnected as they are from the act of penetration and from the pain and destruction it causes, do not appear to us like acts of naked sexual aggression: products of an uncontrolled libido. They look like the cool, purely intellectual actions of a disinterested observer undertaking an experiment in physics or biology.

Only when you look more closely at the body-language and the sociology of those involved in computerised war do you see the reality lurking beneath the surface of its scientific respectability. For one consequence of the mechanisation of war has been that its obvious sexual connotations have been overlaid by male fascinations of another kind: with inventing gadgets and seeing how they work. This fascination, and the pleasure it gives, is only another form of the *libido dominandi*, but it seems at first sight less overtly sexual than literally penetrating another person's body with something closely connected to your own.

## Women as peacemakers

If my general thesis is right, then the job of women as peacemakers would appear to be more than acting as 'educators for peace' as the Pope seems to suppose. Indeed, in saying that women have a special role in peacemaking because of their specific qualities – sensitivity with regard to the weakest, the sense of loving and self-giving – he seems implicitly to endorse the very excesses of masculine 'superiority' which lie at the root of warfare. The God-given job of women, he seems to be saying, is to act as a counterweight to an equally God-given 'specific quality' of men: namely *insensitivity* to just those things.

Surely the kinds of sensitivity in question – to the poor, the weak, the victimised – are required of *all* Christians, not just feminine ones?

Admittedly, sometimes men are not so good as women at being sensitive to certain kinds of human suffering: but this is hardly a *Christian* realism.

## Women turn into killers

Perhaps the Pope comes nearest to the nub when he says that "the woman is often the first victim of this violence", who becomes an instrument in the hands of "those who sow division and hatred". By being so obviously the victims – violated, discarded, homeless – women *reveal war for what it really is*: an exercise of that *libido dominandi* which is in all of us, especially men.

One of the most frightful dangers today is that women cease to be the victims of male domination in war and turn into killers themselves. In the Second World War women were widely recruited into the war effort, but mostly only in non-combatant roles. They made guns, aeroplanes and bullets for men to use. They plotted the courses of ships and aircraft, typed memos, manned telephones, kept accounts, translated messages, nursed the wounded, dug for victory. But on the whole they did not go to sea, fly bombers or pull triggers.

I doubt if there was anything intrinsically impossible in a woman flying a Spitfire or operating a torpedo tube. It was an emotional or 'moral', rather than a physical, barrier that stood in the way of their being asked to kill. But today this barrier has been largely dismantled. Already there are women working on battleships and learning to fly fighting aeroplanes. Why should women not be allowed to blow up the world if men are allowed to do so? It certainly does not need a man to press the button which would put an end to civilisation as we know it.

The only rational and non-sexist objection I can see to such a horrible degradation of women's liberation rests on the point I made at the beginning. This is that the weapons which women would have to use even in a really modern computerised war of the future, run from some air-conditioned bunker



# Ploughshares act against depleted uranium

**F**our of America's leading Catholic peace witnesses have been imprisoned for lengthy terms in Baltimore, USA for an action they took to highlight the use by NATO and the US military of depleted uranium-capped weapons in wars in Iraq, Yugoslavia and Kosovo.

The four, Jesuit priest Steve Kelly from New York, mother of two Susan Crane, 56, and veteran prophet Phillip Berrigan, 76, both of the *Jonah House* community in Baltimore and Liz Walz, 33, founder of a Catholic Worker community in Philadelphia, had all entered the Maryland Warfield Air National Guard Base. Upon reaching the stationary A-10 Thunderbolt bombers ("Warthogs") they hammered on the Gatling gun in the nose of the planes and on the pylons under the wings, and poured their blood into the engines of the plane. They hung their banner PLOUGHSHARES VS DEPLETED URANIUM on the site.

The A-10 is an aircraft built around a gun – a 30mm, seven barrel Gatling that can spew 3900 rounds per minute. This plane fired 95 percent of the depleted uranium deployed by the US during the Gulf War, leaving behind 300-800 tons (*Dutch Laka Foundation*), poisoning humans and the natural elements in Kuwait and Iraq. As the *Ploughshares* statement says, "Depleted uranium is a delayed response weapon which burns its way through tank armour and oxidises, throwing radioactive particles as far away as 25 miles. When ingested, these particles cause chemical and radioactive damage to the bronchial tree, to kidneys, to liver and bones, causing somatic and genetic trauma. Cancer often results".

Phillip Berrigan says: "I cannot forget my shame and sorrow over the second American nuclear war in Iraq and the third in Yugoslavia. Despite what the spin doctors say, depleted uranium shells and bombs are nuclear weapons."

▷▷

## Women, Sex and War (continued from page 25)

full of VDUs, simulators and virtual-reality gadgets, would still be that which offensive weapons have always been: *phallic expressions of the lust to dominate*. It is true that there have always been some women who are, or would like to be, 'dominant'. Literature is full of them from Goneril and Regan onwards.

But is this really the direction in which women want to go? Perhaps it is the prospect of such a decadence that underlies the flawed but suggestive meaning of the papal peace message of 1995. ■

(This article first appeared in *Priests and People*)

After three months in custody awaiting trial, the case against the four was finally heard before a jury late in March 2000. At the trial, they sought to show that the US Government was guilty of crimes against humanity through waging war with weapons banned by international conventions, which prohibit the use of nuclear weapons and depleted uranium. Unlike some British courts, no American court has allowed a defence using international law and moral argument to proceed. The only questions allowed by American judges in the more than 60 similar cases in recent years, have been questions about the alleged incident. No one is allowed to talk of morality, deaths of children or civilian populations from radioactivity, or the destruction of land and crops from the illegal and immoral use of weapons of modern warfare.

Because of the refusal of Judge James T. Smith, a Catholic, to allow any moral argument, the four defendants withdrew from participation in the trial and remained in their cells praying. Before they withdrew, Susan Crane told the judge and jury: "We cannot put on a defence about the dangers of depleted uranium and our rights and duties under international law. We have been denied our right to testify about these topics. We have been denied our expert witnesses. Therefore we cannot go forward. We will not participate with what amounts to a legal gag".

Supporters burst into hymn singing and were cleared from the court. Phillip Berrigan returned from the cells to tell the judge: "The courts are identified with the Pentagon and the government. There is no way non-violent defendants can get a serious hearing in this or any other courtroom. That is my experience over several years in several dozen courts".

The jury were given specific directions from the judge as to what they were to discuss and what they were to regard as irrelevant. After four hours the four were found guilty of malicious destruction of property. All were given prison sentences. Liz Walz was given 18 months, Susan Crane and Steve Kelly, 27 months and Phillip Berrigan, 30 months.

A recent letter from the NATO Secretary-General George Robertson to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan confirms that the DU weapons were indeed used by the US in Kosovo. There, 31,000 rounds of depleted uranium ammunition were used during some 100 missions by the Warthog aircraft. The shells are tipped with high density depleted uranium to help them penetrate the thick armour of military vehicles or underground bunkers. ■

Adapted by Jim Consedine from letters by Elizabeth McAlister. Reprinted by kind permission from The Common Good

## Books on Theology: Geering and several others

Neil Darragh

**L**loyd Geering is undoubtedly the best known of New Zealand theologians. His latest book *The world to come: from Christian past to global future* (1999) is just the most recent of many publications. Those who have not read Geering before will welcome this book because it reruns and summarises much of his earlier writing. Those who have read his other books may find this one covers similar ground though perhaps with a stronger dismissal of the Christian past and a braver proposal for a global future. The millennium seems to be a dangerous lure that attracts people into making millennium-scale prophecies when at other times they might be more wary or more grounded.

One of the difficulties that results from the sheer size of Geering's literary output is that he can seem to be the only person in New Zealand writing theology. Indeed the New Zealand public could be excused for thinking that theological ideas in this country fall into either the post-Christian futurism of Geering or the fundamentalism of the Christian Heritage Party, with little in between. In fact New Zealand theological writing does exist in both quality and quantity. This theological literature is as subtle and varied as anywhere else, but tends to coalesce into four main streams.

### Evolutionary theology

This theology is characterised by a belief in global social evolution that is seen to have progressed through several phases, each one better than the previous one. Or if not actually better, these phases are in any case seen to be inevitable. Those who have not yet caught up with the most progressive phase may be regarded as archaic or at least very tedious. This global inevitability is offset nevertheless by a strong belief in individual choice. This stream of theology does not regard New Zealand as a serious place to do theology in its own right. There are a large number of books of this genre and nearly all of them are by Lloyd Geering.

### Evangelical theology

This is characterised by a strong biblical base and missionary outreach. An example of this is *New Vision New Zealand: calling the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole nation* (1993), edited by Bruce Patrick. Evangelical theology and evolutionary theology usually see themselves as in opposition, but they have in common that they are both strongly resourced from overseas interpretations of Christianity with relatively slight discernment of the specific conditions of being Christian or being religious in Aotearoa New Zealand. Some recent missionary theology, such as Anne Hadfield's *Grassroots mission: holistic mission in a fractured world* (1999), has focused more specifically on the New Zealand situation.

### Theology of church

The main concern of this stream is the Christian community, its organisation and its traditions, focussing mainly on church reform. Examples of this are Norman E. Brookes' *Methodism at the crossroads* (1993) and Brian Davis's *The way ahead: Anglican change and prospect in New Zealand* (1995). A considerable amount of attention to church reform comes from feminist theology such as the collections *Women and church: shaping the future*, (1994) edited by Rosemary Neave, and *Keeping our heads above water: reflections on the ecumenical decade of churches in solidarity with women* (1998) edited by Ree Bodde. This theology draws its inspiration for reform usually from the experience of being Christian in New Zealand.

**Local theology** (focussing particularly on Aotearoa New Zealand as a place to do theology)

Maori theology is the most obvious form of this. See, for example, Michael Shirres' *Te tangata: the human person* (1997) and *Church and state: te tino rangatiratanga* (1998), edited by Janet Crawford. A

more common form of local theology is issue-based: dealing theologically with issues in New Zealand society. Examples of this are Richard Randerson's *Hearts and minds: a place for people in a market economy* (1992) and Eileen Shamy's *More the body, brain and breath: a guide to spiritual care of people with Alzheimer's disease* (1997). Also within this stream of local theology are Maurice Andrew's *The Old Testament in Aotearoa New Zealand* (1999) and John H. Roberts' *Thinking theologically in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2000), which try to deal with the way Pakeha New Zealanders can do theology without being simply second-hand dealers in foreign forms of Christianity.

**A** different kind of writing, not theology in the same sense as the books I have noted above, is the writing of hymns and prayers. There is a considerable amount of writing of this kind ranging from the Anglican *A New Zealand Prayer Book – He karakia mihinare o Aotearoa* (1989), through many published hymns such as those of Colin Gibson and Shirley Murray, to psalms such as *Psalms down-under* (1996) by Joy Cowley and Terry Coles, and *Grant us your peace: prayers from the lectionary psalms* (1998) by David R. Grant. There is also a variety of books of original prayers ranging from Bill Bennet's *Listen to the shepherd – Whakarongo ki te kupu: prayers and liturgies for rural people in New Zealand* (1997), to Selwyn Dawson's *Help! a first aid kit of prayers* (1998), to the practice of contemplative prayer in Alan Roberts' *From one to another: an encouragement to deeper prayer* (1999).

There is a substantial body of theological writing in Aotearoa New Zealand much of which is little known. This perhaps reflects poor distribution of theological material or maybe it is just the result of a colonial mentality that expects theology to come from overseas. ■



## The Jesus I believe in

*An Introduction to Christology*

Gerard H. Luttenberger

Mystic Connecticut, Twenty-Third Publications, 1998

Price: \$75 approx.

Review: Helen F Bergin, OP

If you ever ask the question "Who is the Jesus I believe in?" or if you're interested in exploring how early disciples and gospel writers came to different appreciations of who Jesus was for them, then this book might well appeal to you.

*Introduction to Christology* by American Vincentian priest, Gerard Luttenberger, is divided into four sections. The First Part examines the nature of christology and why one might undertake it. Part Two discusses how the gospel writers experienced, reflected on and then put into writing their understandings of Jesus and his mission. Part Three focuses on four themes central to a full appreciation of Jesus Christ – his preaching of God's reign, his wondrous deeds, his death, his resurrection. Part Four moves beyond the gospel period into non-Jewish cultural environments wherein important statements by early church councils were made about Jesus' humanity and Jesus' divinity.

An overriding hope of the writer is that present-day disciples, like those in Jesus' day, might respond individually and in communities to the question "Who do you say that I am?" Consequently, Luttenberger hopes that each reader will participate in a process of "interpreting one's faith-experience of God, alive for us in and through Jesus, the Christ" (12). At

the end of each chapter, reflection questions are suggested so that the book may not be simply an intellectual exercise of adding fact upon fact. The reader is invited to ask how stories about Jesus might influence their own faith journey.

In addition to reflection questions, the author provides extensive notes at the end of the text which introduce the reader to significant biblical and theological contemporary research. These notes need not, however, be consulted. The text can stand in its own right.

While the entire work is stimulating and helpful for anyone keen to engage in recent theological study about Jesus, I recommend Part Two as particularly useful. In this section which deals with the shaping of the earliest traditions about Jesus, Luttenberger situates the gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John right in the communities for whom each evangelist was writing. The author offers a colourful sense of each particular community, be it Jews and Gentiles in Rome (Mark), or various groups of Gentiles in Ephesus (John). At the same time, he notes each community's particular concerns at that historical period, e.g. persecution, community factions, treatment of newcomers, and shows how such issues led to each evangelist's nuancing their understanding of Jesus for that community.

*Introduction to Christology* is full of thorough contemporary scholarship. Each chapter has a clear focus and progression. The reader is encouraged to follow the text with their individual life experience in mind. While being exposed to the tradition about Jesus, the reader is also invited to be transformed by encountering Jesus now. Don't read this book if you're not prepared to put in a little effort. However, if you do read it, you will find it very worthwhile. ■

## 'Daughter of God'

*The Spiritual Way of St. Jeanne d'Arc*

by George H. Tavad

The Liturgical Press

Price: \$45

Review: Elisabeth Nicholson

Jeanne d'Arc has inspired many authors, Christian and non Christian, and all sorts of interpretations have been made of her life, her character, and her mission. Fr. George Tavad's stated aim is to analyse the 'structure and depth of her inner life'. In this I am not sure that he has been entirely successful, but nevertheless he has written a fascinating book. He places Jeanne firmly in the context of history and indeed, as he writes, 'Jeanne d'Arc and her career would not make sense outside her own time and place'.

The details of Jeanne's mission are hard for us to accept today. It is difficult to conceive of God promoting nationalism and urging one country to fight against another, yet, in its essence, hers was a call to seek justice, and that is something we can understand.

Jeanne described herself as "la pucelle", the daughter of God, and in this description she found her whole self-identity. She was unlettered, ignorant, a peasant girl. She did not follow any particular spiritual discipline, her interior life was based on the sacraments, nourished by sermons, statues, hymns, processions, the normal aids available to any lay person of her time, yet she had, whatever one may think of her 'voices', an extraordinary spiritual perception, and a total love of God which went hand in hand with a dedication to the cause of justice.

God, for Jeanne, was inseparable from the Church. Even when representatives of that Church were working for her destruction she remained completely loyal and obedient, provided only that she was not forced to disobey the commands God had given her. Jeanne's life, as George Tavad shows us, was a combination of contemplation and action which does indeed resonate with our understanding of Christianity today.

Certainly this book has increased my understanding and appreciation of Jeanne. It is well written and I found the historical background quite fascinating. If, ultimately, Jeanne remains something of an enigma it is perhaps hardly surprising - after all it took the Church 500 years to decide to canonise her! ■

## Post Modernism, Truth and the Christian church

*Moving Between Times: Modernity and Postmodernity: A Christian View*

By Brian Carrell,

DeepSight Trust

Price: \$29.95

Review: Daniel J. Stollenwerk

From the first encounters of the Judeo-Christian with the Greco-Roman world an immobile earth held the privileged centre of the universe and certain knowledge was derived from outside that centre: from one personal God who had predestined human redemption. In 1543, however, Copernicus placed the earth in a circular path around the sun-centered universe, and some 100 years later Descartes would utter his famous *cogito, ergo sum*; not only had the earth lost its central universal position but now certain knowledge came not from God, but from within the individual. Thus was Modernity born.

The Western mind would go through a sort of secular conversion in the modern age: truth was to be pursued not through faith in God, but through faith in human reason. The Scientific Revolution would make astonishing advances in the discovery and manipulation of the natural world, and the Enlightenment would enthrone democracy as the only legitimate rule of society. Human nature, in the modern era, unchained from the authoritarian shackles of the church and the ignoble superstitions of the illiterate, would now enjoy limitless – perhaps even inevitable – progress.

And although Nietzsche would prophesy its demise and, to the perceptive eye, World War I would demonstrate it, still faith in human reason flourished throughout most of the 20th Century in the Western world. Around 1970, however, Brian Carrell tells us in *Moving between Times: Modernity and Postmodernity: A Christian View*, signs of reactions against

the precepts and programmes of Modernity became increasingly evident. Truth, if it existed at all, was relativised; there reigned a pessimistic uncertainty toward the future at the same time that old links to the past seemed less and less secure. But above all, there appeared to exist neither a Christian story of redemption, nor a Modernist faith in human progress – in a word, no "meta-narrative" – to hold the different facets of our lives together. Rather, as contemporary cosmology appeared to indicate, we had been set adrift in human history on a rather small planet, orbiting one of some 400 billion stars in one of some 100 billion galaxies, in a 15 billion year old universe wherein not even our scientists could assure us that it was the only one in existence. Enter the Postmodern era.

Carrell's analysis of the present age in *Moving Between Times* has two goals: first, to trace the roots of Postmodernity in the modern age beginning with the Renaissance, passing through the Enlightenment, and finally touching on Nietzsche himself; second, to show the pervasiveness of the Postmodern mentality in art and architecture, film and TV, the consumer society and the information age.

But Carrell is an Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Wellington, and so he attempts an understanding of the Christian church in this Postmodern era as well. Thus he dedicates a chapter to the impact of both Modernity and Postmodernity in Western Theology and the church. Finally he gives ideas as to how the church might confront this contemporary cultural situation.

*Moving Between Times* is a well researched, easily read, concise introduction to Postmodernity. It should be of interest to anyone who wishes to gain a better understanding into the contemporary milieu of Western Society in general and New Zealand in particular,

as well as to anyone who looks to the role of religion in today's society.

If the strength of *Moving Between Times* is its succinct explanation of Postmodernity's place in History, its weakness perhaps is the ideas for the church's role in the present era. For although it is true that the Christian church has found herself on the defensive at least since the end of the medieval and dawn of the modern eras, never before has she had to face the challenge of a society that believes that truth can be attained neither through faith in God nor faith in reason; a society in which the only indisputable 'fact' appears to be the futility of both the search for truth and the destiny of the individual in a vast uncaring universe; a society made tolerable, perhaps, only by the business of work or the diversions of sports, TV and the shopping mall. Thus, in all fairness to Carrell, the challenge to articulate and fulfil the church's role in this novel Postmodern era is beyond any one book; it will become the key question for the church for at least the next century. ■

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# Parting of the ways in southern Africa

One of the most evocative photos seen in the Press recently was that of a white farmer's wife in Zimbabwe holding her small twin daughters and watching black Africans chanting on the other side of a high electric fence around her homestead. The picture encapsulated, in one image, all the troubles generated by white colonialism and the artificial racial divide, both of which seem insurmountable. The woman's gaze is defiant: she stands four-square suggesting the defence of her children and her property. The black Africans' look is one of jubilation. They look her straight in the eye and stand tall, implying that their time has come. The sad politics of this beleaguered country

## Crosscurrents

by John Honoré

continues. The Rhodesia of Ian Smith, through to the presidency of Robert Mugabe, has not given the native people of this region any better conditions nor any sustainable hope of owning land. Most of the large holdings are owned by whites who have the money, the equipment and the technology. If the provocation continues they will probably defend themselves to the death or walk away and abandon the country.

## I've been thinking...

I've been thinking about Richard Prebble. His recent allegation against John Tamihere has been refuted and Tamihere ripostes that New Zealanders have had a "gutsful" of (Prebble's) claims. He is right. Prebble is an opportunistic demagogue whose influence in New Zealand politics has been totally destructive. Consider his record. In 1984 he was instrumental in reducing the top tax rate by half, 66c to 33c, which did nothing for the economy. Money went into speculation that ended in the 1987 crash. Unemployment rose to the highest level since the 30's and overseas debt quadrupled. The age of greed was born.

Then he started selling everything, hence his nickname "mad dog". He pioneered the sale of assets to overseas interests. Telecommunications, railways, banks and insurance companies now have foreign ownership. His excesses led to his dismissal from Cabinet in 1988 but he had already destroyed the credibility of the Labour Party for a decade.

By 1990, in the hands of Prebble as Minister for SOE's, Labour had sold 18 Government enterprises which led to the demise of the Public Service. He divided broadcasting into two SOE's, RadioNZ and TVNZ, for the ultimate goal of privatisation. They have never recovered. In 1993 he lost the Auckland Central seat to Sandra Lee and then, in 1996, he publicly became what he always was, a right wing zealot. The Act party was born.

As leader of the Act party he has been rejected by Wellington Central, "the most politically aware and best educated electorate in the country" and is in Parliament only because of the MMP system of list members, as is the whole Act party. He has been reduced to making allegations which have no basis, promoting populist issues for publicity gains and lately, to carping about Helen Clark going first class to London instead of travelling with the "hoi polloi" in an Air Force transport. His political career has been divisive and destructive. No other politician can be accused of doing such damage to a country and still claim to have credibility. Prebble has been rejected by his original party, Labour, and twice rejected in national elections.

I agree with John Tamihere, people have had a "gutsful".

Could black Africans cultivate the land without their expertise? I would think not. According to one farmer, the blacks would be forced to cut down the trees and kill the stock for short term survival. Land is "unforgiving" when badly treated.

The sad truth is that most Zimbabweans, white and black, long only for peace and a job - the dignity of work. The political system of Zimbabwe is leading inexorably to another confrontation, which will further divide the country. Let us hope that the next photo does not depict armed, helmeted whites staring implacably through an electric fence, at a reincarnation of another black insurrection.

## Power corrupts

What is the fascination of politics? During a trip to Wellington last month I was introduced to Jonathan Hunt, Speaker of The House. He generously invited four of us to visit the Speaker's apartments in Parliament House and to join him for lunch afterwards. Jonathan Hunt is an experienced politician, urbane, witty and at the summit of an honourable career in politics. He is an impressive man. But, at the same time, it is difficult to avoid the clichés of "corridors of power" and "power corrupts" to explain the aura of privilege and isolation from reality that parliament buildings exude. It is a cocoon where people administer to every need, the media dwell on every word and secretaries attend to trivialities.

People acknowledge you as the Member for X whereas before, no-one knew you existed. An elected member of little talent becomes intoxicated by all this - the less the talent the more the hedonism. Money has no meaning. It's all part of the consolidated fund. Further on there is the promise of the good life after parliament, directorships, boards, ambassadorial posts, plus a generous superannuation. No wonder lesser representatives than Jonathan Hunt seem "crazed with power". ■

## Divorce, remarriage and the church

Thank you for your coverage of divorce, remarriage and the church in the March issue of *Tui Motu*.

There is an urgent need for the church to address its attitude towards remarriage, especially its denial of full communion within the church for those who are in irregular marriages. The permanence of marriage is a basic principle of our Catholic faith. It is an ideal to be striven for. However, the reality is that often for very sound reasons the ideal cannot be attained.

People should not be ostracised for failing the ideal. Why is it that ordained priests can be dispensed from their sacramental vows and allowed to participate again in the church community when remarried couples cannot, unless that have been able to succeed through a legalistic and, to my mind, demeaning annulment process?

It was heartening to read of the good work of Fr Frank Kelly in Christchurch. His questioning of the church's attitude from grass roots level commands attention. I do wish though that in the account of his work he had not indulged in generalised lawyer-bashing: *Lawyers*

*are rarely helpful. They are concerned with the division of property and defending their client's interest.. Their client is usually in a mixed-up and confused state - but they do nothing to help them deal with that.* Even stronger: *Everyone is poorer after a break-up - except perhaps the lawyers.*

## letters



As a family lawyer of many years' experience I know that most of those who practise in what today is a specialised field are sensitive to the emotional needs of their clients as part of their representation of their clients' interests. They are able to recognise when their clients are "mixed up and confused", and refer them to the appropriate agencies to deal with their state, while at the same time assisting them with legal issues. They are just as often concerned about issues of custody and access or domestic violence as they are about division of property. Family law devours a large part of the legal aid fund. Family lawyers do not make money out of legal aid work. Its rate of payment is significantly lower than normal rates. The old myth that

lawyers gain from marital break-up has little foundation. It disappoints me to think that the people to whom Fr Kelly ministers may have had unhappy experiences with lawyers. I suggest that with the assistance of the District Law Society he could identify a panel of specialist family lawyers to whom he could make referrals.

Norman Elliott, Auckland

## How scandal can arise

To supplement the articles in the March issue on remarriage and the reception of the sacraments, I would like to refer interested readers to the article in the English *Tablet*, headed *The Internal Forum*, by Theodore Davey, (27 July 1991).

Fr Davey, head of Pastoral Studies at Heythrop College, London University examines an approved practice that softens the rigours of Canon Law especially in relation to receiving the sacraments. He comments that *in a curious way it often happens that scandal does arise in a parish where the remarried are forbidden the Eucharist.*

This is a valuable and freeing contribution to this discussion.

Trish McBride, Johnsonville

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## It just aint cricket!

A year ago I wrote an article in *Tui Motu* concerning the virtual takeover of professional sport by business interests. This article elicited a couple of responses, one on *National Radio* no less, and the other in *Tui Motu*. This respondent defended the vicarious involvement in sport enjoyed by a number of people.

That was one of the particular threats I was concerned with, highlighted in a recent documentary which looked at the dangers of 'sideline parents' realising their own sporting ambitions through their children.

Like a TV channel surfer, it brought to mind a selection of brief and very random images that have flickered around the peripherals of my awareness.

I recalled...

- following the All Blacks' exit from the World Cup, a Press article contending the megastar lifestyle had softened the players, that the honour of pulling on the black shirt should be enough motivation, backed by a training regime consisting of full time work down on the farm.

Now *there's* a novel thought!

- the increasing ease with which players can represent a country for which they have no natural ties. Cynical it may sound, but can cash transfers of sporting nationality be too far away?

- the Olympic financially-related hassles; major traffic disruption caused by the squillion dollar roading to the new stadium, extravagant ticket prices, and their availability to Australians only through Olympic-sponsors' outlets.

- the £19 million transfer fee just paid by Manchester United for one player.

- Jonah Lomu's desire to own the

loudest but most physically unlistenable car stereo in the world.

And, of course, overhearing the office analysis of the recent cricket betting scandal, no doubt repeated in workplaces and bars across the country. I was amazed that something of this nature should have come as a surprise to anyone, since it seems to be an inevitable consequence when money, fanaticism and sport are mixed.

As soccer coach Terry Venables noted (on another matter) with stunning insight: *If history repeats itself, I think we can expect the same thing again.*

I'm sure you'll be lifted by the observation of one of my colleagues who declared that, even if you paid the opposition to lose a game against the Black Caps, New Zealand's woeful form would still allow them to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. ■

Mike Marshall

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