Tui Motu

InterIslands

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The man who planted hope

Tui Motu-InterIslands
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Contents

Planting the seeds of change

This issue of *Tui Motu* is centred round a wonderful tale which came to us by good fortune. The story is of a remarkable man who chanced upon a tragic situation and decided to do something about it. He resolved to transform a desert into a garden of Eden. It took him the rest of his life. And he succeeded.

It is not only because the story is beautifully told that we have given it pride of place. Elzeard Bouffier, the hero of the tale, is the sort of person whose example inspires others. What was amazing about Bouffier was his sheer perseverance in carrying it through. When you plant deciduous trees, especially in a cold climate, you don't expect to see much of the fruit of your labours. Bouffier's philosophy was at the exact opposite end of the spectrum to the Macdonalds' culture which pervades our Western world. In such a culture individual gain and rapid results are the prime criteria for success. There is no place for altruism or the slow, imperceptible growth of the 'mustard seed'.

Bouffier is also countercultural in an immediate sense. The crisis of our time is primarily ecological. A recent scientific gathering in Shanghai has advanced the timescale of global warming, speaking not of one degree but as much as six degrees Celsius rise in the next hundred years. The causes are manifold, but one example recently cited is the fact that in China forest and arable land is currently being lost to desert at the rate of 2700 sq km each year. That's approximately the area of greater Auckland – every year. To counter such destruction would need a whole battalion of Bouffiers!

How does one bring about change? In this *Tui Motu*, we focus on an area where a fundamental change of culture is required. Last year New Zealand was afflicted with a series of stories of children being brutalised by their parents or whanau. Mrs Merepeka Raukawa-Tait has spoken out boldly citing cultural causes for these high rates of domestic violence. Her courageous words have not always been music to the ears of the Maori Ministers in Government. But no one could question her courage.

It would be foolish to imply that this is an exclusively Maori problem. Child abuse and partner-bashing occur in all societies and cultures. Nevertheless there are often cultural conditions which aggravate the situation, and these need to be named and remedied.

Two years ago we ran a brief interview with Cabrini Makasiale, a Tongan Catholic, who has been active for some years in South Auckland Polynesian communities. Her work has moved on a few steps since then, so we are now publishing a longer and more penetrating interview. She addresses the problem of domestic violence among Pacific Islands families head on. She makes several crucial points of wider application:

• Think critically – especially about one's own behaviour. "What's missing", she says, "is the ability to think critically of our own cultural practices and norms".

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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Think outside the square!

• Attitudinal change is difficult and must be a long term enterprise. "The problem is the belief system: that hitting and violence is okay".

• So where does faith come in? "..the Christian churches tended to put a rubber stamp on patriarchy. Violence continued to be covertly accepted". Far from challenging the entrenched patriarchy of Pacific Islands cultures, Christianity has often reinforced it.

Clearly there are lessons here which any human group or power caucus could learn from. What would happen, say, if someone in the Israeli Cabinet suggested that the Arab inhabitants had equal rights with Jews to rule Jerusalem? What would happen if Monsignori in the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith were to insist that there be a significant proportion of women and laity among their membership? What would happen if the Business Round Table admitted members of the Federation of Labour to its councils – and vice versa?

To listen exclusively to one's own kind is deep-rooted in human nature, thus avoiding criticism that might threaten one's deeply held principles and prejudices. Add to this a fear, as Cabrini Makasiale says, of daring to be different: ".. if my belonging is threatened, then my whole identity is shaken".

Another piece in the jigsaw of this *Tui Motu* is an essay on the Catholic church and the rise of Nazism. "How could such terrible things happen in one of the world's most civilised countries?", asks the author, Donald Nicholl. The answer, again, is fear. Fear of rocking the boat, of risking – on the part of the bishops – the security of the faithful, of preferring to suffer in silence than to resist. Most German Christian leaders hated what was going on, some dared to speak, but none succeeded in taking effective action. And so six million Jews died by unspeakable cruelty.

How do we define responsible conduct? Do we mean the ruthless following of a selfish vision? Do we mean dedicating our lives to the pursuit of wealth or power or personal prestige? Or do we mean to live as Elzeard Bouffier lived, seeking to leave our world a better place than we found it?

The vocation of the Christian in today's world demands exemplary courage. It is to think critically – even about one's own most cherished beliefs; to prepare oneself calmly and perseveringly; to be prepared to speak out boldly; to risk derision and personal attack. It is to be prepared to change oneself and facilitate change in others. In short, it is to have the courage to follow the example of Elzeard Bouffier – and of Jesus Christ.

M.H.

Publishing Tui Motu

Of all the challenges involved in publishing a magazine the editorial function is the most critical. The competency and consistency of our editorial staff has been our salvation.

There comes a time, however, when our good fortune is put to the test. Editing two midyear issues will be just such a test. Personal reasons require our editor to be in Europe in June and July.

We are therefore inviting expressions of interest from readers (or persons they know) who have the competencies described below:

• Enthusiasm for the religious and philosophical outlook of the magazine

• Skills in interviewing, editing scripts and writing.

• Familiarity with the Macintosh computer system and programmes – Microsoft Word and Adobe Pagemaker – used in *Tui Motu*.

An interim editor would be ably supported by our assistant editor. In these days of computer and Internet it would not be necessary for the interim editor to reside in Dunedin, though that would be an advantage.

Expressions of interest should be directed in the first instance to T Cloher, Chairman of Directors, 26 Hopkins Cres., Auckland 1005.

(email: cloher@free.net.nz)

Tom Cloher

letters ✍

Inaccurate Bible translations

Last Christmas' pamphlet from the Bible Society, quoting Matthew 1:18-19, reads "*Joseph... did not want to embarrass Mary, so he decided to quietly call off the wedding*". This is a subtly different rendering of the same verses in the Douai translation (which closely resembles the Authorised Version): "*Joseph,.. not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately*".

The wording of the first quotation (from the Contemporary English Version) is obviously intended to make it more palatable to the modern reader by ignoring the severity of the Mosaic Law, held sacred by the Jews of that era, and which meant that far from being "embarrassed" Mary was liable to be stoned to death for unchastity (see Deut 23:20-27).

Another example is the same version's rendering of Luke 2:6: "*She dressed him in baby clothes...*" which did not exist in those days. "Swaddling" clothes (Douai version) were strips of linen cloth, used according to the custom of the time, and which prefigure the wrappings of Christ's body in the sepulchre.

The above are two examples of inaccuracies found throughout all modern translations of the Bible, not excepting the Jerusalem Bible. The Bible has been faithfully copied and translated for nearly two millennia and has come down to us miraculously intact, apart from minor copyist's errors and textual variations.

Is it fortuitous that tampering with God's word only began in the last Century and coincided with the decline of Christianity? Perhaps a return to a truthful rendering of Scripture could be first step in the regeneration of our faith.

Jenefer Haig, Palmerston, Otago

*Modern biblical translations offer a wide choice – from the strictly literal, verbally accurate (*RSV*), to the more idiomatic which render phrase for phrase (*Jerusalem*), to the paraphrased and often simplified (*the Good News*).*

Personally I doubt whether having this variety to choose from causes people to lapse from faith. I think there are more profound sociological and ethical causes.(Ed)

Letters continued overleaf ▷▷

Dominus Jesus

I am disappointed with your attitude to the Roman document *Dominus Jesus* published (see *Tui Motu* October 2000)... It is a carefully-worded statement sorting out quite clearly the relationship between the Catholic church and other groups of Christians and non-Christians. In *Dominus Jesus* there is nothing that is not already stated in Vatican II or in the Catholic Catechism.

It is sad that the statement has caused offence, but where it has, that could well be because Catholics involved in ecumenical discussions may have previously fudged issues involved and given others wrong understandings.

You contrast the style of *Dominus Jesus* with that of Bishop Cullinane's statement at an ecumenical meeting: *A Culture of Peace* (*Tui Motu* October pp 8-9). Differences in the style of language derive from the situations in which language is used. The authors of *Dominus Jesus* were forced to use a more impersonal style because they were writing an official statement and trying to make their ideas as clear as possible to an international audience.

Brian Quin SM, Otaki (*abridged*)

letters

"I will be with you always.."

We know that the top people in the Vatican make mistakes and are pig-headed. History has highlighted the management errors that have been made and which have affected our human structures into future centuries. That does not reduce the authority of Rome as the 'rock' of Peter. But it is in the Creed where the faith of two millennia resides, and I don't see that it forbids us to examine the application of its tenets during each age that passes.

Fifty five years ago in a small village church in Sierra Leone I saw an old priest refuse communion to a young native lad because of some misdemeanour. Today, each weekend in our crowded local church, I see hundreds approach the altar to receive the Eucharist with hope based in the promise that "he who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood will live in me and I in him". Perhaps God alone knows if there are unworthy ones among them for it is for God to judge.

The validity of the promise in the Eucharist is more important than any argument about some dogmatic Vatican prelate who will one day have to meet his Judge and account for his actions. Good priests will still bring to the altar the gift of Christ in the Eucharist, and if in the future these are female or are married men, or celibate, the wonder of the promise will not be degraded.

Maurice McGreal, Glenfield, Auckland

..Good men doing nothing

Donald Nicholl

The recent book on Pius XII accusing him of being anti-Semitic and failing to do enough to avert the Holocaust has prompted *Tui Motu* to revive an article, written in 1975 by that most fair-minded of Catholic writers, the late Donald Nicholl. Nicholl was primarily a historian with an encyclopedic knowledge and experience of peoples, philosophies and religious writers.

After World War II he studied in Germany, learned the language, and became especially interested in Judaism. Inevitably he asked himself those searing and ever-recurrent questions: how could the Jewish genocide have happened? *How could a civilised people sink to such barbarism? Could not ordinary decent people have prevented it?*
Let Nicholl speak for himself.

A historian has to have a 'good nose': it is above all the smell of a particular world which one has to learn to detect, and if one fails to do that then, no matter how correct one's observations may be, the whole description is wrong. More and more of the books on the churches under Hitler that are appearing nowadays lack precisely this permeating element. The reader who lived through the period is bound to reflect that the authors seem not to have known the smell of fear which can transform a superficially comprehensible situation into a nightmare.

Historians with their obsession with objectivity will produce a sterilised portrait of Hitler which will slot him conveniently into a series of would-be conquerors, and gradually smooth away the pain and sense of outrage – the brimstone smell – which mention of Hitler produces in those whose lives brought them into contact with the brimstone.

Time and again I asked Germans the question which, in those terrible days, was on everyone's mind: *How could such terrible things happen in one of the world's most civilised countries?* And time and again the answer would come back – they had underestimated the power of evil that had been awakened in Germany by the rise of the National Socialists.

For example, suppose those Germans whose dislike of the Jews was a factor in their voting for Hitler in 1933 could have seen the end-term of their attitude, would they have acted the way they did? If in 1933 they could have foreseen that the road they were being tempted to take would inevitably lead, within 12 years, to the destruction of six million of their fellow human beings, would they not have refused to take the first step?

During the early years of the Nazi regime many assumed that the regime would soon pass. In 1937 the Lutheran Bishop Dibelius was acquitted of a charge under the Conspiracy Law – as was Pastor Niemoller in 1938 who had been arrested at the personal order of Hitler. Even then the grip of the National Socialists was not as firm as, say, that of the Bolsheviks in Russia at the same time. It was not until 1938 that the great exodus of Jews from Germany and Austria really got under way.

What about the Roman Catholic community? Not only were there scarcely any prominent Catholics in the Nazi movement, but it has been said of the Catholic bishops, for instance, that no other group of men of similar weight in German public life maintained such a resolute stand as early as they did.

In 1930 a priest of the diocese of Mainz was denounced to his bishop for preaching a sermon against the whole philosophy of National Socialism. But the bishop, Dr Mayer, produced a lucid and unambiguous reply backing the priest. This was taken up by other bishops one after another during 1931. The faithful were instructed that membership of the Nazi party excluded a person from the sacraments of the Catholic church.

Hitler triumphed in the March elections of 1933 and gained control of the Reichstag. On March 28 an instruction was issued from the Fulda German Catholic bishops' conference recognising Hitler's government as entitled to the obedience of the people. The ban on membership of the Nazi party was removed.

What had happened? The initiative was taken by Cardinal Bertram, then president of the bishops' conference, who circulated all the bishops on 25 March with his proposal to make the change, seeking approval by return of post. Clearly many of the bishops fell in line with heavy hearts, none more than von Preysing, shortly to become bishop of Berlin.

▷▷

For the June bishops' meeting von Preysing prepared a memorandum listing the areas where National Socialism was diametrically opposed to the teachings of the church. He specifically warned against being taken in by the way the Nazis used words such as 'God', 'Christianity', 'morality', 'justice' in a perverse sense so as to deceive Christians. How to deal with the Nazis became a constant stumbling block between Bertram and von Preysing throughout the '30s. Several times von Preysing considered resigning his post but was eventually prevented by the personal persuasion of his old friend in Rome, Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII).

The two bishops were strongly contrasting in character and background. Von Preysing was an aristocrat, a late vocation, a strong character who in 1933 said of the Nazis: "We have fallen into the hands of gangsters and fools". Bertram was a scholar and a cleric, a 'man of the desk'. In 1933 he was already 74 years old. His childhood in Prussia had been dominated by the period of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*: Under Bismarck the Jesuits were driven out of Prussia, 1000 parishes were deprived of their pastors and eight out of twelve bishops expelled. Preachers were censored, seminaries put under state control or forced to close.

The memory of this haunted Bertram for the rest of his life. He resolved never to do anything which might lead his flock having to endure a similar persecution. He was terrified lest any of the faithful might die without the ministrations of a priest. To provoke another *Kulturkampf* would be the ultimate disaster. Von Preysing said of him: "The virtue of prudence counts for much more with the Bishop of Breslau than the virtue of truth".

Perhaps the principal factor of all was the protective attitude towards the Catholic laity exercised by Cardinal Bertram and other bishops. Bertram's principal reason for relaxing the ban on membership of the Nazi party was the fear of asking more of the faithful than they could be expected to bear.

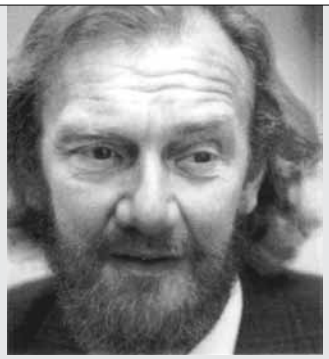
In Germany at that time there were some 400 Catholic newspapers employing 100,000 people. If they were closed down it would mean putting all those out of work and endangering the livelihood of their families. But papers which resisted National Socialism in the early years underwent a huge surge in readership. Catholic trades' unions and youth organisations joined together in protest against the treatment of the Jews, and in 1935 an appeal was made to the hierarchy asking for guidance in facing up to the threats posed by the Nazi regime. The alternative was described as a 'martyrdom without mandate'. The bishops' response was sympathetic but totally inadequate.

It is interesting to note that although many individuals spoke out boldly in protest during the growth years of Nazism, it was rare that any Catholic voice was raised to intervene on behalf of people not members of the Catholic church. When for instance Nazi thugs murdered a Communist miner at Potempa in August 1932 not a single Catholic voice was raised in protest.

The persecution of the Jews did not call forth any sustained chorus of disapproval. Cardinal Faulhaber preached a famous series of sermons on Judaism in Munich cathedral, but it was more a refutation of Nazi racism than an exposure of the flesh-and-blood cruelty being exerted even then on the Jewish people. It was not until 1942 and 1943 that bishops like Faulhaber and Cardinal Frings of Cologne spoke out in protest against any human being, not just Catholics, being deprived of their God-given human rights. By that time it was almost too late.

Prior to the Second World War in Germany the different religious and political groupings were so deeply divided it would have been almost unthinkable – even impertinent – for a member of one category to have spoken up on behalf of someone from a different group. For one thing the different groups virtually never met each other socially. Catholics went to Catholic schools, and Protestants to Protestant schools. Jews went to Jewish doctors; Catholics to Catholic doctors. The Catholics especially were

The Beatitude of Truth
By Donald Nicholl
Darton, Longman & Todd
Price: $27.50



This collection of articles, talks and broadcasts by the late Donald Nicholl was published in 1997 shortly after Donald's death. It was edited by a lifelong friend, Professor Adrian Hastings who also wrote the Introduction.

Donald Nicholl was one of the finest Catholic writers in the English language in recent decades. He was a historian, ecumenist and spiritual writer. Many people especially in New Zealand have been profoundly influenced by his book *Holiness* written in the 1970s.

This collection covers the full range of talents of this prolific author and lecturer, and its title comes from a lecture given in Leeds University in 1987: it sums up the relentless search for the truth of God which most accurately describes Donald's life work. He constantly looked beyond the confines of his beloved Catholicism, and his writing is peppered with quotations, references and stories taken from a variety of other traditions. Indian mysticism, the various strands of Judaism, Islamic writings and the Eastern Christian churches were among his favoutite sources.

His writing is always autobiographical. Donald was incapable of being a 'detached' author. He was ever seeking God and ever desirous to share his discoveries. This makes even his most abstruse writings relatively easy to read. It is as if you hear him talking with his friends.

The article on the churches and the Nazis is typical of the treasures in this book.

very conscious of their minority status in the Second Empire, and Catholics could be more discriminated against even than Jews. In the 1920s it was the way for Jews to speak up on behalf of Jews and Catholics on behalf of their fellow Catholics.

The lines of loyalty were firmly drawn, and it was not until the different groups began to experience persecution together that they started to co-operate. The very concept of resistance and nonconformity had not been worked out in the 1930s, and it was only in consequence of experiencing the evils of Nazi tyranny that such a culture of healthy criticism started to emerge.

Even von Preysing himself, who we have seen was never deceived about Nazism, was ineffectual. Subsequent research has revealed that he personally wrote to the Pope begging him to speak out on behalf of the Jews. Von Preysing lacked neither discernment nor courage. What he lacked was the ability to translate his perceptions into political action.

Soon after the war I spent a night talking to someone in Cologne who had never compromised himself under Hitler, about the dilemma that had faced Christians during the period of the dictatorship. Eventually, just as the light before the dawn was picking out the shape of the great cathedral facing his house, I asked him what one should *do* in such a situation. "*Nichts,"* he replied, *"Man kann nur leiden."* Nothing. One can only suffer.

Reinhard Heydrich (right), the so-called "Butcher of Prague", saluting the raising of the German flag on his arrival in Prague as Hitler's viceroy. Heydrich was seen by Hitler as the 'ideal Nazi'. He was one of the architects of the 'final solution', the plan to slaughter the whole Jewish population of Europe. He was assassinated in 1942.

Suffering in silence was seen as the appropriate response. Nor was this paralysing factor confined to the Catholics. Jews sometimes went to their deaths with scarcely a murmur. Protestants who saw Hitler as evil, felt they had to endure him rather than get rid of him. Catholic bishops – an attitude which undoubtedly influenced Pius XII – were fearful that their flocks might be endangered if they spoke out. When they did speak out, for instance when Pius XI issued his encyclical condemn-ing National Socialism *Mit brennender Sorge*, they would take pains to read it out first in their own cathedral church to draw the flak on themselves and protect their people if they were accused by the regime. ■

Nicholl closes this thoughtful piece by asking a serious question of pastoral theology. *Is it wrong for clergy to adopt an overly protective attitude towards their charges who are being threatened with suffering?* What father would allow his child to suffer or to die rather than protect them in an issue which involves sin? Yet according to Christian teaching this is precisely what God did.

The bishops were not prepared to trust their people to withstand the evil spirits abroad in Germany in the 1930s. It is significant that two of those who did speak out, Maximilian Kolbe and Fritz Hochstetter, have been honoured by the church subsequently; one was an imprisoned priest and the other a layman in an isolated situation.

Nicholl's essay could prompt the reader to reflect on similar situations in our own time. Our much vaunted free press is more and more coming under the ownership of powerful individuals. Faceless multinational corporations determine the way of life and living conditions of countless millions of people across the globe. The voice of the churches is rarely raised and even more rarely heeded. Who is effectively challenging the tyrannies of our new century? Said Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing".

Maori pastoral care in the Catholic Church

Tui Motu speaks with Pa Hemi Hekiera SM on tour in the south

Are you satisfied with the way Catholics nowadays care for the Maori people? This has to be looked at during a time when things are moving for Maori not only in the church but in the whole country. The Catholic church hasn't got a good record in looking after the Maori people. Our concern is that the needs of the Maori people are not overlooked in the evangelisation strategy of the church – that we are not abandoned *again.* Whatever programmes are designed, the Maori people must be cared for.

The *kura tau* programme, which the Society of Mary has given its blessing to and which I am engaged in with Fr Paddy Kinsella, means a 'bestowed treasure'. This treasure can be anything. So our starting point is to try to discover what God's gift is, say, in the Hawke's Bay region. Or what is the *kura* in South Auckland? At this moment we are seeking it in the South Island. We are trying to discover what is the message for today, for 2001: what are the needs of the Maori people in each area – and how we in the Society of Mary, with our own diminishing resources, may meet that need?

The programmes we have run differ from area to area: sometimes a hui, sometimes discussion, sometimes Mass, or a cultural programme. Originally we had hoped to include lay people in the team, but we found their family needs came first. They didn't have the freedom the religious had to go round and do this work. But in each area we visit we as priests try to involve the local lay people.

Can you give us an example? We have just spent five weeks in Invercargill. We found a good structure. The diocese allows the Maori people to have their own 'parish' and the *tomairangi* marae – their own meeting house near St Mary's Basilica – with a service in Maori each week. If only a few turn up on a given Sunday, then they all go and join the local parish church. They still belong to the local parish. They are flexible, but they are trying to maintain a vibrant Maori community.

There is good leadership; there are different ministries established; the liturgy has a Maori flavour; they are a very sacramental people. They have a *kohanga reo* and there's a good relationship with St Joseph's Catholic school next door. Before we left we wrote out for them a paper acknowledging the value of *tomairangi*, the 'dew' which God sends down upon the community like the manna which was given to the children of Israel.

As we went round the South and discovered pockets of Maori Catholic people we sent the information down to *tomairangi*. Part of our task is gathering data about the people. But we are seeing the potential within the diocese and gathering suggestions for further action. When the Maori bishop comes to visit there is a record of the people in place.

It is not enough simply to check up how many are going to Mass. We have to note where the vitality is, how they establish their *kaupapa*, their support network. Spirituality is part of this even though it may not be specifically Catholic. I accept what Amilapavadash says, "the culture will test the gospel – and the gospel will test the culture". It goes both ways. In most areas our resources are poor. Maori spirituality is a very important part of the development of the church's life in this country. The pakeha who come to support us, recognise the *kura* which is present in Maori tradition.

And what about ordinary parish Mass? Should the greeting and response in the Maori language take place? This cannot occur without preparation, otherwise the priest-leader is exercising a form of dominance which is insensitive to the pakeha congregation. I would explain to the people that whether or not we are Maori, the land speaks to us. The land expresses itself through the ancestral language. For instance, performing the *haka* overseas acknow-ledges the land we come from. The Maori greeting is there to acknowledge God's gift of this land. The land is sacred and belongs to God – and this is expressed through the ancestral people and through the Maori language. It is a good enough reason for using the Maori greeting and response in the liturgy, even if there were not a single ethnic Maori present.

The primary emphasis is on the Christian perspective of building a community living Christian values. The Catholic perspective, the sacramental observance, is built onto that. But the Christian part comes first. That is where we start.

For that reason churches have got to get together more than in the past. Perhaps once a month in a way where the people can show their unity in Christ. We have to seek the bishop's blessing on this way of building the Maori Christian community. It needs to be real and seen as a sign of the living Christ.

In my opinion this has been too haphazard in the past. The different Christian groups need to have an agreed vision and an agreed way of acting it out. And it has to have the backing of the church authorities. If next year I have an appointment to a specific place, this is the way I would like to operate. You have to have a focus for this to happen. You cannot achieve it while you are constantly on the move.

Can I ask you something totally different – about the current concern over Maori violence against women? Maori are warriors, even the women who can often be very strong and capable of looking after themselves. The warrior thing, which is an energy to achieve, to defend and to conquer, is in itself good. But if carried to excess it becomes abusive. And women too can do this. It may be in the genes.

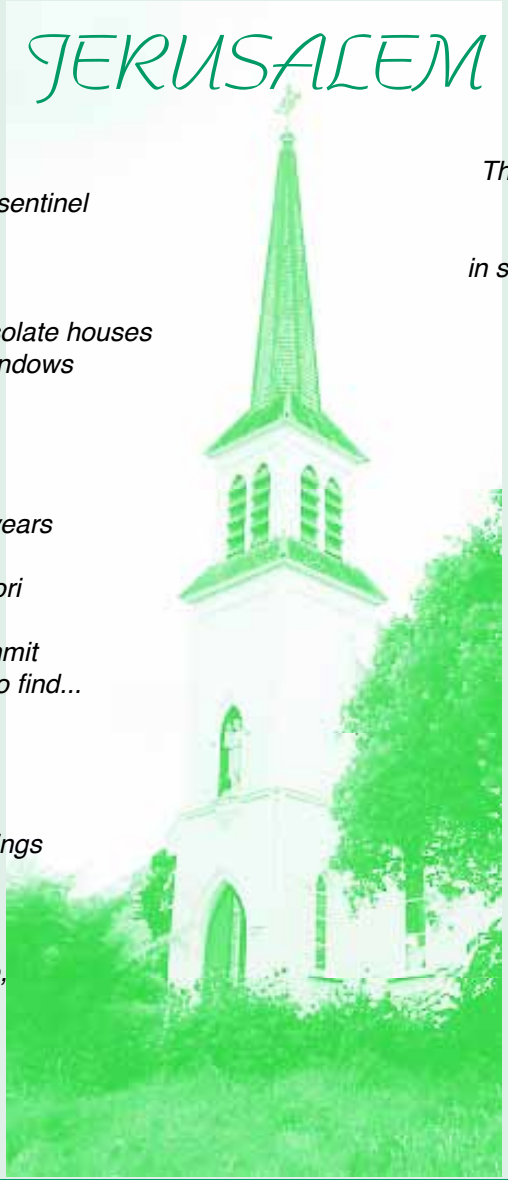
Often it has been drink that releases the warrior trait and brings about violence. The drink renders you free of control and aggressive. It isn't intended, it just happens. And you've got to repent. The challenge is to change.

Pa Henare Tait says if there is violence, the *tikaonga* has to be put right. "You have hurt your wife. You have put down her *tapu*. You have taken it away. You have to restore her *tapu*. You may have to face her family and she may have to tell why you have done the violence. You then have to find an answer because it is not enough merely to talk about it. You have to do something to put it right. You may have to take your wife for a holiday. You have to enhance her *tapu*, not merely restore it."

This is the way all sin is repented. It's quite parallel with the process of restorative justice. The process in Maori is known as *hohourongo.*

Pa Henare tells the story of a boy who was responsible for the death of another boy in a car accident. The families came together; the dead boy's family expressed their anger very strongly. Eventually the other family moved to restore the tapu by pledging money to help with the education of one of the other children belonging to the dead boy's family. This is the true way to reconciliation. ■

JERUSALEM



From the bottom of the hill
the church towers like a tall sentinel
its spire piercing the clouds
like a warning beacon.

The climbing path is dotted with desolate houses
their creaking doors and flapping windows
gaping wide,
absent owners long since dead
or fled into the bustling city.

The church itself, now full of many years
spruce, well-loved and prayed in
displays photographs of fervent Maori
and of enigmatic James Baxter,
lying in the shadow of a nearby summit
now at peace, which he had come to find...
And the river flows on.

Yes, there is peace here.
One feels it in the grounds,
in the house that housed the foundlings
and now opens its doors
to the passing stranger.
One senses it in the Maori workers
working out their community service,
and the Maori who live down
under the hill
who bear the stamp
of quiet contentment.

The Sisters in this desolate backwater
are cheerful, very much alive,
their whole world often enveloped
in swirling fog from the narrow confines
of the silent water...
And the river flows on.

One is tempted to look sharply
over one's shoulder
to search for a little mud-spattered
black-garbed nun galloping by on a
square country horse,
its nostrils aflame in the cold.

And one wonders if at night
there are sounds of fast-galloping
hooves over the marsh grounds.
Does the ghost horse and its rider
pause at the remains of the orchard
now laid bare to the hills and
remember the rows of cheery trees
shining brightly in the summer sun?

Little Mother Joseph, if there is
anywhere that your great spirit
rests on earth, surely it is here
in your loved Jerusalem...
And the river flows on.

Sr Adrienne O.P.

*Cabrini Makasiale (left) is a psychotherapist and counsellor working out of Friendship House, Manukau City in S Auckland. She runs tutor programmes and courses in the area of parenting skills – saying **no** to violence on the part of Pacific Islands' men and women. She also works with couples to improve the quality of their relationships and parenting.*

Her views on the problems of social violence are personal, but come from years of study and work experience among the Pacific Islands communities. A Tongan brought up in Fiji, Cabrini has lived and worked in New Zealand for 30 years first as teacher and religious educator. A few years ago she went back to study to become a psychotherapist.

Working to end violence in Pacific Islands communities

Violence is found in all cultures, walks of life and age groups. Domestic violence is fundamentally about the abuse of power and control, whether the abuser is a man of a woman. One study in the USA demonstrated that most domestic violence is perpetrated by men – but not all. In these violent situations the needs of women are seen as subordinate to those of men. The Christian churches, Islam and Judaism are all patriarchal, tend to be dominative and reinforce this situation.

Most Polynesian cultures, too, are patriarchal and the arrival of the Christian churches tended to put a rubber stamp on it. Violence continued to be covertly accepted. While *love thy neighbour* was being preached, the cultural norm and practice of hitting and verbal abuse continued – and was even encouraged.

Underlying it is the belief that men have the right to control others, that men are in charge. Even in Western societies this used to predominate, and it was really only in the 1960s that things began to be transformed so that physical punishment was banned. I think we must thank the feminist movement largely for that change.

So how do we educate parents that hitting is wrong? To change patterns of behaviour learned in childhood, continued into young adulthood and reinforced in married life is a very difficult 'turnaround'. In our courses we try to give Pacific Islands men and women the larger picture, so they do not become obsessed by guilt, but see that it is a wider problem and that 'it's not just them'.

to become violent is a choice: they can do it – or not

We try to show them the difference between violence and anger. A strong emotion such as anger is part and parcel of being human. To become violent is a choice: they can do it or not. Often they have equated anger with violence and have never thought there might be another way of expressing anger. The way we deal with this is through separate groups, men and women apart, since that is the mandate of the courts. And we also run 'co-gender' groups.

We try to educate those on the courses in alternatives to their deeply entrenched violent behaviour. We offer skills in managing their anger. We then try to support them in bringing back this newly learned behaviour to their communities. In a Pacific Island culture, to belong means to conform. For a Pacific Islander – to translate Descartes – 'I belong, therefore I am'. If my belonging is threatened, then my whole identity is shaken.

To achieve such a change is very difficult because many of them are already struggling with trying to start a new life in a new country. Their children often object to their old traditions. So they are trying to work through a whole range of complex issues – all at once. It's a huge 'ask'! The children learn one way of behaviour at school. Then they go home to a completely different culture which is hierarchical and inflexible – and very conformist.

The people who come to our courses are either 'respondents' who have been committed by the courts for violent behaviour, or they are self-referred. In that case, the family or their employer have bidden them to do something about their anger and their violence, so they come along to us voluntarily. But the respondents come because the alternative for them is prison.

in a Pacific Island culture, to belong means to conform

Some are very receptive to what we teach; others are just 'going through the motions'. We do have some successes, but until recently the courts have been lax in chasing up those who dropped out. But now things have been tightened up so that if they don't attend, they will be back in court again and perhaps sent to prison.

We as Pacific Islanders must own the difficulties we have in the area of domestic violence; we need to get together and be positive in seeking change, and the church ministers have to reinforce it. The majority of our people still listen to them.

Leadership is crucial, and Pacific Islanders have great leadership qualities. The problem is in the belief system: that hitting and violence is okay. It's very difficult to change such a deep-rooted attitudinal stance. It is crucial that the men who are leaders show in themselves that one can be strong, can have dignity, can be empowered – and also be a gentle person. Against this is a distorted viewpoint that '*if I show I'm gentle and vulnerable, then I'm weak*'.

I had a case referred to me of a young, well-educated Pacific Island woman whose father used to beat her if she disagreed with him or 'became *palangi*'. When she made any claims to equality her brothers would side with the father and beat her up as well. She was driven to taking drugs to try to relieve her inner pain. She is held in a vice of conflicting forces. She still wants to belong; it's *her* family – yet they are reinforcing

The problem is that I, as a Pacific Islander, am not born into a context where I am allowed to be different. If I am different, then I'm seen as an upstart, wanting to be better than the others. I say '*I*' because I have had to work through this in my own family, so I know exactly what it feels like. There is a time to be 'the same as' – but there is also a time to stand apart. Otherwise I am not integrated. I'm lopsided as a person!

We are great people for the heart: we all have PhDs in feelings! The key factor for us – what's missing – is the ability to think critically of our own cultural practices and norms. And then we have to be able to articulate that thinking in the Pacific Islands protocols so that the elders can hear it. There is *something* within the human person that when truth is spoken everyone will take it on. To achieve that requires long and patient preparation.

The ministers are crucial, especially as some can be agents of conversion for the community. After God and the king and the nobles come the ministers!

what's missing is the ability to think critically of our own cultural practices

Some ministers are themselves perpetrators of violence. I have had cases referred to me of young women who have been raped by their ministers. They may have been sent from the Islands to stay with a minister while they study here. They have been told by their family – and even by the elders – not to report the abuse because "look what it will do to the minister and to the church!" They ensure that the need of that woman is subordinate.

My work has so far always been with the women and some male Pacific Island facilitators. The men have so much to learn not only with regard to their own status but even in their self-identity. They feel they have so much to lose.

And it is not only about men being opposed to the well-being of women. The women will often tacitly collude with it. It is in us to collude. I ask myself why do we want to maintain something which is keeping us down. Carol Gilligan, an American writer, says that for us as women relationship is paramount. "If I am going to risk losing the relationship I will prefer to take the beating". I fear that this is too often the case. Relationship is a paramount value for us. That goes through all cultures, not just because we are the mothers but because we are the weavers and the connectors on society. We are made that way. Just putting the menfolk down gets us nowhere. Such a programme of change needs such careful planning.

So far I have worked in the wider community and have not gone directly to the ministers. Now I have two others working with me I feel ready to approach the churches. I am not afraid to do that, but up to now I didn't feel we were ready. We needed first to build up a team of counsellors and facilitators to maintain the quality of the work. Too often you find that Pacific Island initiatives start with a bang and then fizzle out. I don't want that to happen. We have to be able to work in two cultures, the Western as well as that of the Pacific Islands.

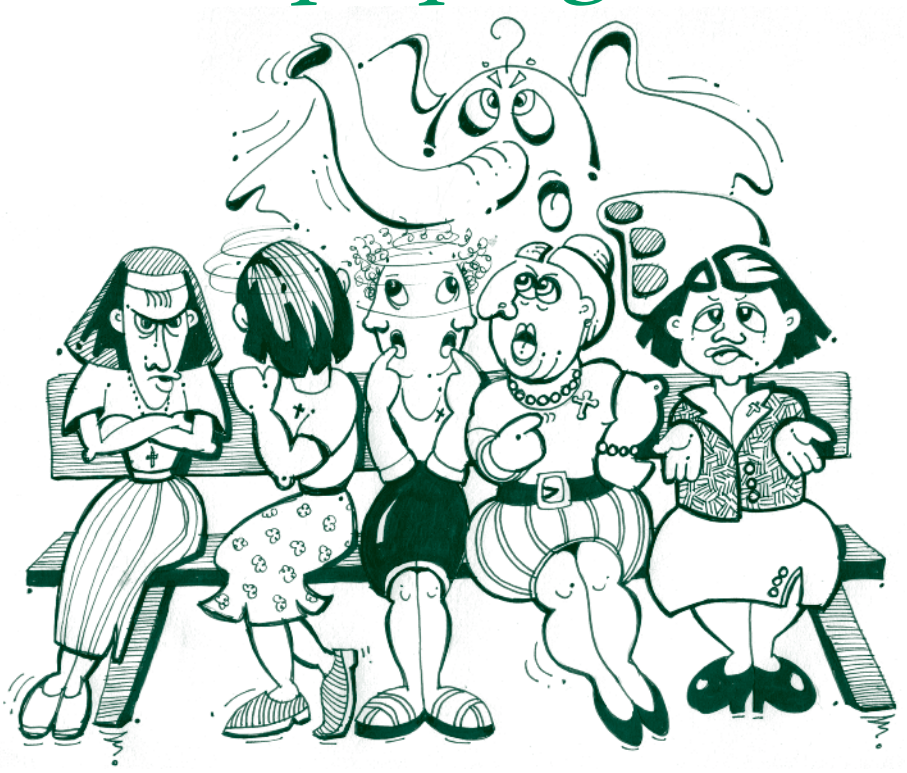
The 'good news' for me is to see the faces of the men and women at the end of a course, to see them stand up and cry, and say "if only I had heard about this long ago!". I say to them: "You've heard it today. Let us walk on". ■

Recent publicity given to violence in Maori families elicited this comment: "*As a Maori woman I have to say I'm really fearful for our race when I see the large number of Maori women and children being brutalised in our country. We've got to speak up and take responsibility... Maoridom is where it's at basically because of poor leadership over the past 50 years. We haven't encouraged our people to see the value of education.*"
(Merepeka Raukawa-Tait, chief executive of the *National Collective of Women's Refuges*)

(photo and excerpt by courtesy of North and South *magazine)*

Marge Dennis, *a Canadian who specialises in facilitating religious meetings, has been on tour of New Zealand helping congregations discover their shadow. "Once I was talking to this community of Sisters, and half way through the evening I said to them: "You know, there's an elephant here in the room – and not one of you has mentioned it!"*

Hush! there's an elephant peeping over



The shadow side of life must not necessarily be seen as something negative. The biblical images of sin are dark – so it is assumed that anything 'in the shadow' must be negative and sinful. Dark is not necessarily evil. Therefore, the shadow is good. It is always with us because we are standing in the light of the Creator – and light casts a shadow.

What I ask a religious community to do is tell each other once again their founding story. Often enough early on in their history, there has been a split. Sometimes it's been caused by a bishop! The break away can be traumatic and a healing is necessary for the congregation. So the question I put to religious is: *what part of your story do you not tell to outsiders?*

I think that many of the church's problems might be best dealt with in terms of 'shadow'. The shadow is what we repress. It is whatever in our experience is not acceptable – because we judge it so. It is something we don't want to show others because we are ashamed to. In the church one common area of shadow surrounds power and control. We preach a gospel of love – and we repress the desire for power. We pretend we don't have it – yet in fact we do .

Again, poverty is a real problem for many religious. They take a vow of poverty, yet often enough they are very rich. They have a roof over their heads, food on the table and they have security. When people suddenly go quiet or are silent talking about what they have, that's a sign of excess! Yet it's folly for them to say: "we'll give it all away."

I say to them: *use it!* A very good example is the property the Josephite Sisters have at Mission Bay, in Auckland. When they bought it, it was an area out of town which nobody wanted. Now it's prime real estate! But they use the buildings to house people who could not afford to live there or they give them a holiday they otherwise couldn't afford. They are using it.

So I say to them: "if you didn't have this you couldn't be generous in letting needy people use it." What has happened at Mission Bay is an excellent example of the integration of the positive shadow of an Order.

The religious charism

I will ask a group to jot down all the values and concepts which comprise their charism. Then I say to them, "write down the opposites". Then I ask: "what in your charism do you not practice within the congregation?"

I facilitate meetings of religious all over North America but it is only here in

New Zealand that I do this work with the shadow. Perhaps the time is not right yet over there. A congregation is like a human being: we spend the first half of our lives storing up data in our 'bag' – and the second half dealing with it.

There is a Canadian congregation founded in the 1920s where the inspiration came from a woman, a priest wrote the rule and obtained approval for the Congregation, but the two of them didn't get on. There was no formal schism but the division still exists to this day! And I think it's destroying them.

A division like that can persist in a different form – and perhaps no one will even know where it came from. Often it's hidden within the shadow of a congregation: no one knows the origin of the division! So it's important to know your own history. You have ask yourself: *what is it we do not practice among ourselves;* and *what part of our story do we not tell others?*

Other questions?

I say to a group at a Chapter: *think of the people who are community irritants* ..because they all know who they are. Then, I suggest to them that perhaps these are the very ones who carry the Congregation's shadow! What we do is project our shadow onto this person.

I am not talking here about behaviour which is dysfunctional. It's even harder for religious to look at the positive shadow than the negative; because it is the positive shadow that challenges you to be different.

Another question: *Think of the times at congregational meetings when you get into the 'same old stuff'*. You get stuck. The shadow is emerging. You have to stop debating and identify what's behind it. For instance, why do many women's congregations go mad at the time of elections? Is it that women in society – and especially in the church – have been powerless for so long?

Another way to get at shadow: keep asking *why* questions. "*Why* do you want to change the wording of your mission statement?" Because we want the wording to be perfect. "But *why* must it be perfect?" Or – "*why* are you irritated by so-and-so's behaviour?" Not, "what's wrong with her?" But "*why* are we irritated?" In other words it is *our* problem. It's our shadow we need to unearth.

Once the shadow is identified, it needs to be integrated. It has to be acknowledged first. And then decisions should be made which match the discovery. And then you have to tell someone outside all about it. If the shadow is negative, amends will need to be made for the pain that has been inflicted.

This often entails a ritual. Once I used a sort of *Stations of the Cross* where a series of events in the life of the congregation were visually depicted. Each person had to recognise the harm that had been done by events, and what part they played in it. What were they going to do to make amends? The ritual enabled them to make the break-through. And humour is the other ingredient which helps.

The crisis in religious vocations

If there is a lack of energy among some congregations about seeking vocations, perhaps this is a sign of the positive shadow. Many present forms of religious life appear irrelevant today. The dedication of the individuals is anything but irrelevant – it's the structures that no longer have meaning. We are stuck in the structures we have inherited.

Yet the movement of *mercy* or of *charity* is very much relevant. That gives us a sign of a possible way to go – to dare to believe we can do without those old structures.

If a congregation decides not to accept any more candidates, then, in effect, it's committing suicide. It gives the Spirit no choice. How are we to know if God is going to inspire people to come to us again – if we don't allow them to come? After all, when congregations start there may be only a tiny group of people. So numbers don't actually mean anything. It is the organisation which kills us. And in thinking that through, therein lies the hope for the future. ■

Sanctions against Iraq

***Moana Cole** was imprisoned for 13 months in the United States for protesting against the Gulf War. Now, ten years later, she looks back.*

Sanctions were first imposed against Iraq in August 1990 by Resolution 661 of the UN Security Council. The resolution set out "a full trade embargo barring all imports to and exports from Iraq" except for medical supplies, foodstuffs and other humanitarian items. Iraq went from being the richest, most progressive of the Arab states to a crippled society, denied access to its principal natural resource with a civilian infrastructure and economy in ruins.

According to WHO figures, the sanctions have killed over 1.7 million Iraqis. In 1999, UNICEF released a report detailing a two-fold increase for infant and child mortality over the past decade. Dr Abdul Razzak Al Hashimi, of the *Association of Friendship, Peace and Solidarity,* says that this once prosperous country is being artificially and deliberately manipulated into conditions of poverty and degradation.

The Iraq Sanctions group, headed by former US Attorney General Ramsay Clark, were told by Dr Mazin Shimari that Iraq has a zero percent cure rate for leukemia because of lack of medical supplies. An entire generation of Iraqi children is growing up underweight and short in stature because of malnutrition and the lack of adequate medical care.

Archbishop Guiseppe Lazzarotto, Papal Nuncio to Iraq, comments "we have a permanent non declared war". Ramsay Clark declared "The sanctions are genocide. They weaken and permanently debilitate the strongest of a society and kill the weakest and most vulnerable".

If there is no end to the sanctions, an entire generation of Iraqis will not be educated, fed properly and lose their culture. The sanctions against the children of Iraq must be ended or we New Zealanders who supported the 1991 war and chaired the initial UN Sanctions Committee, will be held to account. ■

The Man Who Planted Hope

By Jean Giono

For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years. If this performance is devoid of all egoism, if its guiding motive is unparalleled generosity, if it is absolutely certain that there is no thought of recompense and that, in addition, it has left its visible mark upon the earth, then there can be no mistake.

About 40 years ago I was taking a long trip on foot over mountain heights quite unknown to tourists in that ancient region where the Alps thrust down into Provence. All this, at the time I embarked upon my long walk through these deserted regions, was barren and colourless land. Nothing grew there but wild lavender.

I was crossing the area at its widest point, and after three days' walking found myself in the midst of unparalleled desolation. I camped near the vestiges of an abandoned village. I had run out of water the day before, and had to find some. These clustered houses, although in ruins like an old wasps' nest, suggested that there must once have been a spring or well here. There was, indeed, a spring, but it was dry. The five or six houses, roofless, gnawed by wind and rain, the tiny chapel with its crumbling steeple, stood about like the houses and chapels in living villages, but all life had vanished.

It was a fine June day, brilliant with sunlight, but over this unsheltered land, high in the sky, the wind blew with unendurable ferocity. It growled over the carcasses of the houses like a lion disturbed at its meal. I had to move my camp.

After five hours' walking I had still not found water, and there was nothing to give me any hope of finding any. All about me was the same dryness, the same coarse grasses. I thought I glimpsed in the distance a small black silhouette, upright, and took it for the trunk of a solitary tree. In any case, I started toward it. It was a shepherd. Thirty sheep were lying about him on the baking earth.

He gave me a drink from his water-gourd and, a little later, took me to his cottage in a fold of the plain. He drew his water – excellent water – from a very deep natural well above which he had constructed a primitive winch.

The man spoke little. This is the way of those who live alone, but one felt that he was sure of himself, and confident in his assurance. That was unexpected in this barren country. He lived not in a cabin but in a real house built of stone that bore plain evidence of how his own efforts had reclaimed the ruin he had found there on his arrival. His roof was strong and sound. The wind on its tiles made the sound of the sea upon its shores.

The place was in order, the dishes washed, the floor swept, his rifle oiled; his soup was boiling over the fire. I noticed then that he was cleanly

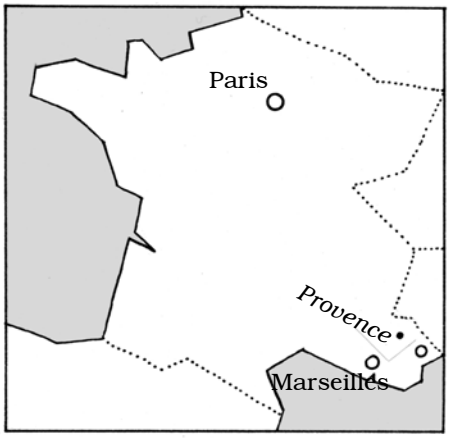
shaved, that all his buttons were firmly sewn on, that his clothing had been mended with the meticulous care that makes mending invisible. He shared his soup with me and afterwards, when I offered my tobacco pouch, he told me that he did not smoke. His dog, as silent as himself, was friendly without being servile.

It was understood from the first that I should spend the night there; the nearest village was still more than a day and a half away. And besides I was perfectly familiar with the nature of the rare villages in that region. There were four or five of them scattered well apart from each other on these mountain slopes, among white oak thickets, at the extreme end of the wagon roads. They were inhabited by charcoal-burners, and the living was bad. Families, crowded together in a climate that is excessively harsh both in winter and summer, found no escape from the unceasing conflict of personalities.

Irrational ambition reached inordinate proportions in the continual desire for escape. The men took their wagon-loads of charcoal to the town, then returned. The soundest characters broke under the perpetual grind. The women nursed their grievances. There was rivalry in everything – over the price of charcoal as over a pew in the church. And over all there was the wind, also ceaseless, to rasp upon the nerves. There were epidemics of suicide and frequent cases of insanity, usually homicidal.

The shepherd went to fetch a small sack and poured out a heap of acorns on the table. He began to inspect them, one by one, with great concentration, separating the good from the bad. I smoked my pipe. I did not offer to help him. He told me that it was his job. And in fact, seeing the care that he devoted to the task, I did not insist. That was the whole of our conversation. When he had set aside a large enough pile of good acorns, he counted them out by tens, meanwhile eliminating the small ones or those which were slightly cracked, for now he examined them more closely. When he had selected a hundred perfect acorns, he stopped and went to bed.

There was peace in being with this man. The next day I asked if I might rest here for a day. He found it quite natural – or to be more exact, he gave me the impression that nothing could startle him. The rest was not absolutely necessary, but I was interested and wished to know more about him. He opened the pen and led his flocks to pasture. Before leaving, he plunged his sack of carefully selected and counted acorns into a pail of water.



I noticed that he carried for a stick an iron rod as thick as my thumb and about a yard and a half long. Resting myself by walking, I followed a path parallel to his. His pasture was in a valley. He left the little flock in charge of the dog and climbed toward where I stood. I was afraid that he was about to rebuke me for my indiscretion, but it was not that at all; this was the way he was going, and he invited me to go along if I had nothing better to do. He climbed to the top of the ridge about a hundred yards away.

There he began thrusting his iron rod into the earth, making a hole in which he planted an acorn; then he refilled the hole. He was planting an oak tree. I asked him if the land belonged to him. He answered *no*. Did he know whose property it was? He did not. He supposed it was community property, or perhaps belonged to people who cared nothing about it. He was not interested in finding out whose it was. He planted his hundred acorns with the greatest care.

After the midday meal he resumed his planting. I suppose I must have been fairly insistent in my questioning, for he answered me. For three years he had been planting trees in this wilderness. He had planted 100,000. Of these, 20,000 had sprouted. Of the 20,000, he still expected to lose about half to rodents or to the unpredictable designs of Providence. There remained 10,000 oak trees to grow where nothing had grown before.

That was when I began to wonder about the age of this man. He was obviously over 50. Fifty-five, he told me. His name was Elzeard Bouffier. He had once had a farm in the lowlands. There he had had his life. He had lost his only son, then his wife. He had withdrawn into this solitude, where his pleasure was to live leisurely with his lambs and his dog. It was his opinion that this land was dying for want of trees. He added that, having no very pressing business of his own, he had resolved to remedy this state of affairs.

Since I was at that time, in spite of my youth, leading a solitary life, I understood how to deal gently with solitary spirits. But my youth forced me to consider the future in relation to myself and to a certain quest for happiness. I told him that in 30 years his 10,000 oaks would be magnificent. He answered quite simply that if God granted him life in 30 years he would have planted so many more that these 10,000 would be like a drop in the ocean.

Besides, he was now studying the reproduction of beech trees and had ▷▷

▷▷ a nursery of seedlings grown from beechnuts near his cottage. The seedlings, which he protected from his sheep with a wire fence, were very beautiful. He was also considering birches for the valleys, where, he told me, there was a certain amount of moisture a few yards below the surface of the soil.

The next day we parted. The following year came the War of 1914, in which I was involved for the next five years. An infantryman hardly had the time for reflecting upon trees. To tell the truth, the thing had made no impression upon me; I had considered it as a hobby, a stamp collection, and forgotten it.

The war over, I found myself possessed of a tiny demobilisation bonus and a huge desire to breathe fresh air for a while. It was with no other objective that I again took the road to the barren lands.

The countryside had not changed. However, beyond the deserted village I glimpsed in the distance a sort of greyish mist that covered the mountaintops like a carpet. Since the day before, I had begun to think again of the shepherd tree-planter.

"Ten thousand oaks," I reflected, "really take up quite a bit of space." I had seen too many men die during those five years not to imagine easily that Elzeard Bouffier was dead, especially since, at 20, one regards men of 50 as old men with nothing left to do but die. He was not dead. As a matter of fact he was extremely spry. He had changed jobs. Now he had only four sheep but, instead, a hundred beehives. He had got rid of the sheep because they threatened his young trees. For, he told me (and I saw for myself), the war had disturbed him not at all. He had imperturbably continued to plant.

The oaks of 1910 were then 10 years old and taller than either of us. It was an impressive spectacle. I was literally speechless and, as he did not talk, we spent the whole day walking in silence through his forest. In three sections, it measured 11 kilometres in length and three kilometres at its greatest width. When you remembered that all this had sprung from the hands and the soul of this one man without technical resources, you understood that men could be as effectual as God in realms other than that of destruction.

He had pursued his plan, and beech trees as high as my shoulder, spreading out as far as the eye could reach, confirmed it. He showed me handsome clumps of birch planted five years before – that is, in 1915, when I had been fighting at Verdun. He had set them out in the valleys where he had guessed – and rightly – that there was moisture almost at the surface of the ground. They were as delicate as young girls, and very well established.

Creation seemed to come about in a sort of chain reaction. He did not worry about it; he was determinedly

pursuing his task in all its simplicity. But as we went back toward the village, I saw water flowing in brooks that had been dry in human memory. This was the most impressive result of chain reaction that I had seen. These dry streams had once, long ago, run with water. Some of the dreary villages I mentioned before had been built on sites of Roman settlements, traces of which still remained. Archaeologists, exploring there, had found fishhooks where, in the 20th century, cisterns were needed to assure a small supply of water.

The wind, too, scattered seeds. As the water reappeared, so there reappeared willows, rushes, meadows, gardens, flowers, and a certain purpose in being alive. But the transformation took place so gradually that it became part of the pattern without causing any astonishment. Hunters, climbing into the wilderness in pursuit of hares or wild boar, had of course noticed the sudden growth of little trees, but had attributed it to some caprice of the earth. That is why no one meddled with Elzeard Bouffier's work. If he had been detected he would have had opposition. He was undetectable. Who in the administration could have dreamed of such perseverance in a magnificent generosity?

To have anything like a precise idea of this exceptional character one must not forget that he worked in total solitude: so total that, toward the end of his life, he lost the habit of speech. Or perhaps it was that he saw no need for it.

In 1933, he received a visit from a forest ranger who notified him of an order against lighting fires out of doors for fear of endangering the growth of this *natural* forest. It was the first time, the man told him naively, that he had ever heard of a forest growing of its own accord. At that time Bouffier was about to plant beeches at a spot some 12 kilometres from his cottage. In order to avoid travelling back and forth – for he was then 75 – he planned to build a stone cabin right at the plantation. The next year he did so.

In 1935, a whole delegation came from the Government to examine the "natural forest". There was a high official from the Forest Service, a Deputy, technicians. There was a great deal of ineffectual talk. It was decided that something must be done and, fortunately, nothing was done except the only helpful thing: the whole forest was placed under the protection of the State, and charcoal burning prohib-ited. For it was impossible not to be captivated by the beauty of those young trees in the fullness of health, and they cast their spell over the Deputy himself.

An old friend of mine was among the forestry officers of the delegation. To him I explained the mystery. One day the following week we went together to see Elzeard Bouffier. We found him hard at work some ten kilometres from the spot where the inspection had taken place.

This forester was not my friend for nothing. He was aware of values. He knew how to keep silent. I delivered the eggs I had brought as a present. We shared our lunch among the three of us and spent several hours in wordless contemplation of the countryside.

In the direction from which we had come, the slopes were covered with trees 20 to 25 feet tall. I remembered how the land had looked in 1913: a desert... Peaceful, regular toil, the vigorous mountain air, frugality and, above all, serenity in the spirit had endowed this old man with awe-inspiring health. He was one of God's athletes. I wondered how many more acres he was going to cover with trees.

Before leaving, my friend made a brief suggestion about certain species of trees that the soil here seemed particularly suited for. He did not force the point, "for the very good reason," he told me later, "that Bouffier knows more about it than I do". At the end of an hour's walking – having turned it over in his mind – he added, "He knows a lot more about it than anybody. He's discovered a wonderful way to be happy!"

It was thanks to this officer that not only the forest but also the happiness ▷▷

▷▷ of the man was protected. He delegated three rangers to the task, and so terrorized them that they remained proof against all the bottles of wine the charcoal-burners could offer.

The only serious danger to the work occurred during the War of 1939. As cars were being run on gazogenes (wood-burning generators), there was never enough wood. Cutting was started among the oaks of 1910, but the area was so far from any railway that the enterprise turned out to be financially unsound. It was abandoned. The shepherd had seen nothing of it. He was 30 kilometres away, peacefully continuing his work, ignoring the War of 1939 as he had ignored that of 1914.

I saw Elzeard Bouffier for the last time in June of 1945. He was then 87, I had started back along the route through the wastelands, but now, in spite of the disorder in which the war had left the country, there was a bus running between the Durance Valley and the mountain. I attributed the fact that I no longer recognised the scenes of my earlier journeys to this relatively speedy transportation. It took the name of a village to convince me that I was actually in that region that had been all ruins and desolation.

The bus put me down at Vergons. In 1913 this hamlet of 10 or 12 houses had three inhabitants. They had been savage creatures, hating one another, living by trapping game, little removed, physically and morally, from the conditions of prehistoric man. All about them nettles were feeding upon the remains of abandoned houses. Their condition had been beyond hope. For them, nothing but to await death – a situation which rarely predisposes to virtue.

Everything was changed. Even the air. Instead of the harsh, dry winds that used to attack me, a gentle breeze was blowing, laden with scents. A sound like water came from the mountains; it was the wind in the forest. Most amazing of all, I heard the actual sound of water falling into a pool. I saw that a fountain had been built, that it flowed freely and – what touched me most – that someone had planted a linden beside it, a linden that must have been four years old, already in full leaf, the incontestable symbol of resurrection.

Besides, Vergons bore evidence of labour at the sort of undertaking for which hope is required. Hope, then, had returned. Ruins had been cleared away, dilapidated walls torn down and five houses restored. Now there were 28 inhabitants, four of them young married couples. The new houses, freshly plastered, were surrounded by gardens where vegetables and flowers grew in orderly confusion, cabbages and roses, leeks and snapdragons, celery and anemones. It was now a village where one would like to live.

From that point I went on foot. The war just finished had not allowed the full blooming of life, but Lazarus was out of the tomb. On the lower slopes of the mountain I saw little fields of barley and rye; deep in that narrow valley the meadows were turning green.

It had taken only the eight years since then for the whole countryside to glow with health and prosperity. On the site of the ruins I had seen in 1913 now stand neat farms, cleanly plastered, testifying to a happy and comfortable life. The old streams, fed by the rains and snows that the forest conserves, are flowing again. Their waters have been channelled. On each farm, in groves of maples, fountain pools overflow onto carpets of fresh mint. Little by little the villages have been rebuilt. People from the plains, where land is costly, have settled here, bringing youth, motion, the spirit of advent-ure. Along the roads you meet the hearty men and women, boys and girls who understand laughter and have recovered a taste for picnics. Counting the former population, unrecognizable now that they live in comfort, more than 10,000 people owe their happiness to Elzeard Bouffier.

When I reflect that one man, armed only with his own physical and moral resources, was able to cause this land of Canaan to spring from the wasteland, I am convinced that, in spite of everything, humanity is admirable. But when I compute the unfailing greatness of spirit and the tenacity of benevolence that it must have taken to achieve this result, I am taken with an immense respect for that old and unlearned peasant who was able to complete a work worthy of God.

Elzeard Bouffier died peacefully in 1947 at the hospice in Banon. ■

Tui Motu *is grateful to readers Peter and Ellie Kennedy for sending us this beautiful story. Research as to its origin has so far drawn a blank.*

Luke: the Gospel for women – or is it?

Barbara Reid

It is frequently thought that *Luke*, having more stories about women than any of the other gospels, is the best gospel to promote the equality of women in the church. This has led commentators such as Alfred Plummer to remark, "the Third Gospel is in an especial sense the Gospel for women... all through this Gospel they are allowed a prominent place and many types of womanhood are placed before us".

Recent feminist interpreters have noted, however, that *Luke's* portrait of women is ambiguous at best and dangerous at worst. Mary Rose D'Angelo examined the prophetic ministry in *Luke* and found his purpose is to restrict and control women. Beyond the infancy narratives, no woman speaks except to be corrected by Jesus. Women are beneficiaries of Jesus' ministry and engage in charitable works, but are seen to have "chosen the better part" when they remain silent and receptive(*10:42*).

Such scholars rightly alert the modern reader to the danger of too simply exalting *Luke* as a "friend of women". There are women disciples in *Luke* and *Acts*, but a closer study reveals that they do not participate in the mission of Jesus in the same way that the men disciples do.

Women as disciples

Although there is no definition of discipleship given in *Luke*, by examining the teachings of Jesus and his deeds we can conclude that the ongoing demands of Christian life involve: **following Jesus, proclaiming, witnessing, praying, communal living and sharing of material possessions**. A disciple participates in Jesus' mission by doing what he did: preaching, teaching, healing, exorcising, forgiving, feeding, serving, and enduring conflicts and persecution. This is possible when disciples are commissioned and filled with the holy Spirit.

Women *are* presented as disciples in *Luke* and *Acts*. In *Acts 9:36* Tabitha is explicitly called "disciple". Individual women who have faith are Mary, the woman who wept over Jesus' feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee (*7:50*); the woman healed of a haemorrhage (*8:48*); the mother of Timothy (*Acts 16:1*); Lydia (*Acts 16:15*); and Damaris (*Acts 17:34)*.

Although women receive the word, believe, are baptised, follow Jesus, and host house churches, their role is presented as clearly different from that of the men. Women in *Luke* and *Acts* do not imitate Jesus' mission of preaching, teaching, healing, exorcism, forgiving, feeding, or praying.

The powerfully prophetic women Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna in the infancy narratives are not disciples of Jesus; they belong to a different era. They are transition figures cast in the mould of the women prophets of the First Testament, such as Miriam, Deborah, and Judith. Women who speak in the rest of the gospel are reprimanded by Jesus or are disbelieved. Often they are objects of Jesus' compassion.

Discipleship as service

In the few instances in which women are said to serve, *Luke's* slant on the story downplays any possibility of seeing them as performing public leadership roles. In three instances the verb *diakonein* – "to serve or to minister" – is used of women: Simon's mother-in-law in *4:39*; the Galilean women in *8:2-3*; and Martha in *10:40*.

In the context of the Last Supper, Jesus says: *The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But, among you it shall not be so; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves . Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. (Lk.22:25-27)*

Jesus advises his disciples that leadership is equivalent to diaconal service. Kathleen Corley observes that when women serve, Luke casts it as table service; when men do, it symbolises leadership. Simon's mother-in-law (*Lk 4:39*) is portrayed as carrying out the domestic duties proper to women of first century Palestine. In *Lk 10:38-42*, Mary is praised for listening to Jesus, but nothing is related of what ▷▷

she does with what she hears. Martha, who is preoccupied about serving, is reprimanded. The type of service that Luke presents as exemplary for Christian women is like that of Tabitha in *Acts 9:36*, who "was devoted to good works and acts of charity," making tunics and clothing. This is a very non-threatening ministry to the patriarchal order.

We should not be surprised at this. It is entirely anachronistic to expect to find Luke promoting 20th century notions of gender equality. His was a patriarchally structured world and his version of the gospel reinforces such. So what to do with his gospel stories of women? We need to engage in a process of reinterpreting and contextualising the biblical texts. Such an approach recognises the patriarchal cast of Luke's stories, and reads against the grain of the evangelist's intent, consciously challenging rather than reinforcing gender-based role divisions.

Luke himself provides us with a model for such a process. The Third Gospel tells of no mission extended to the gentiles by Jesus. Yet *Acts* attests that the struggles of later Christian communities with this new development led to full inclusion of gentiles without circumcision etc, judging that to be faithful to the vision of Jesus, foreshadowed in his ministry.

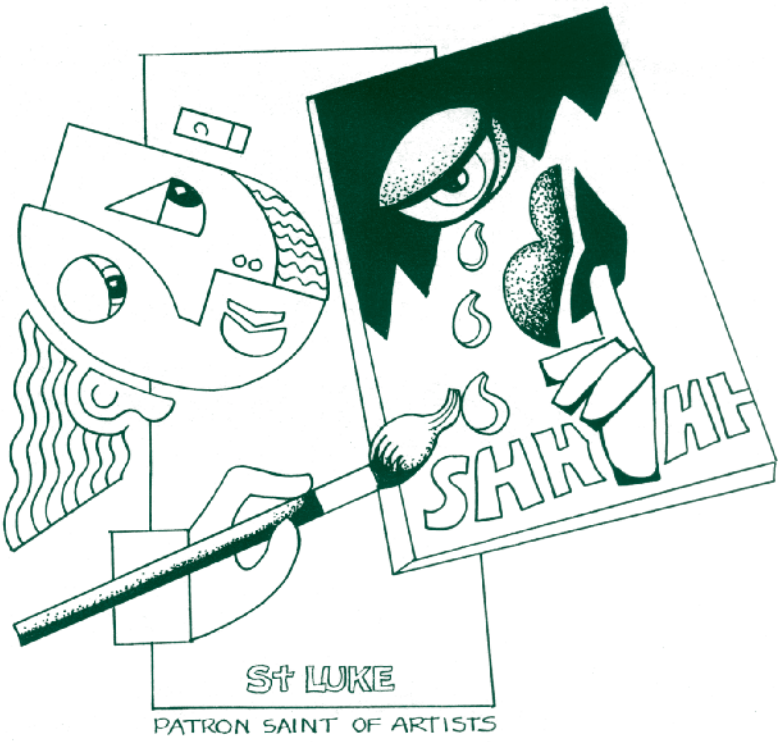
Pitting Mary against Martha

An example of such a process of reinterpretation is the well-known story of Jesus' visit to the home of Martha and her sister, Mary (*Luke 10:38-42*); the concluding declaration of Jesus would seem to settle once and for all the ideal stance for women disciples. Martha, who serves, is chided, whereas Mary, who sits at Jesus' feet listening to him speak, "has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her". In many ways the conflicts among the characters in this story epitomise the struggles that continue in today's church over the roles of women.

As they continued their journey Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him (into her home). She had a sister name Mary, who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said: "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

Contemplation versus action?

The tensions imbedded in this story raise more questions and interpretative problems than any other Lucan text involving women. The most frequently offered interpre-tation is that Mary and Martha represent the tension between contemplation and action. In the experience of most Christians it is the contemplative side that gets short shrift. Accordingly, the message is that one who serves actively can only do so after having listened to the word at the feet of Jesus.



Although this is a true lesson for Christian life, is that the message Luke intends to convey? Why are the two cast dualistically in this text, with one choice approved and the other denigrated? A host of other questions arise. Why, in a gospel where service (*diakonia*) epitomises the very mission of Jesus (*22:27*) does he reprimand Martha for serving? Why is only the *hearing* of the word valued in this instance, when all through the Gospel there is a constant refrain that discipleship consists of both *hearing* and *doing* the word. And why, if Mary is so good at listening, doesn't she hear Martha's plight? Why doesn't Jesus, who is so compassionate towards the downtrodden, sympathise with Martha? Is this a true representation of an incident in the life of Jesus? Or does it reflect, rather, a tension in Luke's community?

Most women who hear the story identify with Martha. Like her they desperately try to juggle all the household demands, usually in addition to working outside the home, while at the same time managing to be the charming hostess, wife, mother, companion. From such a stance there is no good news from a Jesus who not only seems indifferent to the burden of unrealistic demands but even reproaches one who pours out her life in service.

Some propose that what Jesus disapproves of is Martha's feeling burden-ed, her anxiety and worry and not her service. Jesus appears displeased with her preoccupation with "many things" as opposed to the "one thing" required. Jesus wants one dish, a simple meal, so Martha does not have to spend all her energy in the kitchen and can join him in theological discussions.

These interpretations do not take seriously the tensions in the text. They try to smooth over the stark contrast of the two women and the clear exaltation of Jesus of one over the other. By trying to reconcile hearing the word and doing it, they miss what the text actually says.

There is no mention of how Mary will act on the word she hears. Only the dimension of hearing is emphasised.

The ministerial role of women

The real crux of disagreement, both in the early church and today, is not whether women can study theology, but rather, what ministries they may perform as a result. It is around Martha that the controversies swirl, not Mary. Recently, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza has proposed that *Lk 10:38-42* reflects a struggle in Luke's day over the proper ministerial roles of women, not one recording precisely an incident from the life of Jesus. A clue to its setting in the life of the early church is the repeated use of the title Lord (*kyrios*), which reflects post-Resurrection content.

As we have seen *diakonia*, by the time of Luke, connotes all manner of ministries, including leadership. That there were women exercising a wide variety of ministries, including apostolic work, public proclamation and leadership is clear from a number of New Testament texts. It is also quite clear that the early church was not of one mind as to the propriety of such ministries being exercised by women. Luke casts his lot with those who would rein in liberated Christian women, by placing on the lips of Jesus a resounding approval of the silent woman in *verse 42*.

There is also an attempt to obscure Martha's role as head of a house-church. A number of manuscripts read "Martha welcomed him *into her home..*"(*v 38*). The word for *welcomed* (*dechomai*) denotes hospitality, a crucial value everywhere in the ancient world. Luke attaches great importance to the ministry of hospitality. The word can also refer to receiving, hearing or understanding the word. So Martha's welcoming of Jesus speaks of her reception of him as an act of faith, matching Mary's "listening to him speak" in *v 39*. In the first two verses there is no opposition. The tension arises over how their acceptance of the word takes expression in ministry.

Read in the light of the disputes in Luke's day over women's involvement in certain ministries, Martha's complaint to Jesus is not about having too much work to do, but rather that she is being denied her role in ministerial service. Martha is burdened *about* or *with reference to* her numerous ministerial works, not *by* or *with* them. Her distress *about* them is generated by the opposition of those who think she should be leaving them to men.

the crux of disagreement is what ministries women may perform

To make matters worse Martha bemoans the fact that her sister does not take her part. When Martha appeals to Jesus she does not make her complaint about Mary by name, but rather calls her "my sister". "Sister" can carry a connotation of one engaged in ministry as their primary occupation (as with Phoebe in *Rom 16:1*). Part of Martha's anguish is that her sisters, former companions in ministry, have been persuaded that silent listening is the proper role for women disciples, and have left her alone in the more visible ministries.

In the ensuing verse *Luke* portrays Jesus authoritatively siding against Martha in this dispute. The double "Martha, Martha" chides her. In his reproach the word *diakonia* no longer appears. *Luke's* formulation of Jesus' response implies that she, too, would be "choosing the better part" to join her sister in silent passivity.

Martha and Mary in John

A much different picture emerges in the Fourth Gospel. In *John 11:27* it is Martha who makes the most complete proclamation of faith in *John*'s Gospel: *Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.* In the next chapter her belief leads to service with no hint of disapproval. Mary likewise has cast aside her silent passivity and performs the prophetic action of anointing Jesus for burial (*John12:1-8*).

Here there is no tension over women's diaconal service. It profiles women who engage in theological discussions with Jesus, profess their profound faith, and preach publicly and convincingly. There is no attempt to silence women or to restrict them to quiet, behind-the-scenes, homebound ministries. These communities understood Jesus to commission all Christians, women as well as men, to express their faith in the performance of all manner of deaconal ministries.

The best approach today is to recognise the historical situation reflected in the story of Martha and Mary, and analyse both the similarities and differences from that of our day. It is important to know that *Luke's* approval of silent, passive women is only one side of an early Christian debate; the portrait in *John* upholds vocal, publicly ministering women.

That later Christians rejected Luke's disapproval of Martha is evident from art and literature. Medieval paintings of Martha often cast her in a pose akin to that of St George – killing a dragon! A most remarkable painting by Fra Angelico (1387-1455) depicts Martha and Mary present at Gethsemane.

Luke's approval of silent, passive women is only one side of an early Christian debate

Peter, James and John are asleep and Mary is absorbed in a book, while Martha's pose imitates that of Jesus. Like him, she is alert and praying with uplifted hands. Martha's mature faith and service is shown to endure all the way to Jesus' passion. Meister Eckhart (c.1260-1327), a Dominican monk and mystic, preached that Martha was the one who had already reached the stage of integrating con-templation and action. Mary, on the other hand, represents the novice in the contemplative life.

Martha's plea is for Mary not to get stuck in the tranquil resting, indifferent to the needs around her. Martha became the patron saint of innumerable women's communities who adopted her as their model in their active ministries. Read in this way, this text has much to teach us today. ■

Barbara Reid is a Dominican Scripture scholar from the United States. She lectured at Mosgiel and at Otago University during 1995

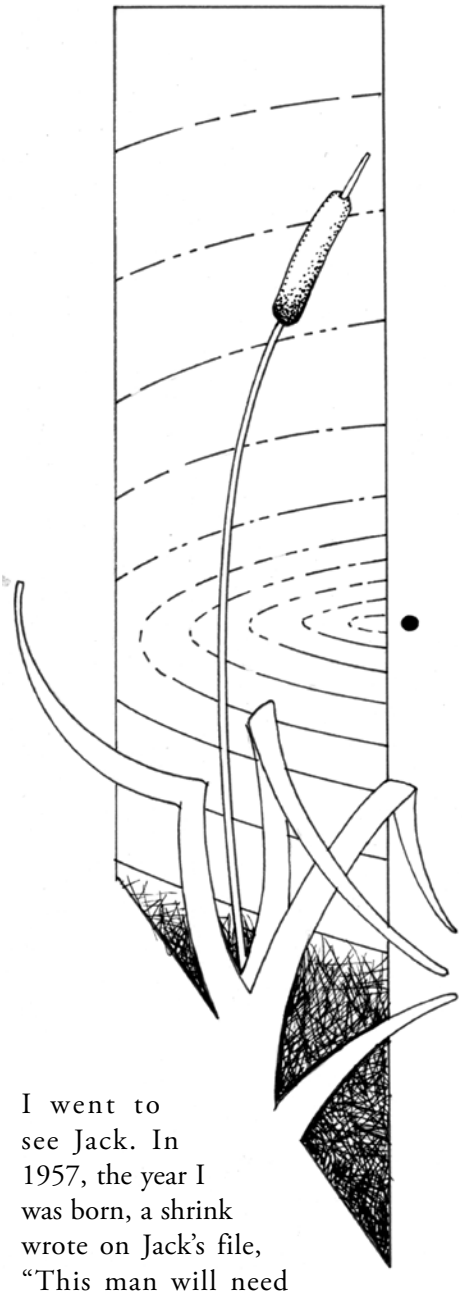
Stones in a creek

Robert Allen

I remembered them well from years ago. I had taught them. And as I sat at my dining room table reading the paper I tried to picture them. Phillip, ten years old, with blonde straggly hair, thin-faced with a cheeky, stroppy grin that could drive me mad, and Ernie, quiet, slow but well-behaved. I liked them both for different reasons. I didn't remember them as friends but there they were, in the paper together, both guilty of the same murder. They had stabbed a guy to death outside a nightclub in Mangere. Why? Does it matter? All I know was that it hurt me to read about it.

As I sat looking at the photo of two young hoods with blankets over their heads being led from the court, I thought of other kids I had taught. How many of them had gone bad? I remembered Rau for instance, bright and articulate, who had died at the hands of *The Mob* in a scrap in a public bar, and how he had been zonked out on weed and booze, and too far gone to know that he was picking a fight with a gang who wouldn't care that when he was small he drew pictures of trees, wrote poems about clouds and flowers, and had parents, separated and a little lost themselves, who had loved him all the same, and had hopes that he would do better than they had.

And neither would the jury that put Phillip and Ernie away, or the gang that had killed Rau, care that a Catholic schoolteacher in the throes of his early mid-life crisis was now wondering why the hell he bothered and swore at God for letting such bloody stupid things happen to young people. Why bother? Why help these kids? It never worked, and always seemed a waste of time in the end. I was bitter that day and with just cause as I saw it.



I went to see Jack. In 1957, the year I was born, a shrink wrote on Jack's file, "This man will need in-stitutional care for the remainder of his life". The shrink was wrong. Jack is the most serene man I have ever met. Smart too. Street smart.

He became that way out of necessity, he told me once. Along life's highway he had discovered something. He had learned that by staying calm and content he could stay sane, and if he stayed sane, the authorities couldn't keep him locked up. The paradox was that it wasn't the treatment he received in the mental health system of 40 years ago that had returned him to sanity, but it was the fear of the treatment itself that kept him out of what Jack called the squirrel factory.

"The squirrel factory?" I asked once.

"Yeah. Where they store the nuts. Hell on earth," he sighed.

To stay free he had needed answers. Like me, he had seen that they would need to be spiritual as much as psychological answers, and he had become, in the process of learning to find answers, the most serene and intelligent person I have ever met. His recovery was complete, but he never forgot to work at staying healthy in the head.

A doctor had also written: "This man will need institutional care for the remainder of his life". He was wrong too. Jack is articulate, well-read, and has a sharp sense of humour centred around an ability to laugh at himself, and I have never once heard him laugh at the expense of others. He is my mentor and my friend. Jack has helped thousands of other people and he helps me.

So this day, after reading the newspaper and swearing at God, I went to see him about the boys, and he sat there quietly smoking as I spoke on and on about the futility of helping people. A waste of time and where did it get me? I was disappointed and hurt. I told him about a young girl, Maggie, I had been trying to help who had suicided after I had formed an attachment to her, and how much that had hurt.

"Stones in a creek," he said matter-of-factly after I had finished speaking.

He stood up stiffly and walked from his dinette into his kitchen and started filling a kettle.

"Stones in a creek?" I repeated.

"Yeah. Stand on the side of a creek and throw a stone in and what happens?" asked Jack.

"Ripples."

"And what happens if you walk away before the ripples hit the creek bank?"

"I suppose they still hit the bank," I said.

He turned, looked at me, coffee jar in one hand and cup in the other and said: "Helping others is like that. Take those two boys doing time. How do you know that the fact you tried to get alongside them won't actually help them when they're inside. They might remember you were okay to them. It might help them rehabilitate. Who knows? And what about all those kids on the borderline who might have gone bad but didn't because of you. See. Stones in the creek. Just because you don't see the results doesn't mean they don't happen."

"Faith?" I asked.

"Sure. Why not. Seems to me we have faith in a lot of things that are just as uncertain. Anyway, as I see it, do the work and leave the results to God."

I looked at the old man making coffee. He was right about the stones in the creek part, but it seemed a little too simple and trusting to me. I told him so as he brought the cups back to the table.

"I think your motivation for helping is wrong," he said.

"Helping is helping."

"Wrong. Who benefits when you help people?"

"Them of course."

"Wrong again. Be honest. Don't you help people because it makes you feel good? Don't you benefit too? The only sane motivation for helping is because it's good for us."

"That sounds selfish," I said.

"Oh it is, but it makes sense. Do it for yourself and the reward comes at the point of giving. Understand and remember this, then you don't need a reward or to be thanked. Won't get upset when you get nothing back. It can also be a foil to your own self-obsession."

"Self-obsession?" I bristled.

"Well isn't that the key to your problems? Aren't you, like most of us, far too wrapped up in your own problems? The next time you get upset or depressed pray and ask God to send you someone to help and you'll be amazed. Helps me I know. Gets me out of myself and makes me see my problems aren't so big."

I looked at the old man and had to grin. Here was a man who had spent a lifetime trying to help other people and he was honest enough to admit what I couldn't. I had been helping people because it fed my ego. What's more, he seemed to be saying this was okay. Jack helped others because it kept him happy. He didn't care too much about the results. Strangely enough I could see the sense in this.

"It's called *enlightened self-interest,"* he smiled and I asked him to explain.

"All of us are selfish. We generally all want one thing and that's a bit of peace of mind. Giving makes us feel better so it's within our selfish interests to give. When we accept that, it makes it easier to give. We get rewarded. Enlightened self-interest. The key to the gospels."

"You're mad Jack," I laughed.

"So said the shrink in '57," he chuckled.

And the next morning it happened again. For no apparent reason, overnight, the self-doubt had crept in while asleep. It was like the cold draught round my back door. It slid in, sneaking through the dark night, slipping under the crack in the door, freezing the whole house. The depression did the same. I could go to bed happy and wake up feeling gutted the next morning.

However, this time I remembered what Jack had said: "Pray for God to send someone to help". I did. It worked. Within minutes the phone rang and I was up and away on another adventure in living, responding to a mate who needed a hand. As I rushed through my shower and shave, the depression lifted. I forgot to feel bad. My obsession with self and with my own problems vanished. I was free to be of help to others. ■

The water minds

(Mark 4:38)

This summer in Galilee
the water level is on
everyone's mind.
Even the water minds.
It is so low that
its secrets will show
like ankles under the robes of Arabs.
It is so low that
its waves tremble
with the effort of remembering
one man drowsing on
a cluster of cushions
once in the bow of a boat.

Anne Powell

A long rebellion? – or a long way home

Peg Cummins

Ten years ago I left the Catholic Church and joined the Presbyterians. It was not a sudden decision but one which took me a couple of years to make. For most of that time, I was attending two churches, until the fence-sitting proved too uncomfortable and I felt I had to make a decision, one way or another.

Even then I struggled, spent many hours and shed many tears, making the decision to leave. And when I finally had, I nearly lost it the morning I saw Michael going off on his own to Mass for the first time. But change I did and I was aware that the change had had its beginnings way back in my childhood when my Dad and I would go walking in the evening after tea and would pass the Methodist church on Sunday evenings where my Grandad was bellringer. They would be singing their hearts out and I longed to be with them but in those days a little Catholic girl had no show of doing that.

Later, on many occasions I was tempted to join people of other religions in their worship and sometimes I did but always with that terrible twinge of conscience knowing that I shouldn't. When ecumenism became the thing to do I was in boots and all and I revelled in being able to join "our separated brethren" in various activities. But through it all I remained a loyal, card-carrying Catholic.

The charismatic renewal hit us and there were lots more opportunities to share with people of other churches, but it was at that time that inter-communion became a real issue for me. I understood the Catholic church's stance on this but I didn't agree with it. Neither could I understand the church's continuing barrier to women in ministry.

When Renew came along I was in boots and all again. This seemed like a good opportunity to do in the Catholic church what was being done in other churches, i.e. gather people into small groups for teaching and sharing. I found myself in the diocesan training team and thoroughly enjoyed the challenges offered. But when I tried to bring Renew back into our own small parish I met firm resistance (due no doubt in part to my missionary zeal).

And so it was that I decided on a change of denomination. Local Catholics were unhappy with my decision but I was warmly welcomed into the local co-operating parish. There, after a short space of time, I was encouraged to conduct services and was later licenced to conduct Communion services. I also undertook study for, and gained, a Diploma in theology from Otago University.

And yet in this, as in many other ways, the Catholic church remained important to me. The funerals of my Dad and my mother-in-law and the wedding of our youngest son, all in the Catholic church, brought home to me the fact that I still had very strong ties there. A couple of years ago there was a service of reconciliation at our parish church. I went along with Michael and found it was one of those services where several priests stood at intervals across the front of the church and people went up to them to receive the sacrament. I knew I would not be able to receive absolution but the priest was so kind and understanding that I felt really moved.

At about this time a friend sent me a copy of *Tui Motu* and I found that other people, who had remained in the church, felt as I did on a whole range of topics. Perhaps after all I could fit into the Catholic church without too much compromise. Several friends in different ways let me talk my way through the issues but the really big stumbling block as I saw it was having to confess that I had been wrong in leaving the church, whereas for me, at the time, it had seemed very right. That turned out not to be an issue.

The priest I went to simply listened to my story, spoke to me of God's love and goodness and after a short time of reconciliation, welcomed me back home. I might add that in all my journeying my love for and my relationship with God never really changed. I do miss conducting services and I do miss worshipping with the many dear people who took me to their hearts but I also feel a real joy in being back in the Catholic church. It is so good to be united with Michael again in worship.

And there are things about the church that I appreciate even more now that I'm back: the orderliness, the lovely new hymns, the sacraments, the colour and diversity especially obvious in the larger congregations. At the farewell service in the co-operating parish I had intended to ask that they play a special favourite of mine *Just let me say how much I love you* but I didn't get around to it so I thought: "That's the last I'll hear of that one for a while." But the following Sunday we went to Mass in a Wellington church and guess what they played as the communion hymn?

It was as if the Lord was saying to me

"Wherever you are I am too, and I love you." ■

First Blessing

Paul Andrews, SJ

It had been a hot, stressful morning, that last day of July, the feast of St Ignatius. We had studied and prepared for this day over 14 years and were up with the lark. John Charles McQuaid, then archbishop of Dublin, arrived at Milltown Park punctually and quietly, creating around him an atmosphere of nervous awe. He muttered his way through the Latin ceremony of ordination.

For us it was the third such ceremony in four days; in quick succession we had become subdeacons, then deacons, and today was to be the priesthood. We were dizzy with dressing up, learning how to say the office, and keeping track of new obligations and rituals.

What a relief to get away from it all in the afternoon, and find my way alone to the Forty Foot for a swim. I left my new black suit on the rocks, and lost myself in the deep, crisp, clean sea, glad to leave behind the warm pieties of family and friends, and feel my body come alive. Best moment of all was to get out and towel myself in the July sunshine, feeling the blood course through cold limbs.

The usual scatter of men was there, some friends, some strangers. As I stood there holding my towel, one of them came up quietly. *Is it true you were ordained a priest this morning?* It is. *Then Father would you give me your blessing?* He knelt on the bare rock in front of me, I placed my hands on his head, closed my eyes and prayed over him.

When I opened my eyes, I saw a sight which to this day fills me with amazement. There was a little cluster of men waiting for my blessing. Some I knew, a drummer from a show-band, a Dun Laoghaire grocer, a barrister from Cork. The rest were strangers. They knelt one after the other, and I laid my novice hands on them. There was no cameraman to catch the scene: one man standing, half a dozen kneeling on the rocks in the warm sunshine, all naked as fishes.

I still have photographs of the rehearsed and solemn rituals of the morning. But that remembered image on the edge of Dublin Bay is more precious. It was the alternative church of the 50s, a group without power or pomp or clothes: six men with a touching innocence seeking the blessing of a new priest, as they might relish the crust of a freshly baked loaf, or the first glass from a bottle of new wine. ■

Compassion for a planet in deep trouble

The Great Work, Our Way Into the Future
by Thomas Berry
Bell Tower NY: 1999
Price: $70
Review: Peter Healy

Book reviews

From the beginning the title of this book suggests what the whole of it might be proposing. Namely, for the human community to find its way into a viable future we have important work to do. The 'Great Work' ahead of us involves changes in the way we think, the way we see and behave, and the roles we carry out.

As I understand his reputation, Thomas Berry is considered to be something of a grandfather to the environmental movement in the United States. His first book, published in 1988, *The Dream of the Earth*, is a gem of a text written in the eloquent style of the North American natural history tradition that Berry admires so much. *The Dream of the Earth* won a literary award and is described in its blurb as one of the ten most important books of the 20th century! Personally, being the Berry fan that I am, I tend to agree with this rather bold claim. If readers wish to delve into *The Great Work*, I suggest you first consider reading this precursor. It is an inspired and important ecological book, a rewarding and thought-provoking read.

Between writing these two books, Tom Berry co-authored with Brian Swimme, another called *The Universe Story*. This book is a development of one of Berry's central ideas about the need humanity has for a collective guiding story. Berry's understanding is that we (living within the western world-view) currently have no adequate story to guide us in these times of enormous environmental destruction. The absence of such a guiding and overarching narrative is one reason why humans are such a threat to the planet's life systems and to all other species. His understanding is that the human community has an inadequate and flawed sense of its proper role as a species among species.

Thomas Berry is an old man now and is retired on a family farm in the hill country of the Southern Appalachians. He has spent his life studying Eastern religions, teaching cultural history at the tertiary level, and writing and developing his particular approach to ecology. He spent some years as president of the American *Teilhard de Chardin* Association and headed an endeavour in New York called the *Riverdale Centre for Religious Research*. As an ecological thinker Berry is in a philosophical/spiritual tradition that includes Henri Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Harsthorne, Sallie McFague, Annie Dillard, Matthew Fox and others.

A major theme in *The Great Work* is that of 'reinventing' what it means to be human. Berry believes that we have done so much damage to the planet's natural systems that we need to reinvent our mode of belonging to the earth as a species. We need a new guiding and healing myth that will enable the human community to become a mutually enhancing presence on the planet and a less destructive one. The human community is currently in between stories; the current stories that guide us are no longer adequate, and the new story emerging has not yet found full acceptance within the human psyche.

Berry's way of putting it is to say: "The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human at the species level, with critical reflection within the community of life systems, in a time developmental context by means of story and shared dream experience." Berry spends a chapter teasing out what he means by each phrase of this statement.

The book mentioned above, *The Universe Story*, is a full exploration of what Berry describes as the 'new story': the story of the epic of evolution that has come available to us through the work of the scientific community over the last 300 years.

The Great Work has an interesting chapter on the university. In Berry's view the university along with the other major establishments of the world – the governments, the religious traditions and the commercial-industrial corporations – have all failed in the fulfilment of their basic purpose because they have no adequate sense of the continuity that exists between the human and non-human modes of being. These institutions, for the most part, fail to recognize the other-than-human world as having any inherent rights or values.

Berry also laments the fact that few universities deal with the first principle of economics which is understanding that the preservation of the integrity of the earth economy has to be the first purpose of any human economic programme. While saying this Berry also sees the university as the most hopeful of all institutions because it has (or should have) the insight and the freedom to provide some of the leadership and guidance needed by the human community.

In a chapter called *The New Political Alignment* Berry encourages us to think about a planet with twice the present human population facing the future with only half of our current resources. ▷

Christian hope seen against a background of evil

Auschwitz – Resurrection
by Raymond Pelly
St Peter's Publications, Wn 2000
Price: $12.50
Review: S. David Crooke

Dr Pelly is an Anglican priest and Christian solitary and a former warden of St John's Theological College, Auckland. Five years ago he visited Auschwitz and Dachau and this book is his response to the challenging question: "If Christ lies buried under an avalanche of 20th Century horror, in what will his contemporary Resurrection consist?"

To find answers, Raymond Pelly works within a tight framework, contrasting five images of the Holocaust with New Testament teaching on the Resurrection: empty space and empty tomb; black smoke and appearances; mutilated body and Thomas; forgetting and remembrance and silence and proclamation.

He sees Resurrection as 'standing' in the space of God's life-giving energies and describes the clearing at Birkenau where the ashes of 1.2 million people were scattered. There is an apt quotation from the Russian *Kontakion for the Dead*: "Weeping o'er the grave we sing our Alleluias". Christ provides us with a place to stand if we are to withstand evil.

The Resurrection also opens up channels of communication with God. The risen Christ was not confined by physical barriers. He became the victim-survivor who shares both suffering and the determined search for new life.

The author explains Resurrection as touching the mutilated body of Jesus. He points to the progressive breakdown of care in the 20th Century, not only seen in mass murder but in issues like euthanasia and human cloning. He reminds us of those who care for terminally ill patients in hospital or for starving people on the streets of India.

The importance of remembering is also seen in a Resurrection context: "Do this in remembrance of me". Or from an inscription at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial near Jerusalem: "The mystery of redemption lies in remembrance".

And remembrance becomes prophecy where the impact of Resurrection can be known and celebrated in our own lives. Dr Pelly looks forward to a future of promise and potential with a picture of Christ the woodcutter, picking up his axe to hew down his own cross and all those like it.

I believe this little book (only 48 pages) is one of the best pieces of theological reflection to come out of New Zealand in recent years. It deserves an international readership. ■

▷ He points out the magnitude of the changes being asked of us if we are to have a viable human future. He notes that we need to carefully rethink our role as humans. Among other things we canno longer afford to have the businessworld addicted to the making of money as though this is their only valid way of being. All our professions and institutions have to be reinvented within the new context that we now find ourselves. Berry is clear that our current context is one of a profoundly degraded world environment.

In our current need for guidance Berry highlights four contemporary places where wisdom can be found: in the women's tradition, in the scientific community, among indigenous peoples and in the classical traditions. In a well-constructed chapter Berry highlights some of the key features of each tradition. He makes clear that it is the collective wisdom of these four traditions that will guide, inspire and give us the energy to fulfill *The Great Work*.

Other insightful chapters in this book include an analysis of the Extractive Economy, the Corporation Story, Ethics and Ecology, the Wild and the Sacred and the Dynamics of the Future.

This is a special – and ultimately – hopeful book, written with a huge heart of compassion for a planet in deep trouble. I hope this review inspires you to read some of Thomas Berry's writing, and that it gives you the courage to become a part of *The Great Work*. I hope you buy this book and read it and share it around, or even better, get your local library to buy it for the community. ■

A stinging challenge to Pakeha complacency

History of New Zealand and its Inhabitants
Dom Felice Vaggioli
Translated from the Italian by John Crockett
University of Otago Press
Price: $49.95
Review: Jessie Munro

Dom Felice Vaggioli, an Italian Benedictine monk, lived in New Zealand from 1879 to 1887. His experience was not cloistered. He was priest in Gisborne and then Coromandel, out and about meeting people. He came already with a reputation for austerity, intellectual curiosity, financial and administrative competence and very frank opinions. (Could the latter be partly behind his posting out to New Zealand and then to the far borders of the diocese?)

In his nearly eight years here he learnt English and some Maori and intensively studied the New Zealand story, tapping into a wide range of sources, Protestant, Catholic and secular. Back in Italy, he continued researching and wrote two full and significant volumes titled *Storia della Nuova Zelanda*, a natural history and a social history covering first contacts up to the 1890s. More than a century after its 1896 publication in Italian, the second volume has now been published by the University of Otago Press in an English translation by John Crockett, because "its critical material, including an evaluation of colonialism, would be of considerable relevance to current historical studies".

Vaggioli wrote for fellow Italians. His historical analysis and message reflected his formation in the time of Pope Pius IX and his distress at the revolutionary, democratic, anticlerical upheavals in 19th century Europe. Yet Crockett is right; the book is pertinent to our present-day New Zealand context and preoccupations, a trenchant reminder that we can't ever with impunity

Vaggioli in his prime as Abbot Visitor of the Italian province of his order

forget the turmoil of our beginnings as a country and as a bicultural society. And it continues to hold Europe, especially England in this case, to account for the ongoing traumas of imperialism. Tom Brooking's valuable introductory essay sums up: "And so, at last, the most stinging challenge to the cosy notion that British colonial rule was somehow the kindest variant of European imperialism is made available to all New Zealanders. This is the perfect antidote to what James Belich calls the 'historical amnesia' of New Zealanders."

John Crockett is to be congratulated for his excellent translation. The text is clear and lively with natural English rhythms. The story is very accessible to modern readers, yet Vaggioli's intense personality and 19th century language are faithfully conveyed. His original Italian was elegantly simple and he integrated skilfully into his text direct quotes from a wide range of sources. Crockett explains some translating decisions, including his valid choice to restore the original English quotes for authenticity and cross-reference.

Any awkward transitions come rather from Vaggioli's occasional leaps from outwardly dispassionate historical reportage to zealous exhortation (for instance on Te Kooti and the day of judgment). However, the transparency of his biases against Protestantism (which he can never refer to as Christian), British colonialism, settler self-interest, freemasonry, Judaism and secular government (especially with regard to education) keeps us alert to his frame of reference.

I didn't feel I was wallowing in sermonising. Vaggioli is memorably direct and pithy in his message. Take this astringent comment on New Zealand's borrowing: "Great Britain, aware of the Australian colonies' repub-lican aspirations, has bestowed its affection on New Zealand, hoping to keep it submissive and able to be used in the future. The colony takes advantage of its mother's indulgence to extract millions from her. How long will the game go on for? It is hard to predict. I believe it will continue as long as England rules the waves. When things change, New Zealand could well hear, 'Look after yourself! I cannot help you!' Then the spendthrift colony, over-burdened with debt, will be in real trouble."

Vaggioli's work has been called derivative but this is not really so. He has analysed previous commentary, expanded on it and largely drawn his own conclusions, updating it to the 1890s. The book covers an impressive amount of both cultures' experience but cannot really be a bicultural history as suggested in the introduction. While empathising with Maori, Vaggioli essentially writes from his European cultural perspective.

In footnotes and index, Crockett has indicated most errors of spelling or fact but some have slipped through the net and readers should cross-check carefully. For instance, Vaggioli confuses the Church and London Missionary Societies; 'Coater' is the influential CMS secretary Dandeson

Coates; 'Moanui' is Te Moananui, Father 'Ronald' is Rolland.

Where Vaggioli described the beginnings of Catholicism in New Zealand, he wrote about the family that welcomed Bishop Pompallier and facilitated so much of early Catholic mission: "I regret that I could not ascertain the benefactor's name, which should be handed down to posterity". I would have loved a footnote here, finally crediting Thomas and Mary Poynton with their deserved recognition. So strong was their faith that, in the absence of any priest in New Zealand before 1838, Mary took her babies to Sydney for baptism.

Slanted arguments and omissions are clearer to us, with the benefit of hindsight. Nevertheless, much of his analysis stands up fairly well alongside the *Oxford History of New Zealand*, James Belich's *Making Peoples*, Anne Salmond's *Between Worlds* and relevant entries in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (for instance his treatment of Governor FitzRoy and the Wairau incident, and of Governor Grey). Vaggioli regretted not having access to Society of Mary archives, but his overview of the Marist mission is reasonable and does not disguise the rift with Bishop Pompallier.

His championing of Maori rights is illustrated very well in the sections on the Treaty of Waitangi, highlighting Britain's and the colonial government's culpability in the ongoing story, and in his compassionate account of the story of Te Whiti and Parihaka. He is very clear on land sales ("daylight robbery of Maori under the guise of commercial trading"), confiscation issues and the significance of land to Maori. He attacks surveyors and Native Land Court lawyers enriching themselves at Maori expense. He is not ingenuous in his passionate espousal of the Maori cause, however; he bluntly labels Hongi Hika as "Maoridom's fiercest enemy", describes Te Rauparaha at the height of his excesses as a "slavering jackel" and judges severely Ropata's role in colonial forces.

Vaggioli's canvas is large, his judgment clear and, despite the astringent tone, his overall perspective humane and understanding of the tensions at the cultural interface. When he speaks on a personal level, for instance on his time in Coromandel, he can be positively kindly and prejudice falls away: "I must needs mention that local Catholics deserve praise, as do the Protestants who always treated me with uncommon deference and respect. Many settlers like to say that the gold prospectors are the worst kind of riff-raff, but experience has shown me that this is not true. Miners are impetuous, hedonistic and spendthrift. But they are also sincere, well-intentioned and kind, with no trace of hypocrisy."

Reading the distressing story of much of New Zealand's history could make us wonder why the country is not in a worse mess. For reconciliation and harmony now and in the future, we New Zealanders need to keep hold of those values of sincerity, good intentions, kindness and absence of hypocrisy. ■

Crossing the threshold

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

We can now truly say 'Goodbye to the 20th Century'. I wonder if the human race will ever see another one as full of wars, killings, unrest, disasters, both natural and man-made, which rendered the last century as horrific as any in history. In the last 100 years the degradation of the planet by sheer greed, allied to money and power, has been unprecedented. The depletion of fish stocks, the pollution of fresh waters, the accumulation of greenhouse gases and unfair trade practices have contributed to more than half the world's population living in poverty.

The century ended with materialism still dominating a godless world which seems to have lost its spirituality and its purpose. The new century starts with the world's most powerful nation under the control of a president who appears to endorse the policies of a free market system.

Indeed, he embodies the worst features of self-interest and big business. He is in hock to Texas oil barons, counts as his friends the weirdos in the National Rifle Association and depends on support from corporations such as those in the tobacco industry. The election of George W. Bush has exposed the American legal system to be as corrupt as the political one. Both are manifestly dominated by the dollar and a power élite which debase 'the world's greatest democracy'. The 20th century began in hope, but quickly deteriorated into war. This new century begins in uncertainty.

Winners and losers

How did New Zealand fare last year and what have we to look forward to? There were winners and losers on the political scene. The concerted efforts of big business, the Round Table and the National Party-Act consortium to destabilise the Labour Alliance coalition by preaching doom and financial disaster left egg on the face of Roger Kerr. His final tawdry effort, of backing the newspaper ad campaign about *A Generation Lost*, left him bereft of any further credibility or influence. Gareth Morgan, he who would sell everything and privatise the rest, supported the apocalyptic view and still does. He continues to give economists a bad name.

But the big loser of the year was Jenny Shipley. Married to the Act Party for political survival, her attempts to revive a flattened National Party were unsuccessful. She has promised to revive the British Honours System, bring back the Employment Contracts Act and have another referendum on MMP. The electorate has moved on from there. Mrs. Shipley's bizarre attempt to rebrand the party, as a "radical conservative" one, further undermined her credibility. Her leadership looks shaky.

On the sporting front the mantle of invincibility slipped off the shoulders of Toddy and his boys. Ho Ho! France did it again! The question is being asked whether some of those All Blacks are worth the money, particularly some of the more Neanderthal ones. I won't start on the Black Caps.

In the midst of all these lost reputations, a clear winner stands out. It is Helen Clark. With the full support of Jim Anderton she has bedded down the MMP system and shown herself to be a worthy Prime Minister with the potential of being a great one. She has the leadership qualities and the toughness necessary for the role. She has demonstrated decisiveness and intelligence within the coalition and in government. She has kept her promises. New Zealand can look forward to stable government with a new political system that works towards a more caring and just society.

Vive la nostalgie

This writer spent part of last year 'SKI-ing' (Spending the Kids' Inheritance) in Europe. Did absence make the heart grow fonder? Inevitably, on return, comparisons are made between New Zealand and the country visited – in this case France. Travelling in France by rail is a joy. The high-speed trains crisscross the country at more than 300km per hour, the arrival and departure times are exact to the minute and the carriages are beautifully appointed. It is the best national railway system in the world. In New Zealand, the railways are antiquated. Remember Ruth Richardson who sold the lot in 1993 for a paltry $400 million.

France has one of the best health care systems in Europe (yes, they pay more tax in order to finance it). My French friends were incredulous when I told them of a decade of trying to run the health service here on a commercial basis. Nor could they understand the plunder and sale of strategic assets such as telecommunications and hydro-electricity.

The budget for art and culture in France appears very generous. Paris has museums and art galleries which are the envy of the world. They are wonderful buildings that are forever being updated and refurbished. This pride in art and culture is civilising.

France is a beautiful country, but the pace of living (and the cost) is exhausting. Yes, there were times I longed for the quiet of New Zealand, the proximity of a coast line and the grandeur of the Southern Alps. Nevertheless part of me remains in France. The heart has grown fonder of both. ■

Impasse in Jerusalem

The last days of the Clinton administration brought out a rush of political commentators airing their assessment of the previous eight years' performance: how had Bill Clinton measured up on the presidential scale, how would he be remembered? Would history forget the scandals and remember his efforts for peace in Northern Ireland and the Middle East?

Certainly Clinton's efforts to broker a Middle East peace deal continued right up to his last week as President. Palestinian and Israeli leaders were meeting even as his successor was being sworn in, but, according to Paul Adams, the BBC's Middle East correspondent, a formal peace deal is one thing and real peace quite another.

In a discussion with John Simpson on the BBC's *Simpson's World* he spoke of the enormous gulf which separates Israelis and Palestinians, of their total lack of communication.

"There is an incredible insensitivity on the part of the Israelis about what the Palestinians experienced in the creation of the state of Israel, and on the other hand there is the blindness of the Palestinians to the whole mental makeup and the history of the Jewish people.

"They know so little about each other and each others' lives, yet they can live 15 yards apart and walk past each other without seeing or knowing or understanding."

From a viewpoint on the Mount of Olives and against a stunning background of the Old City of Jerusalem the two journalists talked of the square kilometre of land which contains sites sacred to three faiths which has been the focus of dissent and discussion since the critical moment in 1967 when Israeli troops occupied it after 2000 years of exile.

"Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, congratulated the troops on their victory and urged that they immediately give it back – he knew the problems that possessing Arab territory would bring – but the moment was lost, and now 380,000 Israelis are living in conquered territory" John Simpson commented.

And from Paul Adams: "There are some Palestinians who believe that the Israeli occupation will end, just as the 100 year control by the Crusaders from 1099 ended. They believe that the state of Israel is temporary, and has the inherent weakness of any colonial enterprise, and if they are steadfast and patient, they will triumph. But the international community has a sense of responsibility and guilt regarding what has happened to the Jews and will not allow that to happen.

"There has to be some effort made to bridge the gap between the two peoples, otherwise any peace will be a very cold one and people will continue to walk past each other without seeing each other, or only in a hateful and envious way."

In his farewell speech to the nation, Clinton announced that he had no intention of retiring from the international stage. If he is given the chance, it may be that the world will remember him as the bridge-maker. ■

Kathleen Doherty

New Year's blessings

When Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope in 1978, his Polish countryman, Cardinal Wyzinski, told him that Providence had chosen him to lead the Catholic church into the third millennium. Twenty two years later this same man, now stooped and frail, pulled shut the huge bronze Holy Door in St Peters, Rome, signifying the end of the church's Jubilee Year and the beginning of the new millennium. Far from looking on this as a vocation completed, the Pope, speaking on behalf of all Christians said, "We now return to our normal activities. This is quite different from taking a rest".

And on the same day, 6 January, he issued an Apostolic Letter (*At the start of the new millennium*). The letter begins by recalling highlights of the Jubilee Year – a year remembered particularly for requests for forgiveness. Despite opposition from some Vatican cardinals, the Pope, during Holy Year, seven times asked for forgiveness for "the sins of the sons and daughters of the Church", including those committed against the Jews, against women and against human rights. He called this a "purification of memory".

He also mentions events during the year 2000 which give a sense of optimism for the future: his ecumenical meetings with those of other Christian churches and those of non-Christian cultures and faiths. Two personal highlights were his visit to the Holy Land and his meeting with young people during the World Youth Congress in August. He commends those parliaments which have made a start in remitting some of the debt owed by poor countries.

When speaking of guidelines for the future, the Pope insists on the importance of the Second Vatican Council. Much has still to be done to implement the Council's teachings. Local councils of priests and pastoral councils "must be ever more highly valued".

There has been some reform of the Roman Curia but the Pope notes, "there is certainly much more to be done". In making these points he seems to be trying to allay fears that the Catholic church is becoming too centralised in the Vatican bureaucracy.

The papal message lists the challenges facing the world in the immediate future: "The contradiction of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others living in conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity". The Pope speaks of a particular type of poverty which can afflict also the wealthy – despair at a lack of meaning in life, drug addiction and the fear of abandonment in old age and sickness. He mentions also the challenges of the ecological crisis and the disregard of fundamental ethical requirements in biotechnology.

is a very personal and inspiring letter. And its agenda is realistic because it bases hope for the future on individual Christian lives. The Church's task in every age, says the Pope, is to not only to *speak* of Christ, but to *show* him. And this will not happen unless each of us knows Christ personally. We must make time and space in our daily lives to let the spirit of Jesus influence us. The Pope warns of restlessness and impatience and says we must "resist this temptation by trying *to be* before trying *to do*".

He keeps stressing that we are not saved by formulas and teachings but by a Person and we can only come to know this person, Jesus, "in a setting of silence and prayer". The time has come to repropose to everyone the high standard of ordinary Christian living. This must be the first priority in parish and diocesan pastoral planning. Every parish must foster prayer and study of the bible. The effects of this will then be felt through all levels of the church and society – the spirit of Christ can be integrated into the fabric of the new millennium.

It would be good if this letter (perhaps in summarised form) could be made available in parishes. It could well be one of the last from Pope John Paul. It is a very personal testament from a man conscious of his age and infirmity. A final anecdote should give each of us something to reflect on.

He tells us how he often stopped to look from his window at the queues of pilgrims waiting to go through the Holy Door of St Peter's. "In each of them I tried to imagine the story of a life – someone whom Christ had met and who, in friendship with Him, was setting out on a journey of hope." ■

In her Christmas message for 2000 Queen Elizabeth 2 departed from her customary travelogue and chose instead to speak of her own religious beliefs and what Christmas means to her. There was no 'sermonising'. Instead a simple This I believe.
"Many,' she said, "would have been inspired by Jesus' simple but powerful teaching: love God and love thy neighbour. In other words treat others as you would like them to treat you.
"To many of us our beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me," the Queen said, "the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example".

Jim Neilan