Tui Motu

InterIslands

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Lent – A Path to Happiness

a man of measure, scholarship and truth

Two scholars together: Rowan Williams and Benedict XVI.

A cell phone symphony is an odd occurrence. I recall being in a restaurant in Rome packed with journalists when suddenly phones galore squealed, silencing the buzz of conversation. Word had just got out. John Paul II had 'gone to the house of the Father'. The long death watch was over.

Benedict has chosen a different exit tune. Deprived of a period of preparation we have been caught by surprise. Rather than eulogies, legacies have been the talk of reporters in the immediate wake of the shock.

How to respond? For a man of such intellect and scholarship where does one begin? Perhaps that's it. In a world where the commentariat is so often under or misinformed, here is a person whose whole life says that intellect, scholarship, and the search for truth matter. Not just for developing one's own understanding but for respecting that of the other.

Such a stance struggles to find 'good press'. Thus the so-called Papa Ratzinger gaffes. How do we read them? Let me comment on one I followed closely while working in the Secretariat of State.

The Regensburg saga. The context was quintessential Benedict: speaking in his native tongue, back at his old university, among fellow German academics, engaged in an erudite exposé of why violence in the name of God is illogical because violence is incompatible with the nature of God. The German intellectual press gave the speech the serious coverage it merited. Only two days later did a furore explode. Why? Because the speech had been translated into English.

A raft of commentators, the large majority of whom did not have the capacity or the time to understand the argument, burst forth into a mindless frenzy of vitriol. Yet within two months the focus of inter-religious dialogue worldwide had shifted from the Jewish world to that

contents

Front Cover illustration: Donald Moorhead

of Christian-Muslim dialogue, and the common search for peace took centre stage. What had happened? When eventually voices of those who had actually read and understood his speech pierced through the din, opinion changed. Benedict's argument was right.

Back to the legacy. Within five minutes of arriving in my office on the morning of Feb 12th I had a journalist on the phone asking me my view. Caught on the hop I said: I think Benedict will be remembered for his clear, accessible and incisive teaching, his masterly analysis of social trends shaping culture and society, and his personal humility and kindness. I would now add his love of scripture and his captivating insights into the unique place of Jesus and Christian faith in the history of humanity.

Much recent commentary has turned from Benedict to the Roman curia. There has been a sympathy for Benedict that he has been let down by Vatican officials' careerism, in-fighting, and sycophantism. My experience of the Secretariat of State was of collaboration, hard work, friendship and service.

But the negative assessments persist and some incidents and decisions of more recent years point heavily to a kind of nepotism that would wound any organization. Benedict himself has not hidden his dismay. And so a question emerges. Lying within Pope Benedict XVI's free act of relinquishment of office, is there a hope that any perpetrators of ideological or personal interest will find themselves without high office after the election of his successor? What an extraordinary final Papa Ratzinger contribution to the New Evangelization such an outcome would be, for surely there is no room for self-serving sideshows as the Church universal refocuses on the truth, love and beauty of God made known in the person of Jesus Christ. ■

This appreciation of Pope Benedict XVI was written by Bishop Charles Drennan of Palmerston North, who worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State for both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

lent: a path to happiness

The advert on the shop window read like this: "Be happy: Give yourself a radical makeover: have a full facial; join a gym. See us for other important paths to happiness." A quiet chuckle escaped from my lips. If only true happiness were that simple I would be the most handsome, fit person this side of the black stump! Alas. Cosmetic surgery, recreational drugs and athleticism delude us as ways to make humanity smarter, stronger and more attractive. I wonder now what Lance Armstrong, that icon of a certain brand of happiness, searches for to enhance the fullness of his life.

Lent provides us with another type of happiness check-up. It is annual. It asks us yet again to take our spiritual pulse. This life-long search for true happiness lies in opening ourselves further in relationship to the love of God and of others. The words of the first reading of the Ash Wednesday liturgy are a constant refrain of our Lenten journey: "Come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning." (Joel 2:12) It is a movement of the heart in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Finally we shall relish the triduum of days we name 'holy' and 'good'.

One part of this 'happiness check-up' is to take measure of such wider and broader issues of love and justice as climate change, global warming, and the huge inequality surrounding poverty. Opening to the love of God anew will be helped by taking to heart some of the ideas which Natalie and Maurice Atkinson and Gareth Morgan feed us in this issue on our Lenten path. Bev Sutherland tweaks this in a different way.

Aquinas talks of *beatitudo*, happiness, as our final goal. Jesus meant that happiness be not just heavenly, but very much part of beautiful planet Earth. It begins now "on earth as it is in heaven". Let's walk this Lenten path together. **KT**

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Tui Motu – InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed.

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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The Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Háhi Weteriana O Aotearoa

12 February 2013

To the Bishops and People of the Catholic Church in New Zealand

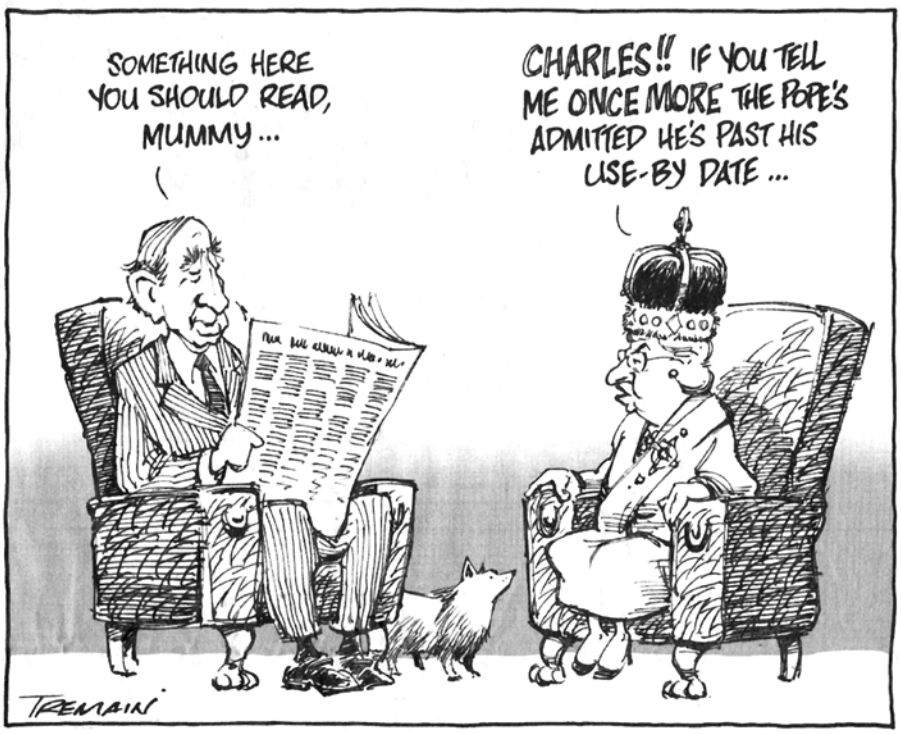
The people of Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa / The Methodist Church of New Zealand wish to convey our love and care for our Catholic brothers and sisters at this time. We would like to acknowledge the theological and spiritual legacy of Pope Benedict XVI as he prepares to leave the pontificate behind. We realise that his resignation from office is, for many Catholics, confusing and an occasion of deep sadness. We offer our prayers for you at this time.

One of the challenges the Roman Catholic Church has presented to us in ecumenical conversations is to consider the significance the Petrine ministry has for Christian communities outside of Catholicism. This is a task that will take some time but we can say clearly that many Methodists have looked towards Pope Benedict and his predecessors as exercising a ministry of leadership for all Christians. We shall pray for a spirit of discernment and wisdom in selecting Pope Benedict's successor.

Grace and peace

Rex Nathan
President
Methodist Church of New Zealand

Jan Tasker
Vice President
Methodist Church of New Zealand



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☞ letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not changing the meaning.
We do not publish anonymous letters otherwise than in exceptional circumstances.
Response articles (up to a page) are welcome — but please, by negotiation.

Jesus man of peace

Above all we want to make the voice of Jesus heard. He was always a man of peace. It could be expected that, when God came to earth, he would be a person of great power, destroying the opposing forces. That he would be a person of powerful violence as an instrument of peace. Not at all. He came in weakness. He came with only the strength of love, totally without violence, even to the point of going to the Cross.

This is what shows us the true face of God, that violence never comes from God, never helps bring anything good, but is a destructive means and not the path to escape difficulties. He is thus a strong voice against every type of violence. He strongly invites all sides to renounce violence, even if they feel they are right. The only path is to renounce violence, to begin anew with dialogue, with the attempt to find peace together, with a new concern for one another, a new willingness to be open to one another. This is Jesus' true message: seek peace with the means of peace and leave violence aside.

- Pope Benedict XVI
Good Friday homily, 2011

nz needs tppa like a hole in the head

Mary Ellen O'Connor

TPPA? — "No thanks", as many on the street respond, when I speak to them on the subject. That is the very response we need to take to our Government. However, in December 2012, negotiators from all 11 TPPA countries were warmly welcomed to Auckland by senior Government officials to participate in the 15th round of this complex and potentially very far-reaching negotiation. Though TPPA is massive in scope, few have heard of it, our elected representatives know very little about it and the media barely reports on it.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) is a so-called 'free trade' agreement currently under negotiation between New Zealand and ten other countries – the United States, Chile, Peru, Brunei, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Mexico, Canada and Vietnam. But most trade between the countries concerned is already quite 'free'. So what is it about?

special rights for foreign investors

The TPPA would guarantee special rights to foreign investors that operate from any of the TPP countries. **If these negotiations succeed they will create a mega-treaty across all countries that will put a straitjacket around what policies and laws sovereign governments can adopt or enact.** In the case of New Zealand, these provisions could impact on the controls on genetically modified food, laws restricting foreign investment, regulation of dodgy finance firms, regulation of mining activities, all aspects of ACC, intellectual property protection or provision for local content on TV. Protection for labour or the environment (another Pike River anyone?) could be severely weakened and there would be no preference for New Zealand business in major government procurement projects. Our commitments under the Treaty of Waitangi would be read through the lens of this 'trade' treaty. Put simply, anything that interferes with the untrammelled profit-making of corporations risks being challenged. And it is the US corporations that are the largest and have the most to gain.

The US drug lobby, or 'Big Pharma' as it is known, is keen to challenge the operation of agencies such as our Pharmac, which has saved $5 billion in the last 12 years (Pharmac's Annual Report 2012). Surely a good thing. But from the 'Big Pharma' angle, the purchasing power of a Government enterprise like Pharmac threatens their potential profits and they could well demand that it has its wings severely clipped.

bill of rights for big corporations

The TPPA is effectively a bill of rights for big corporations, one that shackles future Governments and our democratic right to decide future policy and laws. If the Government goes ahead with a new policy or law that the investors say affects the value of their investment they could sue the government for millions of dollars, thereby trumping our domestic laws. In the case of *The Hobbit* and Warner Bros, we have already seen how one company could bring pressure to bear both to change labour laws and to winkle massive tax subsidies from a Government that maintains there's no money for health, early childcare or public transport.

all negotiations are secret

The bits we do know are garnered through leaks. The final text does not have to be approved by Parliament; it will just be ratified by Cabinet. All documents except the final text would remain secret for four years after signing. The Agreement is forever unless a party withdraws, but that is not a real option.

How does the New Zealand government justify the TPPA? It is about better access for Fonterra into the US market. But, as US economist and former World Bank President Joseph Stiglitz, frankly stated: "Most of these 'free trade' agreements are … managed for the advantage of the United States, which has the bulk of the negotiating power … One can't think that New Zealand would ever get anything that it cares about". A Wikileaks cable showed that even New Zealand's lead negotiator didn't expect any significant gains.

Big losses are what we're lining up for. So why would the Government secretly sell out our right to make our own choices about public health and safety, our environment, our *tino rangatiratanga*, in fact our future? Partly because they are true believers in globalisation. Partly because the notion of democracy has taken such a pummelling already, they don't think it matters. Partly because they are pandering to the US in its moves to strengthen its role in Asia and counter the influence of China. However with 11 and possibly 12 countries involved, negotiations are very complex. It may just be that some countries perceive the costs to be too high and withdraw. The best hope is that it will collapse under its own weight. Meantime, we need to let them know that we know the gist of what's happening. ■

This article was published, titled "TPPA Signs Away Our Independence", in the Nelson Mail, 29 December 2012

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a path to happiness

Most travellers to Thailand will not have Ranong as one of their destinations but on a recent trip I went there to visit the Marist Mission. The Mission works with Burmese migrant families who for social and economic circumstances have been forced to settle in Thailand. The Mission is a diverse community of Marist Fathers, Mission Sisters, volunteers from the Philippines, New Zealand and Italy, as well as paid staff from Thailand and Burma. I interviewed two of the volunteers, a couple of teachers from Wellington — Natalie and Maurice Atkinson.

Sean Davidson

Natalie and Maurice Atkinson

Why did you come to the Marist Mission in Ranong?

Natalie: I suppose it was a change of scene for a start. It was a challenge and Maurice and I felt that we wanted to challenge ourselves. To be a part of a faith community that was important, a faith community that was about empowering others. And I guess we wanted to have an adventure before we settle down to have a family. We wanted to experience living a community life and to contribute to making the world a fairer place.

Maurice: We wanted to live more in contact with reality. I often think that we are very lucky in New Zealand and this leads to an unrealistic view of life. I spent 80 per cent of my work time filling out pieces of paper, paper that wasn't very important. Certainly on my death bed I don't envisage thinking that they were important. So I wanted to work in a way that was less about paper work but offered more time to think and reflect. More time just to be — to live in the present. I found that hard to do in new Zealand.

Natalie: The other influence was that our good friends Andrew and Nuala were here. They came over here a few years ago and we were interested in what they were experiencing.

We originally signed up for six months, which is almost up, but we have so thoroughly enjoyed it that we have signed up for another 2 years. That will take us to the end of the time that the current online students will have finished their diploma.

What has it been like, working as part of the mission?

Maurice: Living here there is a positive energy. Despite the desperate situation that many of the students and some of the staff find themselves in, there is a positivity and a vibrancy that has rubbed off on me. These things nourish me.

We are a part of a community and that happens every day that I leave my apartment to come to work. As I close my door I will often see the New Zealand volunteers Andrew and Nuala outside with their daughter Felicity. There will be cries of 'Buongiorno' and 'Mingalaba' from the Italian and Burmese volunteers. I will chat with Ronald and Thata (Filipino volunteers) while their son J.P. runs and smiles. Finally Nancy will ask if there is anything that we need. We begin the day nourished by community and that is the best possible start.

Natalie: Not long after I arrived I contracted dengue fever. I ended up being hospitalized in Phuket some 300kms away. Yet so many of the community went out of their way to visit me and spend time with me. Back

home our friends would have been too busy to spend much time with me — but here we have that time. Everything is at a much slower pace.

That experience opened my eyes to what is really happening here. Although we came to help the Burmese people it was really the Burmese who were helping us. At one stage the fever got serious and we needed an ambulance to rush me from Ranong to Phuket. So it was Kimberley the Burmese volunteer who came to the hospital in the middle of the night and arranged the ambulance for me. Although we came here to do something meaningful — we are the ones who benefit the most.

Maurice: Another important thing is that there's time to reflect on my faith and spirituality. In New Zealand I'd been very involved with Church activities and I had lived in community with the Marist Brothers. But I got to the point where I became very disillusioned with the Church. I found that I had little in common with the issues that concerned other Catholics. I wondered whether it was time to move on to find a new faith community. But coming here I have found a community of Catholics who are dealing with the questions that are important. They are a good role model for me. The people here are good — think people of any faith would agree — so that rubs off on us and nourishes us. It's good to be with them.

The community Mass on Wednesday nourishes us too. It's an expression of Church that works for me. We all contribute; all share our skills and abilities. After Mass we share food together — the Mass supports our community and vice versa.

And we need this nourishment because we are dealing with the realities of life and death here. We will regularly hear about this person who has died from HIV Aids. And that person has had to return to Myanmar to look after a dying relative. Death is a part of life. Back home it was easy to lose contact with those realities. Money and busyness separate us from them. Here people don't have the money so the important things in life are clearer.

And what has been the worst part of living here in Ranong ?

Maurice: For me it's an equal first — missing my friends and family is one. My friends who are having children and my parents who aren't getting any younger. Being treated as an outsider by the local community is the other.

Natalie: Yes, the biggest challenge is being the different one. Wherever we go we stand out like sore thumbs. I think it's an experience that everyone should have at some time — that of being the different ones, being the outsider. That's how it is for many people who come to our country as refugees. We have money and a supportive community but how is it for refugees who have little money and little support? It's a humbling experience and a character building one.

Oh, and not being able to speak the language — that's hard. That too is a part of the refugee experience.

And what has been the best part?

Natalie: Mostly it's been the people that we have met — we cherish those friendships. The people that we are working alongside are not just the Burmese — they are our friends and those relationships are very important to us.

Maurice: For me, I would have to say that I'm happy. I am the sort of person who thinks about that. If someone asked me in New Zealand I would fudge the answer by saying 'well it depends what you mean by happy — I have a good job, I'm well paid, but happy?'

Here I just say yes, I'm happy — I can honestly say that.

Natalie and Maurice both smile, the twinkle in their eyes says it all. ■

Sean Davidson is the Director of Religious Studies at Pompallier College, Whangarei.

Zacchaeus

a desire to know
determined
understanding already there
vision
what was it that the crowd
knew
movement and energy
surging towards
gentleness and presence
in his sight
newness
in his gaze
vista
of a life as yet
unlived
touched
perception of
becoming
vision of sorrow
and hope
empathy and compassion
for suffering
vision of selfishness
but not of failure
vision of possibility
and a decision
that was his to make
a chance for friendship
encounter real
and alive
Christ the host
making Zacchaeus the
host
under his own roof

– Joanie Roberson

the devout atheist

Gareth Morgan is an outspoken economist, investment manager, philanthropist, and global biker. A devout atheist, he is also a generous funder of many faith-based projects which help some of the poorest people on earth. He talks with Michael Fitzsimons about economics, morality and his appetite for fun.

How do you see economics and where does morality fit in?

To me economics is very much wound up with philosophy, morality and ethics. But the word has been misused now for so long, it's so part of the lexicon, that the term 'economic growth', which everyone uses, actually just means growth in material things. All GDP does is measure income. It doesn't measure social development or wellbeing or happiness, or anything like that.

It measures a very narrow, material range of things. Economics, defined like that, is almost useless. To me economics is really about how people make choices, how limited resources are allocated, hopefully in a way that people are satisfied as much as possible. Some people are never satisfied, and they're in for an unhappy life.

I've just come from Africa, India and Bangladesh, and people are so happy, and they're so incredibly poor, on our scale. And yet they love it when you're with them. We'd call them destitute in some cases. They work their guts out just so they can eat enough, and keep disease away, and yet they're amazingly cheerful. You can tell that just by being with them.

I heard a saying years ago: "money isn't everything, but no money is". The way I interpret that is that economic optimisation is about making sure everybody has access to whatever the nation has, everybody has the right to participate, and has effective access to those resources. It doesn't mean that everyone has to be equal, because that won't work, due to our animal spirit. There has to be an incentive to contribute, and that can be financial power, wealth.

For most of us, though, there's a certain minimum we need, after which point we can relax, and start looking for other things.

I remember way back, when we're still living in the bus, and I said "Oh, I'm working so hard", and Joanne says "Well, don't think you're doing it for me, I don't need anything –you're doing it for yourself, so stop moaning". I thought that was pretty cool. It brings me back to that line in Silas Marner: if you have an income of 100,000 and an expenditure of 130,000, life can be quite miserable, but if you have an income of 20,000, and an expenditure of 18,000, then happiness is easy.

> "I think we've overdosed on the material fulfilment thing. We don't need it, but you get caught up in it. I think people are lost."

How do you think we're doing in New Zealand?

Worse than we were. We're going backwards because of the increase in wealth disparity. That isn't the same thing as saying everyone should be equal, but just that everyone should be given the same opportunities to participate.

We wrote a book 18 months ago called Health Check, which was a commentary on the New Zealand public health system, and one of the things that came out of that was that Māori kids in particular, and Pasifika kids, are almost being forgotten. They're not getting anything like the opportunities that so-called egalitarian New Zealand should be providing, and has done better at historically. Whereas the old bloody whities, those noisy buggers: well, the squeaky wheel gets the oil. The problem is that the money we're putting into health is going at the bottom of the cliff. We're not putting enough into primary health care.

The stereotype of New Zealand is that we're egalitarian, but actually we've been bastards, really, to Maori in particular, at least up to 1975 — we didn't even let them speak their own language.

Materially, on average, New Zealanders don't know how lucky we are. But I think we're losing a bit of our essence, with the disparity of wealth and power. Some of that is due to the changing composition of our population — growth in Māori and Pacific populations, less growth for white Europeans, so the balance is changing as well.

The New Zealand of today isn't the same as the New Zealand of the 1950s. It's not all our fault, if you want to put it like that. Nevertheless, an economic policy should be serving the aspirations of all the people.

On the environmental front, I think we're making progress but I'm not convinced we are making it fast enough. Especially because so many problems are already in the system, latent, but the effects of which haven't all played out yet. That's the most frightening thing about climate change.

Former Reserve Bank Governor, Alan Bollard, recently said that economics was about people getting better off as generations go by, and that's happening in New Zealand,

so it's good. What do you think?
Well that depends on what measure you're using. If you're using GDP as a measure, then he's correct. But that's absolutely typical of a narrowly focussed economist, who has missed the boat. If you use the measure of wellbeing, of which GDP is one measure, and the others are health, knowledge, happiness, and a raft of other things … If you look at what makes people migrate from one society to another, it's not just GDP.

We get people coming here for our environment, the whole drive behind Wanaka's population growth, for example. Economists should be interested in wellbeing, not GDP. The Reserve Bank is even worse — they care only about inflation. They've long left being economists. They're technocrats.

There's a whole workforce out there that isn't even recognised in the GDP — the volunteer workforce. Best estimates are that it equals about a third of GDP! So if you're not going to measure that, what the hell do you think you're measuring?

Is our lack of happiness a spiritual issue?
We live in silos, in suburbs of people of like mind, and like status. Let me tell you about this bike ride around Madagascar we just did. Madagascar is bloody poor, right. They're completely burning off their forests, to survive, to make charcoal to cook with, to fire their brick works. Their forest is their biggest asset — it's supposed to be the second most biodiverse place on earth — and they're losing it rapidly. It's a disaster. Twenty million people on that island, and a lot of them are poor or destitute.

We'd stop for lunch on our motorcycles, out in the country, and get out our thermette, loaf of bread, tomatoes, cucumber, onions, and make sandwiches. I guarantee you every time we did that, before we finished lunch there would be 20 people standing around us, just looking. Joanne would always do this: take everything we're not eating, put it on a piece of paper and give it to them. Every time, without fail, the food would be divided between the 20 equally. Sometimes when that happened one or two would run off and bring others to share it with. And they'd be so grateful, and so happy. There's a measure of a society.

You contrast that with New Zealand, where so many of us live in silos, and wouldn't have a bloody clue what's going on in Porirua East, if they live in Roseneath. On that measure, I'd say they're far superior to us.

Now it so happens that these developing countries are extremely religious. The first thing they say identifies what religious club they belong to. That stuff is right at the forefront. I've got no idea if that's a coincidence or whatever, if that's linked to the selflessness. The only countries I've ever seen that aren't like this are some in Africa that have been totally stuffed by foreign aid. I've just been in Tanzania, which is like that, and Zambia's even worse.

I think we've overdosed on the material fulfilment thing. We don't need it, but you get caught up in it. I think people are lost. You see that with males in the traditional path, especially, having worked their whole lives. When they reach their retirement, that can ruin them. Men are particularly vulnerable to it.

What motivates you?
I just like having fun. Everything I do, I do because I think I'm going to enjoy it. The drivers of that enjoyment can vary. But in the philanthropic phase, when we first landed the dough, we had no idea what to do with it. We'd been financially secure for so long — we were happy in the bus with nothing, you know, and we could still get by with nothing. Anyway, we decided to do this philanthropic stuff.

First we decided to help only the most impoverished people in the world, which obviously excludes New Zealand, but since then we've started to do stuff here.

We do a lot of philanthropy in the conservation and public education space. Overseas it's all social investment type stuff. The criteria is that it gives me a blast, and so I guess that's just about maximising my wellbeing. Getting satisfaction from learning, helping other people out.

What's your own religious position?
I'm a devout atheist. I think religion is an invention by men to control men. I think organised religion can be quite evil, though not always, and is often used to exploit people.

Having said that, in the social investment space, apart from the investment we do with institutions

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i need you to see the real me

This is the personal story of a woman who has learned from experience what it is to live with disability and to thrive despite misunderstanding.

Bev Sutherland

When I was born 65 years ago, it was obvious that I had dislocated hips, double scoliosis and a malformed jaw. I was also diagnosed as being grossly mentally retarded. Then intelligence was primarily determined by a baby's reflexes, and response to a pinprick. I failed 'Responses 101' magnificently! Twenty-two years later, it was discovered that I had a sensory neuropathy, meaning that I have no sense of touch, taste or smell. Labels are not always negative; this diagnosis took away some of the shame of seeming clumsy, inefficient, and generally incompetent.

One myth I want to get rid of says that if you're born with a disability you automatically know how to cope with it, and that you don't need to grieve for the life possibilities which were never there. That is not true.

the use of the scriptures

And sometimes the Bible gets in the way. We're familiar with the verses stating that physical infirmity is the consequence of sin, sometimes generations back, or else evil spirits. One passage is the beginning of chapter 9 of John's gospel, where Jesus is asked whether the man's blindness is his fault or the fault of his parents. Jesus apparently replies, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, he was born blind so God's works might be revealed in him" — a bit tough on the man! I appreciated scripture study meetings where we were able to look at such verses a little more robustly, and to learn that not all sayings attributed to Jesus were necessarily his words, but words the writers thought would fit with how they saw his teachings.

Bev Sutherland [Photo: Paul Sorrell]

the human challenge

People can be challenging, too. In my tutorials with nursing students, medical students and occupational therapists there has been a wide variety of questions. Some good but predictable like, "How do I determine water temperature in the shower?" and, "How do I cope with eating?" The food question is quite difficult, as the idea of not experiencing taste or texture is hard for others to imagine. I choose food which I can manage safely. As I can't feel anything

in my mouth I need to be very aware of the risk of choking. I always feel reassured when I see shiny cutlery. I know then that I can see my reflection in the blade of the knife, and check that my face is clean.

Some questions make me fear for the safety of society when students undertaking professional qualifications are released on an unsuspecting public. Questions like, "Do you think your life would have been different if you didn't have physical impairments?" And one very vocal student, after hearing that I was able to drive in spite of not feeling my hands or my feet, raised his hand yet again, and asked where I drive. I am usually gentle with students, but on this occasion I decided to enjoy myself. After pausing a second or two, I replied that I do try to avoid the footpath.

the use of our emotions

On a more personal level, years ago I found a book which had a profound impact on me. It was about chronic illness, and responses to it. The book made the point that traditionally in our culture, in order for society to function, individuals are required not to be too open about the emotions involved. This goes for family members as well. I was made aware at a very early age that some family saw my disabilities as their cross to bear. This applies to the wider circle of friends, and to the medical profession as well. In my experience, medical professionals are somewhat uncomfortable when patients respond emotionally. I was taught from an early age that I must not respond emotionally myself, no matter how painful medical procedures may be, as that would make it harder for the doctors.

Some people within the Church also find emotional responses difficult. When I was involved in the charismatic movement I was a sitting duck for those wanting to pray for me. In the end I began saying if you want to pray for me that's great, I'll take all the help I can get. But don't pray for healing, pray that I'll be given the resources to cope with whatever I have to deal with. This attitude of needing to fix things is quite common, and I suspect partly comes from our very human discomfort with difference, and also our discomfort with powerlessness. Unfortunately, in trying not to burden others with my problems, I have to give myself permission to be more open sometimes – when it feels safe. That is hard for me.

dos and do nots

The practical stuff on caring for people with disabilities is easy – keep walk ways uncluttered, and make seats available. If you know someone who uses a wheelchair or motorized scooter, make sure they can be accommodated without reshuffling chairs AFTER the person arrives.

Some don'ts. If I offer to take on a task, please don't decide for me that it's too much for me to cope with. Feel free to offer help, by all means, but please don't try to organise me. I can be very uncooperative if I feel I'm being 'managed'! Those are the easy ones.

Baron von Hugel, a Catholic theologian in the early 1900s at the time of the modernist crisis within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote, "Christianity allowed the soul, encouraged the soul, to sob itself out." One thing which is not so easy to provide, and which I and many others need, is feeling that we do have permission to say that we do mind the fact that pain is constant; that exhaustion is constant; that the feeling of being 'other' is hard; that every new acquaintanceship will probably develop into a disability awareness exercise; and that we do mind that things are not going to get better magically. Another need is to have people who will remain with us in our pain. There are two miracle stories in the Bible demonstrating different aspects of these do's and don'ts. The first is a 'don't': the story of the man waiting by the pool of Bethesda. His friends took him there every day, which was kind, but they didn't remain to help him into the pool — hit-and-run caring? The 'do' contrast story is the story of the man whose friends lowered him through the roof to get to Jesus (Mark 2:1-12). Maybe that could be called follow-through-caring, if you'll pardon the pun.

a prayer

This is a little of my personal story. It is my story only, not anybody else's, because there are as many attitudes to disability as there are people with disabilities. And I hope you will like this poem. Indeed, you could call it my prayer:

You look at me, and see
The problems; I'm ill again
Still, full of problems still,
Still struggling,
Still handicapped.

I want to cry out -
Don't look at my handicap,
Look at me!

There's me in there, give me
Credit for full reality, for my
Intelligence, for my own validity,
I'm not the struggling
Creature that you see.

But, impossible demand,
I also need you to know my pain,
To see the shape of
My wound, feel the burden of my
Handicap, which I always
Carry around, always noticed,
Never found.

I need you to see me,
To know the handicap so well
That you look right past it,
For when you vest me with
That dignity, then I can admit,
Paradoxically, that I am
The struggling creature that you see.

(Jennifer Meyers, *A Winter's Prayers and Songs of Death*) ■

Bev Sutherland lives in Dunedin, and is member of the Mornington Methodist Church.

counting us in – the census 2013

A hands-on academic gives us a look at the forthcoming New Zealand census, and compares what we still do with what is happening in other countries overseas.

Robin Kearns

Rarely in the 21st century do we experience a bureaucratic procedure that occurred in Jesus' time. There were no elections under Roman occupation, nor vehicles to warrant, or passports to apply for. But there was a census. This month brings our opportunity to sit down and be counted. Perhaps we should count our blessings that, as a nation, we not only still have a census but also, unlike the requirements recounted in Luke's gospel, we need not return to our birthplaces. For many of us, that would be a challenge!

to census or not to census?

What is a census? Too easily we can overlook what lies within commonly-used terms. The New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, as its name suggests, collects data on both us the people and the accommodation we occupy. It sets out to enumerate the entire population on a particular date. What results is a slice of social history; a cross-sectional data set that is the most focused picture of the social landscape we have, but is out-of-date as soon as the enumeration is over. This is because the census 'freezes' people in place and time; it is a snap shot whereas life is more like a motion picture.

The key characteristics of a census are that it is:

- Universal (everyone should be counted)
- Compulsory (there is an obligation to respond)
- Comprehensive (a range of information should be collected)
- Simultaneous (information should be collected within a short period to ensure comparability)

A key issue is the location of people on census night. Auckland population geographer Ward Friesen writes of *de facto* enumeration as prevailing in UK and NZ, which records where people are at the night, whereas in other countries (e.g. the US) there is *de jure* enumeration (the usual residence of a population). An issue with the *de facto* approach is that it may incorporate many people who are not usually resident (e.g. tourists in hotels). But the problem with *de jure* counting is that usually-resident people out of the country on census night as well as visitors will be missed. There is no easy answer. Counting is invariably an imperfect process.

reasons to object to a census

One imperfection in the count is objectors. Those who seek to avoid the census tend to be either anarchist or libertarian in disposition. A good example of the former is the Wizard of Christchurch who used to row out to sea on census night. Libertarians object to the government's gaining information they hold to be private and personal. Their arguments have gained traction in some countries and challenge notions of the common good and what it is to be a citizen.

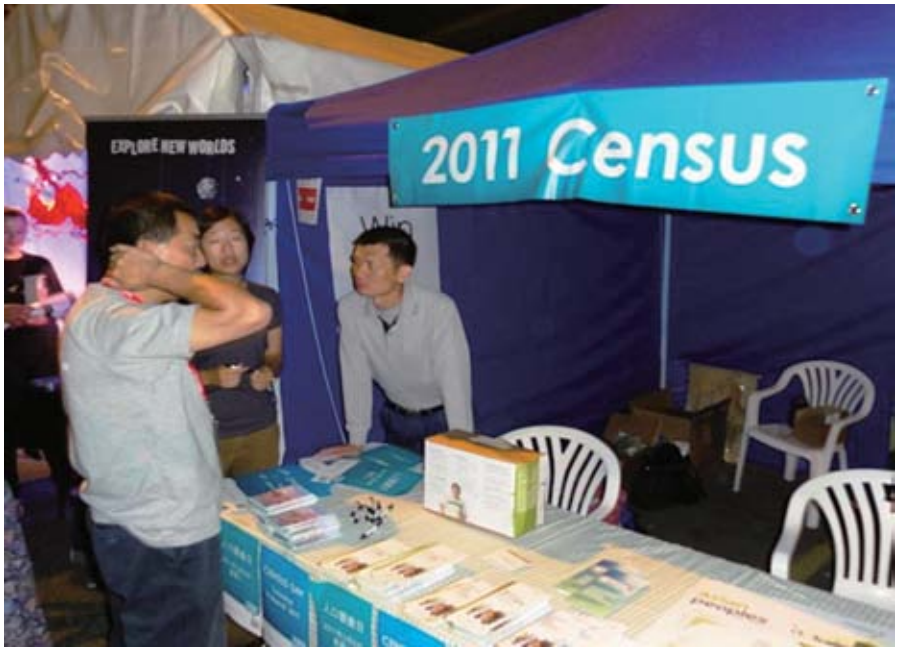
The frequency of censuses varies between countries from every decade in the UK and the US to every five years in New Zealand. Our 2013 census is the result of the delayed 2011 count. New Zealand's first census was conducted in 1851, reflecting a trend for modern nation-states to undertake population counts. Friesen reports that about 200 nations undertook censuses 1995–2004, with those not doing so tending to be ones with serious civil unrest. Increasingly, however, nations are stepping back from an unequivocal commitment to a census.

the reason for the delay

The catastrophic Christchurch earthquakes were cited as the reason for the postponement of our 2011 count, but some were anxious that this postponement might signal a retreat from our government's support for a census. This was not needless paranoia for other countries close in character to ours have reduced their commitment to counting. In Canada, for instance, the government announced ahead of the 2011 Census that completing the 'long-form' questionnaire would be voluntary and only a short version collecting basic demographic information would be compulsory.

Following a trend set below the border in the U.S., a 'National Household Survey' was subsequently sent to only a sample of households with the relevant Minister saying the change was made because of privacy-related complaints. Commentators pointed out that those who are most marginalised (e.g. recent migrants, indigenous peoples) are least likely to respond to a voluntary survey which, in turn, weakens the information gained. The Chief Statistician subsequently resigned in protest at the Conservative Harper government's policy change. Organisations which joined the clamour of protest against the change included the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Canada is not the only country



with diminished commitment to taking stock of its people. My British colleague Danny Dorling reports that the Census held in 2011 could well be the last of its kind in Britain with the government proposing no traditional Census be held in 2021. As Dorling says:

The Census allows social scientists to determine in what direction the trends are going ... Without a Census we will have no idea about how our towns and cities are changing. We will not know whether we are more all in it together, or if we are polarizing ... If there is no adequate replacement for the basic counts of people by age and sex in small areas then we will not be able to determine whether life expectancy has begun to fall in any area in the years to come.

we need data

The late, great Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, famously said, "the government has no place in the bedrooms of the nation". But what about knowing how many bedrooms are available to a household? And how many people occupy them, and how they are heated in winter? Without data, there is no comprehensive picture, and with no such picture there can be blinkered vision. Experience hidden from view can be convenient to those protected by privilege and political power.

the place of religion?

Libertarians also say that religion is a private concern that the state has no business asking about. Indeed, in the 2001 census, over 53,000 people responded to an email campaign and listed themselves in response to the religion question as practising Jedi faith! Suddenly Star Wars has a legacy on the religious landscape (apparently Dunedin had the highest per capita proportion of Jedi). Despite being a tongue-in-cheek response for many, at least we can 'read' something from such a response. In a largely secular nation, perhaps cinematic culture and celebrity are becoming a surrogate belief system? The thing to be thankful for is that the questions are still being asked. For if a census is about holding a mirror up to our nation, then being enumerated on core aspects of our lives such as affiliations and belief structures is surely part of being citizens?

rural hard-to-reach

Although filling the census forms is a legal requirement, not everyone will complete them this year. Some, doubtless, will avoid the gaze of the state. After the 1991 census I worked with Judy Reinken in Hokianga to demonstrate that more residents signed up for the health trust than completed the census. We concluded that, for at least some, this avoidance of enumeration may have been linked to disillusionment with the government of the day that was closing post offices, schools and hospitals. Others may have missed being counted simply because an enumerator didn't find them. When people live in the bush, beyond the reach of roads, the odds of being 'out for the count' increase.

urban hard-to-reach

The urban parallel for 'hard-to-reach' populations are people whose English is limited, and those living in vulnerable housing circumstances. The former challenge is increasingly dealt with by pre-publicity and forms appearing in multiple languages and the use of multi-lingual enumerators. It is the latter situation that is the greater challenge. Anecdotal evidence suggests it is no longer the overcrowded homes of south Auckland that are the least accurately counted parts of the metropolis, but rather inner city apartments. Here the challenge to enumerators is access. Building managers act as gatekeepers and not infrequently units are informally sub-let and over-occupied especially by recent migrants. Although it contests popular thinking, downtown Auckland is now one of the high deprivation parts of the city.

Results of the 2013 count will assist in better understanding the 'lie of the land' in terms of opportunities and risk. Data will also inform funding decisions and claims for preferential treatment for those in deprived areas. These are matters of equity and social justice. Should the continuation of our Census ever come under scrutiny we need to be as ready as the Canadian Bishops were to raise concerns.

As Danny Dorling says, *without a Census … the shrillest voices will win over the most informed. We will not know what it is that we are all together in, and how it has changed* ■

Robin Kearns is Professor of Geography at The University of Auckland, and a director of Tui Motu.

the four pillars of local democracy

The former Dean of the Anglican Cathedral reflects on what it means to work hard at the process of local government and then to know, by virtual consensus of local government bodies, that this is being undermined by the Local Government Act 2012.

Peter Beck

I have been on a rollercoaster learning curve! Being Dean of the Cathedral in the Square was for me the very best job in the Anglican Church and I was very sad to move on. After I resigned the announcement of a by-election gave me the opportunity to continue to serve the city in some way post the quakes. After a lot of prayer, I took the plunge and stood! Now I am a Christchurch City Councillor, representing the Burwood Pegasus ward, which was the most damaged by the earthquakes.

I decided to stand because I believe that the City Council has a pivotal role to play on behalf of the citizens of Christchurch in ensuring and developing a healthy, integrated, sustainable series of communities which reflect the values and aspirations of the people. As I will explain later, to my mind the Local Government Amendment Act 2012 undermines this worthy aspiration.

getting there

It has taken me a full year to begin to get my head and heart around being a city councillor. Quite a transition and yet this new ministry is still, of course, all about people and for me the challenge is how I can exercise a priestly ministry in the council context. Most of all it is about how to encourage and be part of doing the very best we can for the citizens of Christchurch, for the community's well-being; to engage with the issues of the community and to play a pastoral and sometimes prophetic role in representing the people who have elected me. I am the patron of CanCERN, a network of community grassroots groups which sprang up after the September 2010 earthquake and is now pivotal in ensuring that the 'grassroots' voice is heard and listened to in the corridors of the decision makers. In CanCERN we have a tag-line coined by Harold Fleming which says it all — "the wisdom of the local community always exceeds the knowledge of the experts".

And that's the big challenge for elected members and the huge bureaucracies of which we are part.

our challenge as councillors

The Council is a complex organisation and there is so much to get my head around both to understand and then make a contribution. It is a body which is bound up by legislation and bureaucratic processes. My first introduction to the Resource Management Act was to leave me thoroughly stunned as to its complexity. There seems to be a rule for every eventuality. It's like being part of a very large and complex bureaucratic treadmill, in which hundreds of people are employed to make sure we follow the correct processes as defined by statute and the Local Government Act.

To my mind the healthiest organisations are more organisms than organisations. Organisms evolve. Parts are growing, some are shrinking as the circumstances and the needs change. They are adaptive to change. That's really hard for a council, any council, with its myriads of legal requirements and processes. To a greater or lesser extent organisations become self-serving and for us in the City Council the danger in this is that we may get sucked into a culture where we become servants of the system rather than servants of the public. In order for the Council to work in this new post quake world, I think we need to review our priorities regularly, to make our processes more responsive and flexible lest we are tangled in a bureaucratic jungle. To do this in the challenging times we are living through is like rebuilding a plane while flying through a force 10 storm! But that is what we are doing.

the key to our success

It is how we communicate and engage with the citizens of our city, together with our many and various village communities, that is key to our success or failure. Public perceptions, largely shaped by the media, become reality for most people and dictate how we judge and react to what we perceive. But these perceptions are not always the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

How we as councillors and council increase the respect and trust of the city is of course in our own hands. Clear, open, transparent communication, sharing of the facts, being upfront and honest about what is or is not going on, acknowledging mistakes and sharing successes are vital if we are to have a robust and trustful relationship with the city.

More than this, though, is a

proven commitment to engage and listen to the communities which we represent. The future needs to be community-driven with leaders who consistently have "eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts with skill to listen" to the people of our city. There are many voices, and they are often discordant, reflecting the many different views of the population. Our task is to listen to these voices, to assess the different views and then to make the decisions we think are most in line with the spirit and hopes of our city. That is civic leadership. Often we will get it right. Sometimes we will get it wrong. But how we engage with the citizens of our city is crucial to a successful outcome.

being undermined

All that I have said so far is, to my mind, undermined by the Local Government Amendment Act 2012. The government's gross lack of consultation with local bodies, as evidenced by the almost united opposition from the local government sector to some of the major aspects of the Bill as it went through its select committee processes, and its confused and sometimes inaccurate basis for the amendments, disables our ability as local authorities to deliver the true purpose of local government and local democracy.

The new Act makes a very substantial change to the purpose of local government. The 2002 Act has the central provision that the purpose of local government is for local authorities to play a broad role in:

- "promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach". They have been called the 'four wellbeings'.

The new Act replaces these words with:

- "meeting current and future needs of their communities for good quality local infrastructure, local public services and performance of regulatory functions".

The 'four wellbeings' of the 2002 Act acknowledged the fact that local government is not just about roads and sewers and physical infrastructure and the like. These are vital parts of a city's wellbeing. But so is the social and cultural life of a city. Councils have an integral part to play in promoting and ensuring the holistic health of the people they serve.

local government elections

A local government election is coming up in October this year. My hope is that across the country people will be looking for candidates who continue to aspire to the four wellbeings, despite the fact that they have been dropped in the new Act. ■

The Reverend Peter Beck is a Christchurch City Councillor.

the devout atheist

continued from page 9

like UNICEF, we do quite a bit of stuff with individuals out in the field, and 9.9 out of 10 of them are devoutly religious. We always start with this conversation: "I think it's a load of codswallop, and you live by it. But I look at what you do, and that's a big fat tick, so I'll back you to the hilt."

You fund the work of Dr Edric Baker, a devout Christian, in Bangladesh?

Edric Baker is New Zealand's Mother Teresa. Unbelievable man. He's so strong! He's up against the wall, with no money to do the next thing, and he will not let go of his principles.

He's hugely religious. I don't have religious debates with him, there wouldn't be any point. When you see him amongst the dying, you think, "If I believed in Jesus, this is blimmin Jesus in front of me". We back some other people like that: a couple helping handicapped orphans in China, a girl — Rachel Hughes — looking after street kids' children in Vladivostok, all deeply religious. I'll back them all. They're awesome.

Where did you get that sense that you have to look for happiness somewhere else? That material wealth isn't where you find it?

I often think it's because of my wife, Joanne. I wonder if I'd married someone different, someone whose biggest aspiration was to live in a big house on the hill in Roseneath, I wonder what I'd be like now. Because we're all a product of our environment. Joanne is a good Catholic girl who grew up in a very poor family in Invercargill, one of eight kids. If there's one thing that brings her to tears, it's when she sees her own children wasting money. She's always giving people stuff, it's just her nature.

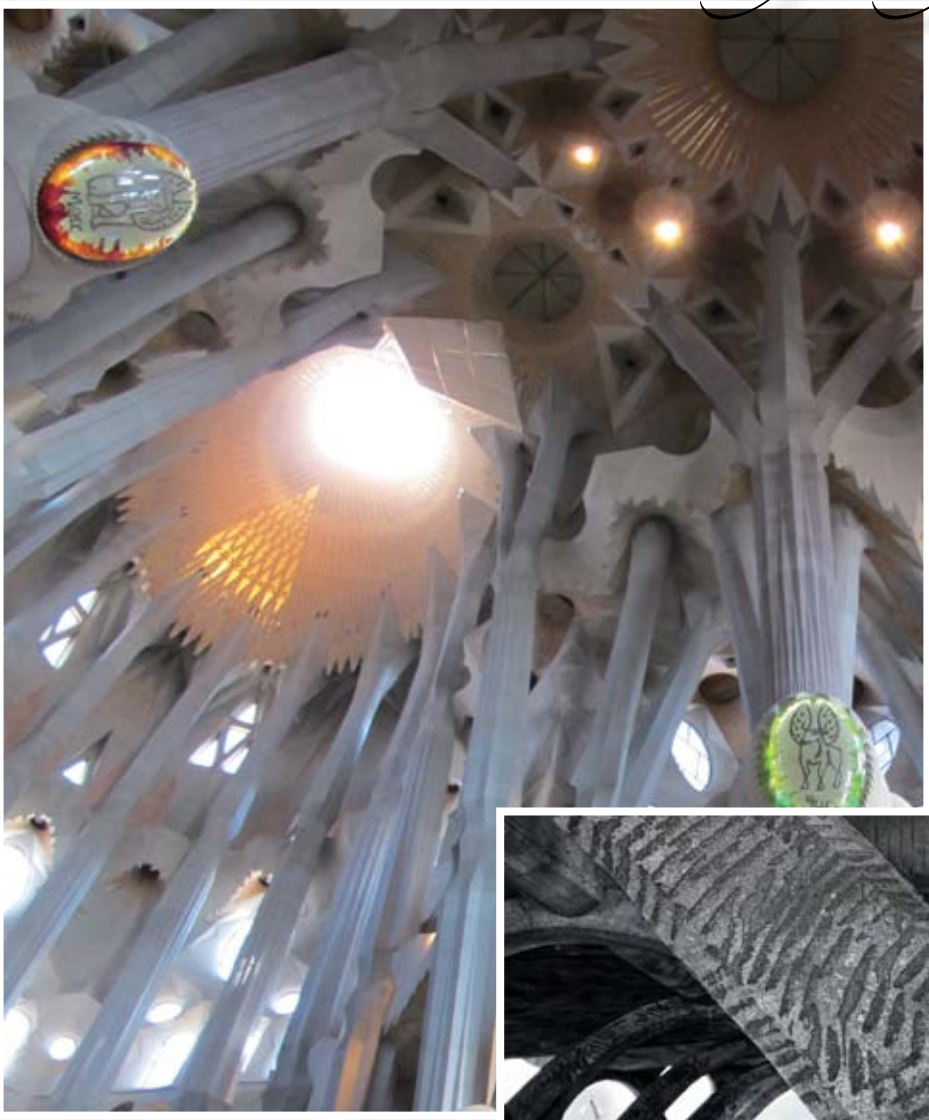
My own family was relatively well off, we grew up in Putaruru, a poor town, but Dad was an Oxford graduate. What I got from Mum and Dad was probably that academic discipline. They were robust debaters.

You seem to be a huge fan of motorbiking around the globe. What's that all about?

We did our first motorcycling trip in 2001, three weeks in the Himalayas. Joanne's always been a biker, she's a bit of a mechanic. I'm not really into motorcycles. As long as the bloody thing goes, in other words. What they do, though, is totally immerse you in the society you're travelling through, and as soon as you stop people come up to you. It gives you incredible freedom. We could live on the bikes, doing that. I want to keep doing it for as long as it's enriching. ■

Somewhere beautiful for God

Michael Hill



Top: Interior of *Basilica de la Sagrada Familia,* with soaring tree-like pillars. Bottom: Zhenshen fashion house with a model leaning against a tree-like pillar.

A long time ago I was wandering through the English countryside with a friend, when he said to me: “Have you ever seen the cathedral wood?” “Never even heard of it,” I said. “I’ll show you”, he replied.

We hopped over a fence and crossed a couple of fields up a gradual slope. At the top there hove into view a copse of tall trees. As we entered the wood I saw they were largely beech. The English beech is a very beautiful spreading tree flourishing especially on chalk and limestone. Here however, they were closely packed and their trunks rose, straight and tall like the columns of a great church, into a dense canopy far above our heads.

Little direct sunlight penetrated, so the wood was deeply shaded but in no way gloomy. It was majestic, and I recall a profound feeling of awe at its gentle stillness. I can well understand why the ancients believed in sacred groves. This was just such a place. I have had a similar experience in recent times visiting one of the New Zealand kauri forests: those noblest of native trees also soar high into a dense canopy and their trunks are so straight they were pillaged by the early European settlers to make masts and spars for sailing ships.

I imagine that such an experience as mine in the cathedral wood may well have helped to mould the fertile

Top: The unique facade of the *Basilica de la Sagrada Familia.* Bottom: a model of the fashion house's overarching solarium (at left) symbolizing a bird in flight as soaring aspiration.

imagination of Antoni Gaudí, the visionary Catalan architect.

His masterpiece, which guarantees his undying fame, is the *Basilica de la Sagrada Familia* (the Holy Family) in Barcelona, north-east Spain. The plan to build this shrine arose out of a movement of the mid-19th Century to preserve the family against the destructive forces of urbanisation and industrialisation. Gaudí himself, who was a very religious man, embraced this cause, and in 1883 at the age of 31 he was given the contract to design the Basilica.

Every other project he received after this time was like a laboratory where he refined the techniques which would go into *la Sagrada Familia*. The project depended on voluntary contributions, so he determined first to erect one of the three façades – that of the Nativity. Three soaring spires lavishly express the joys of living. His hope was that people would see it and glean an idea of what the whole building would eventually look like — so be lured into making a donation.

Enough of the nave was complete enabling it to be consecrated for public worship by Pope Benedict in 2010. The hope is to complete the Basilica for the Gaudí centenary in 2026.

Aladdin's cave

If you wander down Princes Street in Dunedin there is a café where the coffee is good. And if you pass through a door at the rear you descend

into what was once the basement of an old city emporium, a cellar of arched brickwork. There you will come upon Aladdin's Cave — the city office and workshop of Architecture van Brandenburg.

Fred van Brandenburg is a successful architect based in Queenstown, who designed many of the buildings at the Millbrook Resort, as well as others throughout New Zealand. In 2005 he visited Barcelona, and was simply blown away by Gaudí's work, especially *la Sagrada Familia*. "Its complex geometry," he says, "left me stunned … the entire building is filled with religious symbolism.

"Gaudí studied natural shapes and analysed their geometry. I too had to relearn my geometry in order to understand him. I looked at the way he designed his smaller works around Barcelona and saw these forms everywhere; and then I found them all over *la Sagrada Familia* too.

"Natural forms are curvilinear and Gaudi found that these could be constructed using straight line geometry called 'ruled surfaces'. Gaudi was not just an astonishing architect, he was also a brilliant engineer. His love of using geometric shapes — some unique to him — became the cornerstone of his structural and architectural designs. Often he would take two geometric forms and intersect them to form yet another complex shape. All the time he was copying what he saw in nature.

"Seeing Gaudí's work made me realise that all the architectural work I had accomplished up to then was acceptable, but boring! It was so totally predictable. Nothing was stretching boundaries in the way that all Gaudí's works did. From that time on, he became my inspiration."

Fred's second son, Damien, is a graduate architect, and he too visited Barcelona and had a similar conversion to his father's. He beheld Gaudí's masterpiece with the eyes of eager youth. His impressions too are worth sharing:

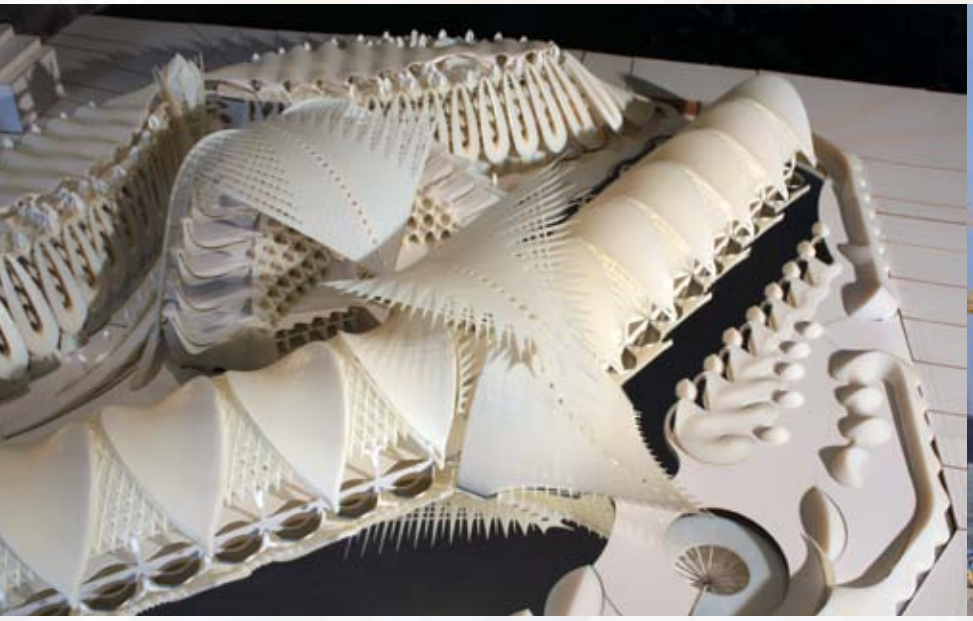
"You come out of the metro in Barcelona and right in front of you there it is, this immense façade soaring up into the sky. It is breathtaking. Inside, what struck me was the way Gaudí enables the light to enter the building. It is much like a Gothic Cathedral: the light bleeds round the edges of his geometry and makes its intricate structures stand out.

"When you look up from the central nave, the columns soar upwards like tree trunks finishing in what resembles a forest canopy above you. The light comes in through the clerestory windows and dapples the architectural shapes. It is like being inside a gigantic forest.

"Gaudí saw his work always as God's work which he was copying. When you work at this sometimes you stand back and acknowledge that these geometries have been worked out in nature long before us."

Damien works in the Dunedin office with his colleague, computer 'wiz' Griff Humphreys and team of model makers. Their workshop is filled with the most stunning and exciting architectural models. Gaudí's dreams are being re-incarnated there. It is Aladdin's Cave. Damien again: "The models are very important: it is like making a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. It helps you to see how the pieces of the design hang together, and how and where gravity comes in. You start with a small-scale model so as to understand the whole picture. Then you move to larger scale models to see in three dimensions how the parts relate to each other."

"One of the things necessary in this work is to be able to think and conceive shapes three dimensionally. A lot of our modeling initially is by trial and error, trying to transform an idea into a reality. Griff can test the ideas as we go on the computer to make it fit into the Gaudi geometric codex, all the time improving the design and at the same time checking the structural integrity as the building rises out of the ground.



"The computer helps us transform the idea into a tangible model. We are following a vein throughout history, which has striven to give architecture a structural art form. We look, say, at a leaf and ask ourselves why a leaf is that shape — so that it can hold itself together in space and shed water and withstand the effect of wind. We look at the design and see if we can copy it."

Madame Zhu

Not long after his return from Barcelona in 2005, Fred was in his Queenstown office when he received a visit from a Chinese woman with her interpreter. She had seen some of his work and was impressed. "You must

become my architect", she said.

Fred protested that since his Gaudí experience his whole style had changed. He showed her some of his new models. She left, and he heard nothing more for 18 months. Then, out of the blue came an imperious summons to go to the city of Shenzhen, near Hong Kong in South China.

Fred went, accompanied by his wife Diane; they were welcomed by Mme Zhu with her husband, Mr Yao. The four of them went to Barcelona together and relived the Gaudí experience. The Chinese couple were completely won over.

Mme Zhu is the leading fashion designer in China and her brand Marisfrolg is internationally acclaimed. Her husband came along to Fred with the brief. He wrote down three Chinese characters on a piece of paper. "The design must be something soaring – awe-inspiring, as *la Sagrada Familia* is to Barcelona; it must be not ostentatious; it must be of permanence". The whole complex was to occupy the size of seven and a half rugby fields.

It is a gigantic undertaking and it has occupied the van Brandenburgs ever since. They visit Shenzhen every month or so, to monitor progress. The factories are already up; there is a vast central building with design workshops and catwalks, issuing from a central atrium. There will be a 50-bed boutique hotel for clients; an over-arching solarium — a metaphor for a bird in flight to symbolise their soaring aspiration; all this set in 4.5 hectares of gardens.

Fred is emphatic that good working conditions, like good living conditions, must be spacious. Fine architecture shapes the minds and souls of the people who live and work in its ambience. For instance, the factory buildings have roof gardens, to keep the workers in touch with nature and give them somewhere pleasant to relax in their break times. The whole complex should be complete in a couple of years.

A dream

Could something like this ever happen here in New Zealand? On that scale, of course, no. Shenzhen is the fastest growing city in China, and now has a population of over 12 million. It is a totally new place, ripe for innovation. It can take a complex on this scale.

Yet we too have a new city about to spring up. Our third city lies devastated by the most damaging earthquake in recent history. It is about to rise again from the ashes. What an opportunity!

What an opportunity for the inspiration of Antoni Gaudí! When Coventry Cathedral, in England, was destroyed by bombing during the Second World War, the immediate question was how to replace it. No doubt there were those at the time who wished to build in the Gothic style exactly what had been lost. Fortunately, the citizens chose to go another way.

The project to rebuild was awarded to Basil Spence (designer of our Beehive). He too had had a van Brandenburg vision, while in Italy during the war. He had visited Ravenna and seen the glorious fifth and sixth Century churches, simple spaces gleaming with mosaics. He built the new Coventry Cathedral in modern materials; and it too is a simple space resplendent with coloured glass and tapestry.

In Christchurch, no buildings suffered more in the quakes than the churches. Hardly any have survived. The cathedral in the Square is in ruins. Petre's masterpiece on Barbados St lies devastated. What will replace them? My dream would be for a single splendid building.

Nothing characterises the ancient European cities more than their great cathedrals. Think of Cologne or Milan, or Notre Dame de Paris. In England, think of Salisbury with its splendid spire, York Minster or Canterbury. The whole life of these cities revolves round those wonderful buildings. They are the venues for their most important civic events. That is what the new Christchurch will need.

It would be New Zealand's *la Sagrada Familia*. It could be one of the wonders of our time. The spirit of Gaudí could be rekindled in this land. The opportunity is there. All that is needed is the vision and the will. "If you will it, it is no dream." ■

Left: a larger model of the fashion house. Right: The left hand side of this model takes shape on the ground in Shenzhen

Father Michael Hill is editor emeritus of Tui Motu.

set the soul on its way

The absorbing nature of everyday life can obscure the path for the journey of the soul. But there are aids to resetting our spiritual compass and finding our direction.

Daniel O'Leary

I went alone to see the Palme d'Or-winning film *Amour.* I knew I would cry. Watching the diminishing effects of old age on the lives of a loving Parisian couple was full of pathos and deeply moving. It raised the most sensitive issues about how we perceive loss, love and death in raw detail in the most extreme circumstances. The cinema was utterly still when the credits ended.

Why was this, I wondered? Because, I suspect, we had been taken to the place of the soul, to that land where our deepest spirit lives — a land we are slow to enter. The urgent, daily context of our lives mitigates against such profound awareness. Too much work, anxiety and a relentless stress are filling our days and nights.

It takes great courage to set about regaining the lost rhythm of the soul. We generally postpone the work of self-realisation, of the inner journey, of the ultimate questions. We forget that if we do not live our lives abundantly now, we never will. And as death approaches, we bitterly regret the greatest tragedy of all — our unlived lives. W.H. Auden wrote:

We would rather be ruined than changed
We would rather die in our dread
Than climb the cross of the moment
And let our illusions die.

We need to keep resetting our spiritual compass so as to discern and painstakingly follow the innate, intimate longing with which we were born. Half-hearted hankerings after happiness won't do. Stifled though it may be, somewhere within us there is always a half-remembered memory of the way forward; we sense a vaguely familiar blueprint too often out of focus, a blurred star that attempts to draw, drive and guide us, that persistently reminds us of our true north.

The journey of a soul is never clear, direct or final. It tests our commitment to the limit. But distracted and confused as we mostly are, the original design is never lost. It spills through the cracks of our daily distractions, but it never drains away completely. Author Sheila Cassidy wrote:

And so we must begin to live again,
We of the damaged bodies
And assaulted minds,
Starting from scratch with the rubble of our lives
And picking up the dust
Of dreams once dreamt.

The required 'picking up' is no armchair rumination, no vague desire to be better. There is no self-help short cut to the place of this emerging and radical vision. Old and shallow patterns of existence have to die for something beautiful to be born. It is not about proving, improving or accumulating anything any more. Nor is it about discovering some glorious plan or direction to navigate the labyrinths of the soul.

Old and shallow patterns of existence have to die for something beautiful to be born.

The truth of it is all so different. It is only through the hard and slow way of surrender, of reaching, through meditation, for T.S. Eliot's "condition of complete simplicity (costing not less than everything)" that the veils begin to part. Only then, beyond looking, can we learn to see. Only then, beyond knowing, can we learn to be wise. Only then can we begin to commit to a life of compassion, contemplation and creativity.

The mystics offer us two inseparable signposts along the way of the soul — the vision of divine immanence, and the working out of it in practice. But how do we do this? How do we hold the sublime vision and the menial tactics together? The answer is hidden in the shocking revelation of Incarnation — a kind of anticlimax we still mostly find unacceptable.

It is only in the loving vision and awareness we bring to whatever we do, the compassionate mindfulness that we infuse into the most mundane realities of our days, that the secret of the searching soul is revealed. And our work could then be described as love made visible. When we sense the gold in the rubble of our lives, when we divine "the dearest freshness deep down things", then we are living in the way of Incarnation. And this changes everything. Our hearts begin to open, our eyes to shine, we breathe more easily, we face the dark more confidently.

In his *Le Milieu Divin*, Teilhard de Chardin situates this transforming awareness of vision and action in the ability to see our ordinary lives against the backdrop of a divine horizon. "Even by the humblest work of our hands we serve to complete, magnificently, the highest levels of Creation. In whatever we do, we build the pleroma; that is to say, we bring a fulfilment to Christ.

"There is a sense in which he is at the tip of my pen, my spade, my brush, my needle — of my heart

and thought. By pressing the stroke, the line or the stitch on which I am engaged, to its ultimate natural finish, I shall lay hold of that last end towards which my innermost will tends ... Knowledge is not enough. Love is the most powerful, the most unknown energy in the world ..."

It is also in the context of incarnate love that Fr Pedro Arrupe, former father general of the Jesuits, outlines his agenda for soul-work. His words would be a fitting summary of Michael Haneke's *Amour*. "Nothing is more practical in finding God than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, what you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."

Mystic and philosopher John Moriarty's much-cherished words offer a comforting mantra for nourishing the *unum necessarium*, that one essential work of the soul:

Clear mornings bring the mountains to my doorstep.
Calm nights give the rivers their say.
Some evenings the wind puts its hand on my shoulders.
I stop thinking.
I leave what I'm doing and I go the soul's way. ■

Fr Daniel O'Leary is a priest of the Diocese of Leeds. His website is www.djoleary.com

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jesus gave me a crunchie today

School holidays, and my wife, Jan, and I find ourselves in Pak'n'save on a weekday instead of our usual weekend re-stock. As usual, lots of people wheeling trolleys, carrying baskets, kids in tow pecking at Mum for this or that on the shelf. The beginnings of Christmas glitz'n'glamour appearing in the aisles – whole hams, boxes of chocolates and normal treats now in red and green wrap and claiming to be cheaper.

Yet, something is not quite as usual. More trolleys with less in them? More people? Different people? Fewer shoes, more tattoos? More junkfood, fewer vegies? Fewer men, more diverse hair colour and piercings? Older clothes and younger mums with kids? An air of calculator thinking going into the choice of each item placed in the trolleys? Benefit day.

I feel embarrassed about our trolley. Sure, we shop only once a fortnight, and by our own arbitrary standards of wealth we're certainly not rich – single income but a good job, etc. We're not selfish people, our family is very committed to social justice, we care for the poor in lots of ways. Yet there's too much stuff in our trolley. Big block of cheese, bacon, sandwich ham, Doritos, nice coffee, dishwasher tablets, etc. You get the picture.

A full trolley on benefit day is food for thought. I notice all sorts of faces around me and imagine lives lived behind those expressions. Grumpy parents, adults with special needs and helpers, elderly people with their own bags on wheels, a trio of young men with scowls on their faces and beer under their arms. People who smile when our eyes meet as trolleys pass in an aisle, and people to whom I am invisible, or perhaps I imagine, are just used to being invisible themselves.

On arriving at the checkout we're keen to be getting home and stashing our embarrassing load of plenty. But there's quite a queue and we've got to wait a bit for the four people in front to get their food through. $36, $102, $47 and a Winz card declined until some items are left at the till. Behind us there's only one bloke with a wee basket of items. So I tell him to go in front, "We'll be ages."

"No, I'm not in any hurry," he says.

"Neither are we. Seriously, you go ahead."

"Oh, if you're sure, thanks."

I move back, he moves in. Middle-aged, maybe 60s, nice smile, old clothes, holes in the elbows & hem, not clean on today. My imagination ticks away and creates his day and what he might be thinking … "What a nice young man letting me go first …" He reaches for a candy bar, on special (85c), almost as an after-thought.

"Good on you", I muse. "Must be bloody tough ... how often do you buy a chocolate bar ... I don't know how lucky I am … nice of me to let you in … wonder if your flat has a shower?"

And he's gone. Almost. I start unpacking the trolley on to the conveyer belt and startle as he taps my arm. "Here, thanks for letting me in front of you." And he puts the Crunchie bar in my hand. "No, no, no. It was no problem, you keep it." The world changes forever as my musing train of thought derails. New thoughts, unspoken, arrive, "Accept the Crunchie, you arrogant bugger. You know nothing about this guy and you're not the only one with something to give."

Groceries in the boot. I take the chocolate bar from my pocket, break it, and give half to Jan. "Jesus gave me a Crunchie today," I say. "Eucharist at the checkout, who would have thought?" ■

Colin MacLeod is the assistant principal and Director of Religious Studies at Kavanagh College, Dunedin.

living below the line

The writer shares her experience as a VSA volunteer in Tanzania – what she was able to do, what she gained and learned, and some of the challenges which she sees.

Anne Perera

Many of you will have heard of or even taken part in the 'Live Below the Line' (LBL) campaign that seeks to increase awareness of extreme poverty in the world. What is extreme poverty? The World Bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than $1.25 US dollars (or NZ$2.25) per day. Right now, 1.4 billion people in our world are said to be living in extreme poverty. In New Zealand eight charities were involved in the LBL campaign. Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) was one of them. VSA has been sending volunteers overseas for the past 50 years. I spent two years in Tanzania for VSA as a Food & Nutrition Advisor to the Small Industries Development Organisation.

Anne (right) with a group of Maasai women in Tanzania.

sensing a call

Having studied and worked for 40 years, one day I felt called to give my life to do something different for others – which led to my VSA work. Tanzania is the seventh country I have lived in, the others being Brazil, USA, Singapore, India, Sri Lanka (where I was born) and New Zealand, home now for over 30 years. I have been privileged to gain qualifications to doctoral level in food science and technology. While studying, I married, and our son was three years old when we immigrated to New Zealand.

In Tanzania I helped train people at village level to use food sources more fully from their own back yards. I trained groups in processing many local food sources and gave them the skills to train others, so they too could earn an income. And I helped set up the Tanzania Institute of Food Science & Technology. As well, I was involved in youth development and facilitated programmes in leadership and business development skills. The people were so hungry for knowledge and it was a pleasure to share useful and appropriate information to help them, especially in learning how to start up small businesses. It was good also to work with several church groups who wanted help training people in food processing. I felt as if all my God-given talents and previous years of education and experience in several countries came together in doing this volunteer work, and I thanked God for that.

learning from the people

I learned much from the people themselves. Most of them were poor and in spite of having few material things, they were generally happy. This opened my eyes to see the world in a new perspective. For example, the Maasai women (pictured with me) come from a very poor nomadic environment. They do beadwork for a foreign NGO which supports them by selling the bead articles in Europe. It was this NGO which organized me to run a training session for them. Most Maasai husbands practice polygamy. It is common to see several little mud huts in a cluster, one for each of the wives to live in. I found it so strange, yet these women pool their resources and share the responsibilities of looking after their flocks of livestock, and fetch water from distances that we cannot even imagine.

I felt very spiritually connected with most of the people I met. Their simplicity, honesty and unsophisticated nature appealed to me. They were so willing to help; I just had to ask. It was a very humbling experience. Being away from home, I did miss my family, but at the same time felt that the people with whom I worked formed a new family for me. They accepted me and appreciated what I did for them, and wished that I could stay longer. The farewell that they organized for me was very moving and it was sad to leave. Even now they email me and we keep in touch. I still feel very much connected to the people who made me feel like family over there.

some real challenges

These two years of living away from family and home comforts were real challenges on a physical level as well. Things that in New Zealand we take for granted such as a steady power supply and clean water were real luxuries there. Taking medicine

and other precautions to prevent contracting diseases like malaria, typhoid, and dengue fever became part of the daily routine.

the church

The Catholic Church in Tanzania is in a real growth phase. The seminaries and novitiates that I came across in Arusha where I lived for two years were impressive. There are many young people from East African nations studying there to become priests and religious sisters. Indeed, several religious congregations have missions in the city itself. For example, I worked with the Notre Dame Sisters in their women's training and coaching programme called *Zinduka* (which means 'awaken' in the local Swahili language). During the two months that my husbsand visited me, we trained the Zinduka group on juice and jam-making using the fruit available in abundance in the country, which would otherwise go to waste.

Church services in the local language are often like musical shows. They are so vibrant and incorporate dance movements into the rhythm of their music. Local choirs spend hours rehearsing for the Sunday services, and people get dressed in their 'Sunday best' to go to church. For the benefit of minority people like me, many churches hold a service in English.

The local people have all sorts of needs and often asked for help. It was difficult to meet the needs of all the people I met around Arusha, especially when living on a small budget. However, it was not easy to ignore the needs, some of which could have long-term benefits not only for an individual, but for a family, a village and even the nation. In particular I met a young man, Sigsbert Kapingu, then 20 years old, and felt I should help him. With support of my family I funded his first year at St Augustine's University in Mwanza, Tanzania. And during a home visit I shared his story with my Passionist and other family groups. Some members generously contributed to the funding of Sigisbert's second year studies. We will raise money to fund his final year of studies. It is my hope that when Sigisbert graduates as a qualified accountant he will be able to support his own sisters and brothers, now in the same situation as he was when I met him.

Where to from here? My heart yearns to be with these people once again. How and when, I will have to wait and see. ■

The author (centre) demonstrating how to cook banana blossom at a food processing training session in Tanzania.

Anne Perera is a food scientist and a parishioner of St Ignatius Catholic Church, St Heliers, Auckland.

Aboriginal

she said she could see the third eye in each of us

she said she was hidden in a hole in the ground
when she was a child and ferns laid over her

she said she could hear the dogs barking and men shouting

she said she could hear her mother and her Irish father weeping

mahboba's promise

Responding gradually to needs as they surface, Mahboba Rawi has built up an organization which is dedicated to bringing hope to those who lack possibilities of education and wider life.

Trish McBride

Some time ago, I made a promise, a promise to write about a woman whose life work is the keeping of a promise. Many other things have intervened, but now is the time to keep the promise I made. We were at an early evening meeting of the Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association in suburban Wellington to listen to Mahboba Rawi, an Afghan Australian, talking about her work for the widows and children of Afghanistan. Our focus was on this woman who was travelling to enlist support for the victims of war in her homeland.

Very occasionally during life one meets a person through whom the light of God shines brightly. Mahboba is such a person. Radiant, strong, brown eyes lit from within, a beautiful blue scarf draped as head-covering, a devout Muslim and a loyal and appreciative Australian of some 26 years' standing.

mahboba's life story

She told us her life story. Born to a comfortably-off family of nine children in Kabul, she was the one with whom her father, unusually, chose to share his wisdom and knowledge as well as with her brothers. When she started secondary school she had ambitions to study at university and become a doctor — possible then! As a young teenager she experienced the Russian invasion of 1979, and when the older student who had initiated political protest and resistance by students was arrested, Mahboba stepped up as the next leader. She and others were soon rounded up, and were loaded into a bus to be taken to an unknown destination. She managed to escape, hid from pursuing soldiers in a carpet shop, was hidden by relatives for weeks while family organised her escape with her uncle through the mountains to the freedom of Pakistan.

After her journey across the Khyber Pass, she was fortunate to have relations to stay with at the refugee camp. But she was very aware of the uneven distribution of aid to refugees in camps. She dreamed of being in charge of getting aid to those who most needed it. She and a brother eventually got to India, where she married an Afghan man already resettled in Australia, and joined him there in 1984. She had their two children, and began working to help other Afghan women settle into their new home and culture with education programmes and community initiatives.

new purpose

Further tragedy hit when their son drowned in an accident. She had another son. However, her marriage eventually foundered. From the depths of pain she began a deep spiritual journey and prayed to God to find a new purpose in life. That purpose came when a doctor in the Pakistani refugee camps asked for help to save children from starving.

Mahboba Rawi

Mahboba started collecting, first to feed the children and then to provide education for camp children. In 2001, she started helping children in Afghanistan with the aid of her uncle who travelled to Kabul and found his old house still standing. The ongoing and at times accelerating killing had left countless widows and their children with no means of support.

building hope house

On her first visit back to her homeland in 2002, she was shocked to see children as young as five trying desperately to sell trivia like chewing gum and plastic bags in the streets to earn the family some food. She went home with one child and spoke with the mother. "I will pay you more than she has been earning if you can let her go to school." A promise! It was kept. And with the help of her equally remarkable uncle and generous donors in Australia and elsewhere, she has been able to keep that promise and open refuges that currently support 500 widows and their children in Kabul and beyond. Mahboba raised funds to build Hope House where there is food, love, education, some security — and hope of a sustainable future with employment education for the women.

working from australia

Her energetic fund-raising activities long since grew beyond her garage in Sydney. A formal organisation was set up and became known as Mahboba's Promise Inc. A documentary on her work was shown on Australian television and gained much support. During one visit to Afghanistan she met a man who wished to marry her because he had seen the documentary. Not at all her choice, but after prayer and laying down some ground rules, she accepted. He would have to respect her work, her independence, her travel. Not the image of a Muslim marriage that Westerners usually have! And so he too is now in Australia, and her main support. Her first husband had insisted that she not wear a head-covering in their new country in an effort to fit in. For many years she concurred. But eventually she chose to resume the custom of covering her hair as a sign of her dedication to God's call.

hope for future peace

We listened fascinated to this extraordinary story — mostly white Kiwi women, and a dozen or so Muslim women. We saw sections of the video — widows in incongruously pretty blue burqas sitting begging in the squalid pot-holed streets of Kabul, children selling shoe-laces, Hope House where there were smiles and gratitude from the mums and their children for being given another chance at a human life. Wars are always a catastrophe for the young. They grow up scarred, and if nothing changes, the boys are likely to become yet another generation of warriors. For those cared for by Mahboba's Promise, there is hope for future peace.

God and God's work are central to Mahboba's life. She cares passionately what happens to the women and children of her tortured homeland. She works to provide them with the basics — and hope! And she appreciates any assistance in support of her work. ■

Trish McBride is a writer and spiritual director living in Wellington.

RANDOM QUESTIONS

What can the word stone and the word night be in the midst of so many stones and so many nights?

What can that birdless tree be in the midst of so many birdless trees?

What can that crashing wave be in the midst of so many waves that have crashed and that are yet to crash? And the ships?

What can the ships that sail away or return to port be, and the women who see them off with their white handkerchiefs or welcome them with baskets of fruit?

What can time be in the midst of so many calendars, and calendars in the midst of so many empty hours?

What can my mouth that kisses and my hands that caress be in the midst of so many mouths kissed and so many hands?

And God?

What can God be, indivisible and unique, in the midst of himself, God without God to ask for an answer or a clue, God without even the word God to protect himself against forgetfulness: that unceasing rain?

– Rogelio Guedea

jesus enters jerusalem

Passion Sunday Luke 19:28-40; 22:14-23:56 (24 March, 2013)

… the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen … Luke 19:37

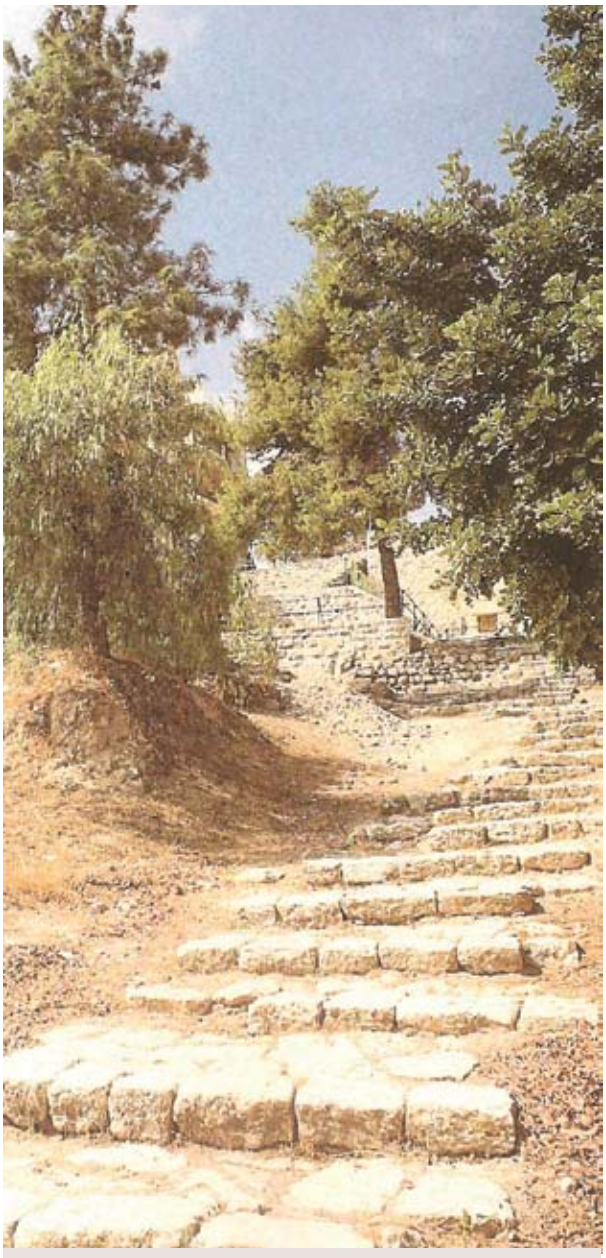
Kathleen Rushton

A friend once wrote "You bring me joy…" I don't remember what was written on other cards but those words have lingered. I have often mulled over the meaning of 'joy' which is one of the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. Last month I pondered the apostle Paul's inner attitude of joy. Now, I find Luke uses the term 'joy' ten times and forms of 'rejoice' eleven times. For this evangelist, the word 'joy' is about a deep emotional gladness in response to some form of the good news of salvation such as a divine announcement that gives hope to the poor and outcasts or to a wondrous event that changes a person. Luke often uses the word 'praise' to convey the emotions of the disciples or crowds when they see the goodness of God in their lives. Joy/rejoicing and praise often go together as they do in the incident which is celebrated liturgically at the beginning of Holy Week.

jesus the pilgrim 'goes up'

Jesus with his disciples is portrayed as a pilgrim who 'goes up' to Jerusalem for the Passover. Matthew and Mark tell us about palm branches being spread before Jesus. In John's version, palm branches were waved. However, Luke has no palms at all, nor shouts of hosanna. Details which have shades of a victory celebration in war or a political takeover are left out. Instead "the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen…" (19:37). Their rejoicing comes from the words and deeds of Jesus the Messiah and recalls what the angel said to shepherds: "I bring you news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day… a Saviour, who is the Messiah" (2:11). Their response to the goodness of God in their lives "peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!" (19:38) also echoes the peace proclaimed by the multitude of angels. They announce the birth of Jesus to the powerless shepherds (2:14) who returned to their flocks "praising God for all they had heard and seen" (v 20).

That angelic appearance occurred after two other moments of great joy which set the tone for Luke's gospel. The angel Gabriel promised Zechariah and others that after the birth of John: "You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth" (1:14). Because of God's great mercy to Elizabeth, her neighbours and relatives



Most likely Jesus trod these steps in Jerusalem which go back to the time of Maccabees and connected the city of David with the upper city.

"rejoiced with her". Mary exclaims, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." Is there, too, a link between Mary's acknowledgement of "the great things" God has done for her and the praise of the multitudes "for all the deeds of power" they had seen?

"the whole multitude rejoices"

Only in Luke's transfiguration story do Jesus, Moses and Elijah speak "of his departure (*exodus*) which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." (9:31). Jesus begins his journey from Galilee when "he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (v 51) and arrives as "the whole multitude of disciples begin to praise God joyfully." (19:37). We hear often that he is 'on the way' and passing through towns and villages "on the way to Jerusalem." He speaks the Word of God giving instructions and warnings to the crowds; positive instructions to the disciples; and to those who resist (mainly lawyers and Pharisees), he tells parables of resistance. He does 'deeds of power' by healing and casting out demons.

Seventy disciples are sent to go ahead of Jesus to prepare the way. These return 'with joy' (10:17). Jesus warns them not to 'rejoice' because they have overcome evil but to "rejoice that your names are written in the heaven" (v 20). Jesus, too, "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" and praised God. The disciples and/or the crowds witness his deeds and words and "the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things he was doing." (13:17). For here, Jesus not only healed a woman crippled for eighteen years but also showed the crowd the mercy and freedom of God who liberates them from misuse of Sabbath laws. Joy, wonder, praise and celebration — sometimes in extravagant measure — are the signs of salvation in individual lives and communities.

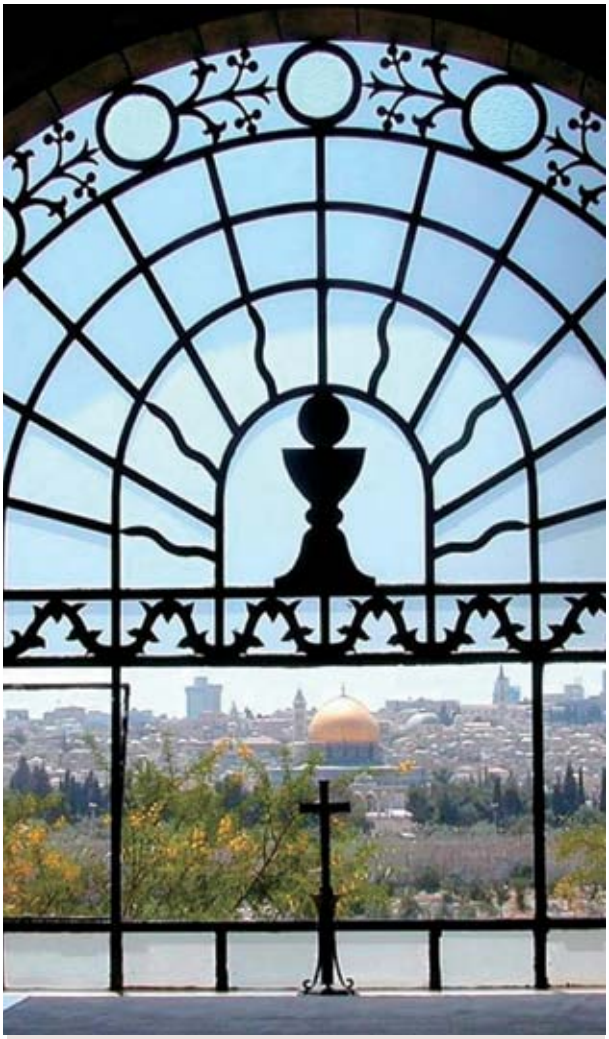
jesus wept over the city

Yet as Jesus catches sight of the city, his emotions are very different from those of the multitude of disciples. He wept over the city (whose name in popular understanding meant 'city of peace') because "if you, even you, had only recognised on this day the things that make for peace!" (19:42). The city will not see in Jesus the peace-bringing 'visitation' from God because those who lived there "did not recognise the time of your visitation from God" (v 44) for which Zachariah and the holy ones of Israel yearned (1:68–79).

Yet, in Jesus' last days in Jerusalem and in the events leading up to his death, Luke makes a crucial distinction between the hostile attitude of the leaders and that of the people who are eager to hear and follow him: "Every day he was preaching in the temple…" (21:37), "…all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple" (v.38). As Jesus is led out to be crucified "a great number of people followed him…" (23:27). After his death "all the crowds who had gathered… returned home beating their breasts" (v 48), while "all his acquaintances, including the women… stood at a distance, watching these things" (v 49).

As I celebrate liturgically Jesus' entry into Jerusalem do I recognise God's on-going visitation in the events of my daily life? On my way to Jerusalem, on my exodus, do I rejoice at the words and deeds of Jesus which set us free in our times? Am I eager to hear and follow him? Does Jesus weep over me? over my parish? over my locality? Why? Do I make a difference through my joy — deep emotional gladness — at the good news of salvation in our times? And do I respond by praising God? ■

Kathleen Rushton is a Sister of Mercy working in adult education in the Diocese of Christchurch.



A view from the chapel of *Dominus Flevit*, the place where it is understood Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

accountability and transparency?

Other People's Wars

Nicky Hager

Craig Potton Publishing 2011, $44.99

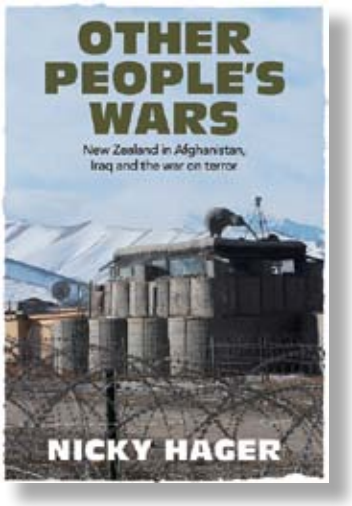
Reviewer: Matthew Hodgetts

In this book Nicky Hager has proven once again to be a formidable investigative journalist. With the unofficial help of some New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel, together with the Ombudsman's office and Wikileaks, Hager shines a bright light into the dark recesses between the NZ Parliament and the NZ military and intelligence agencies. It appears that senior officials in the 'public service' and military purposely misled both elected government and the public to further their own objectives. Their private agenda — to be as fully part of the Anglo/American alliance as possible — led the military and NZ intelligence agencies to mislead and often ignore the wishes and policies of the elected government.

As Hager puts it in the preface of his book (p. 8):

> *A generation earlier Vietnam had been a Television war, where people around the world could follow events day by day and debate the rights and wrongs. Those at home learned what the troops were experiencing and got an impression of what war was like. But the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been public relations wars: more than ever before, military media staff were controlling what the public saw and heard.*

Hager writes about how the NZDF went to Iraq and Afghanistan and often acted against the wishes of the New Zealand Government. This was mainly because it has become more deeply involved in the US military machine's war-fighting than with the United Nations-led peacekeeping or reconstruction as the New Zealand



Government had directed.

The book covers the NZDF's public relations campaign both to shut out any bad news and to conceal how much the NZDF had became just a small cog in the US war machine. Hager in this book champions the need for political transparency by revealing what the defence force actually did and what happened in the War on Terror, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Hager goes into great depth about the different occasions the military top brass have moved to use the War on Terror to reintegrate NZ into the US, UK, Canadian and Australian English-speaking alliance. How later, in both Iraq and Afghanistan mostly, the reconstruction and aid work the NZDF was supposed to be doing became more like military security work for the occupation forces. The NZDF personnel were integrated into the British armed forces in Basra, Iraq and are with the US in the Bamiyan province of Afghanistan.

It is overall another powerfully-written piece of investigative journalism covering another time period and area of NZ politics that is not really covered by anyone else. Hager's *Other People's Wars* is extensively researched and meticulously referenced. He does a service for the NZ public by revealing the highly secretive and anti-democratic nature of the top brass of the NZ military in these cases. Also he shows how countries need to have much more accountability and transparency in their Military and Foreign Affairs Departments and to insure that their military is properly under control by the civilian government.

Hager's book is a very good start. It shows the real picture of the NZDF's involvement in US President Bush's and to a lesser extent President Obama's 'wars on terror' to the public, Parliament and New Zealand Government. ■

law versus grace

Les Misérables

Director: Tom Hooper

Reviewer: Paul Sorrell

Although it might have shone even more brightly with some careful editing, *Les Misérables* offers audiences a stirring multi-generational story that runs for over two and a half hours without slackening in pace or losing our attention. The stage version has been running for almost 30 years, and even those who (like me) haven't seen it will enjoy anticipating the big numbers like 'I Dreamed a Dream' and 'Do you Hear the People Sing?' that punctuate the performance and have taken their place in the popular music repertoire.

But this is no piece of musical candyfloss. Rather, it fleshes out themes of crime and punishment, poverty and justice, forgiveness and reconciliation and law and grace present in Victor Hugo's original novel of the social ferment of Paris in the early nineteenth century. The film follows the progress of Jean Valjean (Hugh Jackman), imprisoned as a young man for stealing a loaf of bread. Having broken his parole, he is relentlessly pursued by lawman Javert (Russell Crowe), whose rigid moral world view prevents him from accepting that a person's faults can be wiped out through atonement and forgiveness.

Where Valjean's loving and open heart leads him from one place of suffering to the next, but ends with his finding salvation and peace, Javert's unbending conscience brings about his destruction. The dazzling scene where Javert walks the parapets high above the houses of Paris, wrestling with his uncertainties and doubts, shows him literally and metaphorically swaying on the edge.

This film is rich and inspiring on so many levels. The costumes and sets are elaborate and colourful, the music rousing, the cinematography magnificent without being showy, and the actors all sing their own parts. Hugh Jackman and Anne Hathaway as Fantine are standouts. The many faces of post-revolutionary Paris are revealed, from sweatshops and street vendors to the bourgeoisie in their fine carriages and, as the action draws to a climax, makeshift barricades manned by passionate young insurrectionists. There is bawdiness and humour to leaven the tragedy, although even the comic characters leave an unpleasant taste. The scene at the inn where Thénardier and his wife engage in the serial fleecing of their customers is a masterpiece of comic timing, perfectly adapted to the music.

There are of course some deficits. We never learn quite what the revolutionaries are fighting for and any political complexities are quickly swallowed up in a tender love story. Following its nineteenth-century literary template, the plot's heavy reliance on melodrama at times verges on the maudlin. But, after all, this is a musical and we should not ask too much. Taken for what it is, the film version of *Les Misérables* is an utterly absorbing theatrical experience and should not be missed. ■

Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

a significant nomination

"I respect Chuck Hagel but his ideas are not mainstream." (Republican Senator, Lindsay Graham, commenting on Obama's nominee for Secretary of Defence.) Indeed! The nomination evoked howls of protest from Republicans. Hagel, himself a Republican Senator at the time, called Bush's decision to invade Iraq "the greatest disaster in US foreign policy." He also maintains that sending young men and women into harm's way without a clear strategy and compelling national interest is stupid. Like President Obama, he believes in diplomatic engagement where possible.

Subsequently both the Israeli President Shimon Perez and six former heads of Shin Beth (Israeli Secret Service), criticized Netanyahu's policies as endangering Israel's best interests. The January elections saw a small shift towards more moderate parliamentarians in Israel. With the Republican Party in disarray, is there a chance that President Obama will take a much firmer line on Israeli government activities?

two prongs

When Mother Teresa died some compared her unfavourably with Brazilian Archbishop Hélder Câmara; Teresa seemed unaware of the need to address what he called 'structural sin'. Although technically correct the criticism missed an essential point, one illustrated by the life of Frédéric Ozanam.

Ozanam (1813-1853) was a brilliant young Frenchman who, as befitted a future university professor, published refutations of anti-Catholic writings by leading French agnostics. However, he accepted their criticism that the Church was no longer distinguished by its practical concern for ordinary people. Realising that one cannot credibly preach Christ without following him in practice, in 1832 he founded, along with half a dozen companions, the St Vincent de Paul Society. The principal aim was to relate to those in need in such a manner as to allow them to experience that they were really people of worth, not just objects of handouts from the better-off. The Society obviously met a need, for it spread rapidly all over Europe.

In 1838, in a series of lectures on commercial law, Ozanam analysed both the prevailing liberal capitalism and the incipient socialist movements (this was before Marx hit the headlines), showing how both were detrimental to the interests of ordinary people. He saw no essential conflict between democratic movements and the Church — unlike some French bishops and pope Gregory XVI. With his companions he established a periodical dedicated to social justice, maintaining that giving handouts to the poor was no substitute for social reform; the masses of people and the Church should work together for a just society. They exhorted influential Catholics to put aside their political differences and work together 'even with non-Catholics' so as to arrive at a consensus as to the structure of a just society; their efforts were fruitless.

When the Archbishop of Paris, Affre, was murdered while trying to mediate between the military and those at the barricades during the June 1848 uprising, Ozanam's enemies seized the opportunity to vilify him. "He was a supporter of the workers and social change, so he bears responsibility for the unrest." The periodical quickly folded and he spent his last five years in practical charity, teaching and study.

Affre taught that if one person was needy this was an occasion for charity, but if a whole social group were poor, this was a matter of justice. The upper classes in the suburb of St Germain derisively made a pun on his name (*affreux* = horrible, frightful).

Hélder Câmara's position gave him political influence in Brazil. People took notice when he said: "When I feed the poor they call me a saint; when I ask why they are poor and hungry, they call me a communist." But Mother Teresa began as a nobody — she was foreign, poor and a woman. Her legacy is the creation of a counterculture, a judgement on the values of the society that rejects its weakest. Frédéric Ozanam's academic status gave him credibility when he explained the logic of a Gospel-based approach to economics; the other prong of his evangelizing work was through his faith-based care for the needy, which in turn served as a springboard for arguing for social justice. We still need the ambulance at the bottom while the fence at the top of the cliff is being built.

threat to humanity?

Sir Martin Rees, Britain's Astronomer Royal, stands behind a foundation designed to study whether artificial computer power will eventually lead to robots capable of self-awareness. It is undeniable that the enormous rate of increase in computing capability is a potential threat insofar as it gives ability to rogues for wreaking havoc on others.

According to a report by Gwynne Dyer, Moore's Law (computing power doubles every two years) still holds true after 47 years, so it is timely to examine ways of ensuring adequate protections are devised. The dismantling of financial controls over multi-nationals by nation-states that occurred during the Reagan years makes the situation more disturbing. However, the assumption that a mechanical activity forms the essence of a human being makes one wonder. ■

you gave up WHAT for lent?

Peter Norris

Immediately following Pope Benedict's resignation, I was celebrant at a Sunday Lenten Mass. I could not help commenting about a cartoon showing the Vatican with a voice coming out saying: "You gave up WHAT for Lent?" Most are thrilled that Pope Benedict acknowledged his own frailty and resigned. With characteristic precision he said that it will take effect from 8.00 pm on the 28th February. I thought of this at the same time as I remembered that I should have called the children forward for their blessing. The profound often gets lost among the very ordinary. Yet in a way this is what Lent is about. It is an acknowledgement of our own failure and weakness so that God can enter in.

Most of us were happy for the Pope. I admired him and as I look at the photographs of the likely successors who are publicly saying 'Lord, I am not worthy' I wonder who will make it. I am sorry for whoever it is. Imagine never being able to wander down the street to buy a latté. He will be able to have 'whatever' delivered to his apartment but it will be hard to get the atmosphere of a cafeteria. To stay sane an extrovert pope would have to travel a lot, while an introvert would be able to stay in seclusion.

In many ways the leadership of the institution will carry on regardless of what we do. It does not touch our lives, as it is about governance. What will touch our lives is authority rather than power. If the new Pope speaks with authority, that is sharing the authorship of God, he will be a force for good. If not, it really does not matter. He will not be a leader but might be an OK manager.

The chances are that we will get a good man who will be OK as a manager. It would be great though to get someone who will do more than manage. We can pray but we should also realise that whoever occupies the big seat in Rome, we are all called to follow Jesus, to share in the authority of God and to listen. It sounds very simple but it is not, because the call to be as creative as God is, to follow Jesus, and to listen to God, takes a lifetime.

We all pray for Benedict's successor and probably no one will pray more than Benedict. He has learnt that being in charge does not mean that people listen. He had to live with disappointment in the people he appointed to various jobs. He had to live with grief when he saw suffering, so he knows what his successor will find. He has also experienced joy at being surprised by how God acts in generous people. He has also been pleasantly surprised by goodness. He will be dealing with a range of emotions as we will.

We all hope for the best; we pray, we dream, and we hope that whoever is elected will also pray and dream as we do.

Father Peter Norris is the Master of St Margaret's College, University of Otago.

a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

Trees, Belonging, Silence

"You're a foreigner if you weren't born a Kiwi, that's just the way it is," said the radio talk-back host to a British immigrant ringing in on Waitangi Day. She was talking about her 57 years in New Zealand and how deeply this land is now her home. Annoyed by the talk-back host's one-eyed dialogue, we flicked off the car radio and driving on towards Whanganui, we started talking about our own family's belonging to Aotearoa.

My New Zealand parents were working in India when I was born, but these long islands are etched on my soul and I have no doubt that I belong here. One way of belonging that has resonated many times in this visit to New Zealand is the friendship I feel with our New Zealand flora. It's friendship with trees and plants in as much as I know their names deep in my heart; and as with my best friends I know them by several different names — Latin, Māori and common English. It's friendship in as much as I immediately recognise different plants, their shapes, textures and colours. Walking up the Huxley river, I leapt joyfully to see the *Celmisia* alpine daisy — flamboyant beside the alpine gentian. Walking up a river near Otaki, I smile at a dreadlocked *rimu*, my favourite among the ponderous podocarps. And as we walk up the Cobb valley I explain to our kids the differences between the lilting, silver beech and her sisters, red, mountain and black beech. The silhouetted flax flowers along Auckland motorways make vertical runs of quavers and the exuberant *toi toi* flounces, a cheer leader encircling the more serious bush. Dr Suess' tufty, crazy trees were surely inspired by our *ti kouka*/cabbage tree which waved at me hundreds of times in the last two months.

Our 13-year-old came back from a horse-riding camp in Taumarunui and spoke of the wonderful afternoon when a group of them sat on a tussocky hill overlooking the Whanganui river. She said they spontaneously sat in silence for 30 magical minutes — noticing, listening, thinking, praying. Shared silence is not impossible even with teenagers and so often brings a deep sense of God-with-us. I am reminded of powerful deep silences that plants and trees have shared with me. And the invitation for me to sit in silence with our children far more often.

Writing now in Auckland, I look out on plantscapes of grapefruit and magnolia trees, feijoa hedges, punkish *nikau* palms and purple sprays of *agapanthus*. Further away shaggy macrocarpa line the horizon. Somehow, these plants that are so familiar and many of them unique to these isles, make me feel at home and feel sure that I belong here.

Thank you, flora of New Zealand. You're better at inviting and sharing belonging to Aotearoa than any radio talk-back host! ■

Kaaren and Jeph and four children live and work in North India. They have had a two month visit back to Aotearoa over the sumptuous Southern Hemisphere summer.