

Tui Motu

InterIslands

March/April 2002 Price \$4



Praise the Lord with joyous sound

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COVER: a church singing group at Outram, C Otago. photo: Peter Frost.

Acknowledgment to the London *Tablet* for permission to print the article: *A path from hate to love* in the February issue



The \$64 million question

If you can hear sounds of rejoicing, it may be Mr Roger Kerr and his Business Round Table chorus in full voice. At the latest count New Zealand now has over one thousand people with an annual personal income of over one million dollars each. Clearly we have achieved a significant milestone in the pursuit of national wealth.

I was recently discussing the question of disparity of wealth with a friend, once prominent in the Canterbury business community. I mentioned that the Church's social teaching has been realised in Spain by companies following the Mondragon principles. One of these is that the differential in earnings between top management and most lowly paid worker should never exceed four to one. My friend said that 30 years ago that would have been about the norm among Christchurch businesses.

How things have changed! What on earth do these latter-day Croesuses do with all their surplus wealth? The Gospel of Jesus acknowledges that there will always be these disparities. But

it provides a simple and unequivocal answer: give it away. If you hoard your wealth it will corrupt you.

Once upon a time the charging of interest on loans was forbidden to Christians. Usury was roundly condemned as one of the seven deadlies. Yet the whole wealth of the West is now built on it, and it may be that it is that very system of investment of surplus wealth for interest which itself produces this gross inequality. Little wonder some Christian thinkers question the whole system from its foundations (*see pages 4-7*).

When J.K.Rowling first dreamt up Harry Potter, she never thought Harry would succeed in making her the wealthiest woman in England, bar the Queen. It's always possible. Who knows – perhaps the circulation of *Tui Motu* will suddenly take off and hit the jackpot. I wonder what our Board members would do with such an unexpected bonanza. We might even be able to afford a new carpet!

Happy Easter to all our loyal supporters!

March/April issue

Readers will have noticed that this issue of *Tui Motu* arrived late. We apologise. The assistant editor has been in hospital, but the good news is that she is well on the road to full recovery.

After due consultation we decided to combine the March and April issues into an Easter *Tui Motu*. Everyone's subscription will moved on by one, so that your annual sub. will still buy 11 issues. The next issue will be in May. Since the editorial team is limping along on one leg, we hope you will be forgiving if the design is not up to its usual standard.

This is our 50th issue. We have included a four page index of all major articles and themes up to and including December 2001. It is clipped into the middle of the

magazine so you can detach it.

At its inception *Tui Motu* was established as a Catholic magazine, but orientated outwards so as to embrace the richness of other Christian traditions. The success of this ambition is well illustrated in our jubilee issue. The guest editorial is in the hands of the well-known Methodist lay preacher and hymn writer, Colin Gibson. Contributors include a Baptist, an Anglican and two Presbyterian ministers as well as laypeople of various denominations. We rejoice that this ecumenical aim has been so splendidly achieved: it makes a fitting Easter offering to our readers.

M.H.

Song of faith that sings forever

If Isaac Stern is right, musical expression is inborn and instinctive in all of us. It begins, he suggests, with the percussive rhythmic heartbeat of mother and foetus; it comes into full existence at the moment of delivery with the declarative birth-cry of the mother and the first loud wail of astonishment, rage or surprise from the infant turned out into a rough world.

So can worship ever be silent? Yes, it's possible – for both religious and secular people. Consider the austere, silent worship of Cistercian monks or the pregnant silence in a Quaker meeting. Consider, too, the mute adoration of the beloved other, the dumb-founded silent worship between lovers at certain stages in their relationship.

But these are unusually intense modes of veneration. It is more natural for us to express ourselves in worship of both the low and high varieties, audibly and vocally. Maybe we just can't help wanting to let God know what we're on about.

'Natural', inherently musical forms of worship include the chants and ululations of ecstatic worshippers, the solemn pitched musical-speaking that is plainchant, and the excited babbling of those 'caught up' in the Spirit. Not to mention the rapt creative mode of improvisatory musicians, whether they are church organists or jazz groups, for whom the spiritual is wholly incarnate in the doing of the music.

Whatever its form, for most of us the presence of music in worship is so familiar we think of it as 'normal', though we all have our view of just what degree of regularity in rhythm, what tonal range from sobriety to jubilation, what complexity or simplicity, what removal from or approximation to contemporary popular modes of speech and song constitutes acceptable 'religious' music.

Ah yes, and we can chant ourselves into rapture, using music to promote our auto-intoxication. We can drown ourselves in nostalgia, by endlessly singing the hymns our mothers (more probably our Sunday school teachers) taught

Colin Gibson



us. We can seal our minds from all contemporary reality and the challenge of fresh thought and feeling by forever repeating the hymn texts of the antique past, imprinting our minds with their fossilized theologies and cultural attitudes. Music, like all great arts, can be our bane or our blessing – as we choose to make it or take it. But it is one of the great springs of life, and our souls would soon dry and wither without it.

I have often wondered just why most of us, including myself, prefer an act of worship to be bathed in music. Yes, there are practical reasons, like quietening distracted spirits, filling a time of general inaction (the offering comes to mind) with delightful music, or drowning out chatter and noise to assist the soul to concentrate on the inner world. But the intoning of the priest tells us we are, for a time, in a different mode of existence. The hymns declare the personal and active participation of the people of God in a corporate act of worship, and the choir anthem raises a particularly highly wrought musical offering on their behalf.

But I like to think (with Plato and Pythagoras and a million philosophers, artists and musicians more) that music specially represents for all human beings that harmony and joy which as an act of faith we hold to be at the heart of the universe. That in some small way our quavering voices, our garbled notes, our fumbling fingers contribute to the holy song of God, forever singing to creation as it struggles to be born.

So, 'let us sing'. ■

Colin Gibson is a Methodist lay preacher and well known hymn writer



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Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

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Just So Much and No

Donella Meadows

Let us rejoice in the logic of the Earth's economy.

The first commandment of *economics* is: Grow. Grow forever. Companies must get bigger. National economies need to swell by a certain percentage each year. People should want more, make more, earn more, spend more – ever more.

The first commandment of the *Earth* is: Enough. Just so much and no more. Just so much soil. Just so much water. Just so much sunshine. Everything born of the Earth grows to its appropriate size and then stops. The planet does not get bigger, it gets better. Its creatures learn, mature, diversify, evolve, create amazing beauty and novelty and complexity, but live within absolute limits.

Economics says: Compete. Only by pitting yourself against a worthy opponent will you perform efficiently. The reward for successful competition will be growth.

Donella H. Meadows, 59, a pioneering environmental scientist and writer, died on February 20, 2001, in New Hampshire after a brief illness. She was best known to the world as the lead author of the international bestselling book *The Limits to Growth*, published in 1972. The book, which reported on a study of long-term global trends in population, economics, and the environment, sold millions of copies and was translated into 28 languages.

Professor Meadows was a leading voice in what has become known as the “sustainability movement,” an international effort to reverse damaging trends in the environment, economy, and social systems.

In 1981, she founded the International Network of Resource Information Centers (INRIC), also called the Balaton Group (after the lake in Hungary where the group meets annually). In 1997, Professor Meadows founded the *Sustainability Institute*, which she described as a “think-do-tank.” The Institute combines cutting edge research in global systems with practical demonstrations of sustainable living, including the development of an ecological village and organic farm in Hartland Four Corners, Vermont.

The Earth says: Compete, yes – but keep your competition in bounds. Don’t annihilate. Take only what you need. Leave your competitor enough to live. Wherever possible, don’t compete, co-operate. Pollinate each other, create shelter for each other, build firm structures that lift smaller species up to the light. Pass around the nutrients, share the territory. Some kinds of excellence rise out of competition; other kinds rise out of co-operation. You’re not in a war; you’re in a community.

Economics says: Use it up fast. Don’t bother with repair; the sooner something wears out, the sooner you’ll buy another. That makes the gross national product go round.

Throw things out when you get tired of them. Throw them to a place where they become useless. Grab materials and energy to make more. Shave the forests every 30 years. Get the oil out of the ground and burn it now. Make jobs so people can earn money, so they can buy more stuff and throw it out.

The Earth says: What’s the hurry? Take your time building soils, forests, coral reefs, mountains. Take centuries or millennia. When any part wears out, don’t discard it; turn it into food for something else. If it takes hundreds of years to grow a forest, millions of years to compress oil, maybe that’s the rate at which they ought to be used.

Economics discounts the future. Ten years from now, \$2 will be worth \$1. You could invest that dollar at seven percent and double it in ten years. So, a resource ten years from now is worth only half what it’s worth now. Take it now. Turn it into dollars.

The Earth says: Nonsense. Those invested dollars grow in value only if something worth buying grows too. The Earth and its treasures will not double in ten years. What will you spend your doubled dollars on if there is less soil, dirtier water, fewer creatures, less beauty? The Earth’s rule is: Give to the future. Lay up a fraction of an inch of topsoil each year. Give your all to nurture the young. Never take more in your generation than you give back to the next.

The *economic rule* is: Do whatever makes sense in

monetary terms.

The Earth says: Money measures nothing more than the relative power of some humans over other humans, and that power is puny compared with the power of the climate, the oceans, the uncounted multitudes of one-celled organisms that created the atmosphere, that recycle the waste, that have lasted for three billion years. The fact that the economy, which has lasted maybe 200 years, puts zero value on these things means only that the economy knows nothing about value – or about lasting.

Economics says: Worry, struggle, be dissatisfied. The permanent condition of humankind is scarcity. The only way out of scarcity is to accumulate and hoard, though that means, regrettably, that others will have less. Too bad, but there is not enough to go around.

The Earth says: Rejoice! You have been born into a world of self-maintaining abundance and incredible beauty. Feel it, taste it, be amazed by it. If you stop your struggle and lift your eyes long enough to see Earth's wonders, to play and dance with the glories around you, you will discover what you really need. It isn't that much.

*a world of
abundance and of
incredible beauty*



There is enough. As long as you control your numbers, there will be enough for everyone and for as long as you can imagine.

We don't get to choose which laws – those of the economy or those of the Earth – will ultimately prevail. You can choose which ones we will personally live under – and whether to make our economic laws consistent with planetary ones, or to find out what happens if we don't. ■

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Rosary House Spiritual Life Centre 2002

15 Dublin Street, Christchurch

Guided Retreat

April 6-13 Fr Mark Chamberlain
Our Friend. A retreat which seeks to explore and deepen intimacy with our God.

Retreat in Routine

May 1-8 Fr John O'Connor
An invitation to live in a peaceful environment while going out to your workplace and other commitments during the day. Evening sessions encourage the retreatant to discern the presence of God in the preceding days.

Ignatian Spiritual Exercises

July 2-9 Team
A **video series** on the life of St Ignatius Loyola. The invitation which he extends to you is that you use his story and his spiritual techniques to help you discover your own story and delight in its many layers of meaning.

Life's Healing Journey

August 16-24 (8 days \$400) Team
A journey towards healing of life's hurts. This is a blend of meditations on the humanity of Jesus, of input on the normal and necessary grieving/healing process, private time and individual accompaniment.



RETREATS – Cost: \$310
Arrival 5.15pm Opening 7.30pm
Closing 10.00am
Private or individual directed retreats
may be made during these times

*To receive our brochure which outlines
other events and to make bookings,
please contact us at the above
address.*

Eyes to See: Ears to Hear

September 21-28 Fr Gerard Whiteford SM
In this retreat the focus is the Jesus of Mark's Gospel and to look at incidents in Jesus' life from his point of view, not our own. This retreat asks the simple question: 'What does it mean for Jesus?'

Preached Retreat

October 9-16 Fr John O'Connor
An opportunity to grow in sensitivity to movements of the Holy Spirit in daily life.

Guided Retreat

November 5-12 Fr Mark Beban SM
Friends of God. "In each generation she passes into holy souls, she makes them friends of God and prophets." (Wisdom 7:27) "I have called you friends." (John 15:15) Is it real to have a sense of God as my friend? If it is, what does this mean for my relationship with the living God? During this retreat we will explore these questions.

Personal Guided Retreat

December 7-14 Fr Mark Chamberlain & Team
A personal guided retreat is a time in silence and solitude during which the retreatant is guided each day personally by a prayer guide to discern the movement of God's Spirit.

Guided Retreat

January 4-11 2003 Fr Shane Dwyer SM
To see the Invisible God. An encounter with the hidden God made present in the Scripture and our own prayer experience.



Economy and Ecology – 1

Margrit Kennedy toured Aotearoa New Zealand recently with her husband, Declan, running workshops on interest and inflation-free money. She shows how financial policies shape global markets and how interest wrecks cultures, ecosystems and economic systems. Part 2, Declan's contribution, will appear in the next issue

Ron Sharp

The huge debts accumulated by Third World countries, widespread unemployment, the degradation of the environment, the arms build-up and proliferation of nuclear power plants: all these are related to a mechanism which keeps money in circulation, namely interest and compound interest. A monetary system without interest would create a win-win situation for everyone and help to develop a sustainable economy.

To change the system, the ordinary person needs to revise their understanding about how money works. Four of the most common misunderstandings are:

- That there is only one type of growth
- That we pay interest only if we borrow money
- That we are all equally affected by interest
- That inflation is an integral part of free market economies.

Growth can be natural, as with the physical maturity of humans, plants and animals – fairly quick at the beginning and stopping in the middle, then deteriorating towards the end. Most of us see this as the only growth pattern, but another growth pattern is *linear*: more coal produces more energy until the coal runs out; machines produce more goods until the machines stop.

A third pattern of growth is called *exponential*. This doubles slowly in the beginning but rapidly escalates, as with the growth of a cancer. Based on interest and compound interest, money doubles at regular intervals, following an exponential growth pattern. This explains why the world is in trouble with our monetary system today. Interest, in fact, acts like a cancer in our social structure.

Take a 3 percent interest rate, for example. In 24 years the money has doubled, 6 percent doubles in 12 years and 12 percent in 6 years. Because the continual payment of interest and compound interest is arithmetically and practically impossible, a contradiction is created. The only way to cope with this is conflict – and that eventuates in wars and revolutions. It is necessary, therefore, to create a monetary system which follows a natural growth pattern.

Do we only pay interest when we borrow money? If so, we simply need to cease borrowing. But the fact is that every purchase we make includes, on average, 50 percent capital costs. We buy the cost of the articles, plus interest, plus profit, plus advertising. If interest were abolished and replaced with another mechanism to keep money in circulation, nearly everyone could be twice as well off or would need to work half the time to keep the same standard of living.

A third misconception: Since everybody has to pay interest when borrowing money or buying goods and services, are we all equally well (or badly) off within our present system? Not at all. A low income family could be paying 2.3 percent on loans, goods and services, and gaining 0.5 percent, leaving a deficit of 1.8 percent. Whereas the rich few could be paying 32.3 percent but gaining 66.5 percent, giving them a positive balance of 34.2 percent. The top section of a population is receiving the interest of the other sections. No wonder we are hearing so much about “the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer”. There is a constant shuffling of money from those who have less money than they need to those who have more money than they need.

A fourth misconception relates to the role of inflation in our economic system. Most people see inflation as an integral part of any money system. Indeed it is seen as “natural”, since there is no capitalist country in the world having a free market economy without inflation. Between 1950 and 1989 every German mark fell from its full value to 28 cents through inflation. But inflation does not need to happen.

Whether we look at inflation, social equity or environmental consequences, it would seem desirable to replace this “mindless financial obsession” with

a more adequate mechanism to keep money in circulation. This is Margrit Kennedy's central message: instead of paying interest to those who have more than they need and in order to keep money in circulation, people should pay a small fee if they keep their money out of circulation.

The transport of rail freight offers a good illustration of how this might work. Imagine a railway company having to pay a customer whose goods occupy a container in their yards: this is the equivalent of 'rewarding' someone who ties up money in the bank by paying them interest.

But if, instead, the railway company charged a fee, that would ensure the container was unloaded as quickly as possible and made available for other customers. Likewise, the best way to encourage people to circulate money instead of hoarding it is to charge them a small fee. It could be the same with money and it would resolve the many societal problems caused by interest and compound interest throughout history.

While interest now is a private gain, the fee on the "parking" of money would be a public gain. The fee would have to return into circulation in order

to maintain the balance between the volume of money and the volume of economic activities. The fee would serve as an income to the government and thereby reduce the amount of tax

*one percent of the
USA population live off
the interest paid by
95 percent...*

this is not democracy.

needed to carry out public works.

The proposal of Margrit Kennedy is not new. The theory was developed by Silvio Gesell in 1904. Egyptian and Old Testament times operated systems without interest. A form of it existed between the 12th and 15th centuries in Europe with church involvement. Significantly, this corresponds with the times when the feminine is more evident in worship and some of the most beautiful architecture and works of art were created.

During the 1930s depression another variation of this system was established in Wörgl, Austria. It was so successful that when 300 other towns began to show interest, the Austrian

National Bank saw its own monopoly endangered and got the Local Council's currency banned.

Modern day versions operate. Michael Linton's LETS (Local Exchange Trading System) is easily adaptable to any locality, which explains why it is spreading rapidly throughout the world. There are some 30 local systems in Aotearoa New Zealand ("<http://letsreview.orcon.net.nz>" <http://letsreview.orcon.net.nz>). "Green" dollar credit/debit transactions are recorded without interest, but a small fee is deducted. There are also many ethical investment banks. The "Just Dollars" fund in Christchurch and Nelson Enterprise Loan Trust (NELT) make loans to small local businesses. A collective of small businesses in Switzerland has been operating a fee money system for 60 years. It had 53,730 members in 1990. Another scheme began in Sweden in 1970 and has over 4,000 members. ■

Margrit Kennedy was professor of ecological building techniques at Hanover University in Germany. She holds a PhD in public and international affairs. She lives with her husband, Declan, in an eco-village in Steyerberg, Germany.

The Earth Bible – progress report

The principle event at the Ecotheology conference in Christchurch July 2000, was the launching of the ***Earth Bible*** project (see *Tui Motu* September '00). The first of five volumes was released, on *Genesis*. *Tui Motu* recently checked on the project's progress with its chief animator, Norman Habel, a Lutheran pastor from Adelaide, South Australia.

Norman reported that volumes 3 (on the *Wisdom* books) and 4 (on the *Psalms* and *Prophets*) were launched at the Society of Biblical Literature's annual conference, in Denver, Colorado, last November. Volume 5 – on the *New Testament* – is due for release later this year. Reception in academic circles across the world has been enthusiastic.

At a more popular level work is progressing on the publication of two collections – Earth Liturgies and Earth Songs. *Tui Motu* hopes to print samples of the songs when they become available.

Some of the liturgies, which are designed for popular use, have already been trialed. One, *a Song of the Earth*, was performed as part of the recent Adelaide Festival. This liturgy is centred on a large clay bowl filled with earth, surrounded by seven candles. After a preface reading of a key text, each of the seven candles is blown out to symbolise seven *days of destruction* of the earth. There follows a collective act of commitment to restore the earth. The liturgy concludes with an act of healing.

Norman also suggests that parish communities might use these liturgies during a *Season of Creation*, which, like a 'lent', could run over five or so weeks. He has already tried this out during September, appropriately, in the southern spring.

To give the Earth Bible Project a more universal appeal an ***Earth Charter*** has been prepared which will be presented to the United Nations next year, to be adopted internationally. ■

Pilgrimage of grace

In New Zealand we have few shrines. A south Auckland environmental group, based at St Mary's Papakura parish, found a new way to go on pilgrimage and celebrate respect for Creation. The event is described by Vicki Baas

*And the water molecules welling up in these clear springs
will have a new tale to tell,
Making their way from the clear depths out to the lakes
through the tumbling gorge and onwards past rolling
countryside
orchards and vineyards
out to the sea.
Here on a windswept beach they will mingle
with the great Ocean of Peace.
In time the sun will call them up.
They'll gather into clouds and travel to distant shores.
As they rain down on Earth
And begin their journey again.*

These water molecules bore witness to some pilgrims who wanted to celebrate the wonder and mystery of water in Aotearoa New Zealand. At St Mary's, Papakura, a small group of parishioners meet regularly to express their care and concern for the environment. Two years ago we introduced *Creation Day* as an annual ecumenical celebration. It was hosted last year by the Methodist community, and will be planned by the

Anglican community in Papakura for later this year.

The Sunday Mass on *World Environment Day* in June 2001 was celebrated with a special emphasis on water. As the group began to focus on water they felt the need to explore further. In September they had a special tour of the Watercare Treatment plant for Auckland. Mean-while others in the group had been studying Maori the-ology. We found that respect for the natural world was

mirrored in Maori spirituality. So the seeds of the Water Pilgrimage were sown.

One of our party, Frank Hoffmann, travelled to Rotorua and made contact with Mita Mohi, and Toru Bidois of Ngati Rangiwewehi, tangata whenua of the Hamurana Springs area. Then, one Friday, various cars and vans travelled to Rotorua to stay at the lake's edge. As true pilgrims we shared our food and wine and enjoyed each others' company. Next morning we journeyed to the Okere Falls and watched in awe as the power of the Kaituna River roared through the chasms. We were in even more awe as we saw the intrepid white water rafters come hurtling through the foaming water.

We then gathered on the lawn near the entrance to Hamurana Springs, and were welcomed on to the area by Toru and his extended family. This simple, but moving ceremony made us feel 'at home'.

The springs are a wonderful sight to see: so calm and quiet, and yet so powerful. The water wells up from a cleft 30 metres deep at a rate of one million gallons per hour. We had a reflection prepared. We sang *God of our Island Home* by Chris Skinner SM and shared a prayer for Justice by Joy Cowley, among our own personal reflections and prayers.

Here is part of the concluding blessing, by Rangi Davis:

*Te Atua, he tapu tona nui
God our creator, How great is your sacredness.
He tangata he tapu tona nui
How deep is the sacredness of the human being
Papatuanuku he tapu tona nui
Mother Earth, how full is her sacredness
Ki nga maunga, nga awa, nga moana. Nga marae e hora
nei nga mihi nui
To the mountains, rivers and seas that surround and
cloak us in their natural palliative care, greetings, greetings,
greetings.*

It was a moment filled with grace. We had shared a wonderful pilgrimage – a time of companionship and prayer and tears and laughter; a time of partnership and a seeking of a new understanding with the tangata whenua; and we grew in understanding of what it means to live as God's people in Aotearoa New Zealand at the beginning of a new millennium.

The water molecules had a new story to tell. ■



Tui Motu explores different ways in which people have traditionally expressed their spirituality through music



The Charlie Parker Quintet: Charlie Parker with trumpeter, Miles Davies (1947)

The Religion in Jazz

"Jazz is my religion." This was blared forth on a T-shirt which I saw in a London shop some years ago. It struck me as a defiant proclamation of someone's love of music as a total way of life. As such, it would be misplaced, surely. For any form of work, hobby or cultural interest to be blown up into a 'religion' sounds like an all-consuming passion, an obsession, or even an addiction. Whereas 'real religion' must be concerned with more than an intense enthusiasm; it must be comprehensive and find its goal and purpose in the universal presence of God. Otherwise it becomes idolatry. Right?

Well, yes, I suppose. But on reflection I think there is much more to this. I have been listening to jazz for some 60 years and, like many others, have been captivated by its rhythms and melodies, by its exciting and varied voices and instruments, by its sounds ranging from the gut-wrenching to the joyously exultant. The same could no doubt be said of other forms of music and also of many other expressions of human

culture which many people enjoy either as a hobby and entertainment or as a vocation in work. How, then, should we view these? Simply as secular, 'worldly' interests for passing recreation (which can in itself be part of a healthy and balanced life)? Or have they some further religious potential? This is a question worth pursuing, and I wish to relate it to the more particular field of jazz, while keeping in mind the varieties of human cultural inventiveness.

*to 'music'
is simply to take part,
in any capacity*

Jazz as 'musicking'

Jazz is a 20th century form of music-making which emerged from the folk-music of blacks in southern USA. The heart of music of any sort is in the making; for music is not a thing, but something which you *do* and participate in; even a written score has to be sung or played to become real. This has been well brought out by Christopher Small, a musicologist originally from

New Zealand, in his books on music education and on popular and classical music.

As he defines it: "To *music* is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing." And the point of it all, as he goes on to say, is to establish relationships – between the composer and performer, and ourselves as listeners.

We find satisfaction and joy in this *musicking* because we celebrate our ideal relationships and learn to live well in the experiential world of relationships. There is a broadly religious quality in the patterns of musical story-telling, of struggle and overcoming; so ritual and musicking help us to say, "This is who we are."

All of this comes alive in the emergence of jazz from its roots in the black heritage. With little more than the memory of African rhythms, they could join in dancing and work-songs. ss

▷▷ In Gospel songs they found hope for a better life, for freedom from slavery and for salvation; they expressed it with vigour in the call-and-response between preacher and people which featured in many black congregations. But also they expressed the sorrow and bitterness of life in the earthy realism of the blues, which has a secular, this-worldly emphasis.

*jazz has become
the greatest influence
on popular music
over the world*

In the metropolis of New Orleans by the end of the 19th century there was a flowering of popular music, with some skilled educated black musicians and brass bands performing for parades, funerals and celebrations. Out of this rich mixture was born ragtime and the musical styles of jazz.

The 20th century has seen this lively heritage of black folk music spread not only to other parts of the USA, but to Europe and the continents of the world. Further, it has developed many forms beyond the original forms of song and dance, piano and small jazz bands. It soon took on orchestral arrangements, the organisation of large swing bands, then microphones and electronic effects which featured in rock music of the later 20th century. New styles such as 'be-bop' brought in some influences from modern Western composers and avant-garde experiments in 'free jazz'.

Recent decades have brought further mergers of jazz and classical music, and now, with 'world music' relating to traditional and folk styles from Europe, Asia and Africa. In these ways jazz has become the greatest influence on popular music over the world. Of course, this would not have happened without modern communications, beginning with travel and the recording industry, and continuing with the mass media spreading the music to all corners of the globe. (This is the

fifth of the 'big bangs' which Howard Goodall highlights effectively in his popular survey of Western music.) So the transformations that have occurred during a thousand years of Western music have been compressed into a mere century of the story of jazz.

Secular and Religious

The story seems to have become predominantly a secular one in these high-powered modern developments. Yet many jazz musicians have had their musical roots in churches and black Gospel music (for instance, Mahalia Jackson and Aretha Franklin). Some of the greatest figures in 20th century jazz have performed 'sacred concerts' for churches in America – Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck.

Mary Lou Williams (1910-81), who was honoured as 'first lady of jazz' for her work as jazz pianist, composer and musical educator, wrote two fine Masses, 'Black Christ of the Andes' and 'Music for Peace'. In the heart of New York, St Peter's Lutheran Church has a ministry to jazz musicians and a service of 'jazz vespers' which I was able to attend through the pastor John Gensel in the 1980s. (And it is worth mentioning some New Zealand ventures along these lines in recent years in Dunedin churches.)

Yet overall, jazz is seen as a form of popular entertainment for the crowds and of musical inspiration for the *aficionados* who buy records and listen for new voices in the styles of jazz. In a predominantly secular culture, jazz remains a mysterious and ambiguous quantity, typified in the tension between the heritage of the Spirituals and the Blues. Within this setting jazz must be understood and accepted as human musicking in its own right. At the same time, we can see something more than this as we look at two essential features of jazz playing.

Freedom to Improvise

A certain freedom of interpreting music has remained a key feature of jazz. (In Western classical music it was popular

in the live performances of Beethoven improvising at the piano.) No doubt the earliest jazz bands and singers stuck to their familiar repertoire, but as the competition between bands heightened in the melting-pot of New Orleans, there emerged musicians skilled in developing variations and new melodies from a ragtime tune. Out of this came the creative musical styles of Louis Armstrong, Sidney Becket and Jelly-Roll Morton of the 1920s onwards. They led on to big swing bands of the 1930s and 1940s featuring soloists within their planned arrangements.

Freedom was maintained more easily in the smaller jazz groups such as the 'chamber music' quartets of Benny Goodman, featuring brilliant improvisations. The happy 'Dixieland' style in Chicago would typically offer individual solos by the several instruments and conclude with an exciting collective improvisation in a 'jam session'.

A more searching and sophisticated solution was that of Duke Ellington, whose compositions allowed for and wove in the individual soloist's styles into the whole arrangement; while he was the pianist, he was also using the whole band as his instrument.

In the second half of the jazz century,

*interplay develops
like the call-and-response
of the preacher to a
congregation*

improvisation has taken on further inventive forms with the modern jazz styles of Charlie Tasker, Miles Davis and John Coltrane. In a pianist such as McCoy Tyner, his powerful outpouring of music makes him the Beethoven of modern jazz (he is also a Muslim in religion). These names are of black musicians, but the great tradition of solo and collective improvisation continues also in white jazz soloists and pianists such as Keith Jarrett with his remarkable



Famous husband- and-wife team Johnny Dankworth and Cleo Laine have toured New Zealand several times.

They are a splendid example of 'inspired togetherness' in their art

recent concerts.

Interplay, Response, Togetherness

The freedom of a jazz improviser is stimulated and enhanced by the participation of others. This becomes apparent to listeners at a concert when the musicians relate to one another in enthusiastic recognition of each other's playing. An interplay develops like the call-and-response of the preacher to a congregation, which spills over into the jazz audience likewise.

Examples of this abound in live jazz performances. I would recall the high points of concerts given by the British jazz partnership of Cleo Laine (singer) and her husband, John Dankworth (on alto sax) at concerts given in Dunedin in 1988 and 1999, the latter with the Dunedin Sinfonia orchestra in a packed Town Hall. At certain moments they would turn to respond to each other and create a special musical conversation. Cleo's flexible voice became a brilliant instrument. John's saxophone became a voice. Together they created new patterns of sound and a relationship of inspired togetherness.

Freedom and Love

I see these two basic features of jazz musicking as having something to teach us about appreciating jazz, but

also about ourselves and our other various cultural interests. Jazz at its best brings the excitement of freedom in creative improvisation and the warmth of relationship between the performers, who respond in mutual recognition and interplay. Of course, this does not always happen; we are in a far from ideal world, where jazz solos can become mere ego-tripping and response can become a well-worn cliché with little warmth of participation. But we do recognise the real thing when it happens. Why is this?

*its creative freedom
its and joyous interplay
reflects the freedom and
love of God*

In the recent (February) issue of *Tui Motu*, there is a lively report on the theology of Ruth Page: "Emmanuel – God with us." The emphasis here is first on the freedom which God has made possible in the universe; God respects our freedom, and lets the created world be. But God also companions the world and is constantly persuading us to respond to the Christ who incarnates God's freedom and love. This points the way to a Christian view of jazz

as one aspect of our human culture. We can respect its human reality and achievement for what it is. But we can also appreciate its lively expressions of creative freedom and of joyous interplay in the light of the freedom and love of God. For 'God with us' covers all the world, all life, all culture – and jazz. ■

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A contemporary statue of Hildegard which stands in the grounds of St Hildegard's Abbey, Eibingen, Germany. "It portrays well Hildegard's fragility and yet strength, her determination and yet her uncertainty."

The music of Hildegard

"Symbols of God exercise enormous power within the lives of human beings in that they are significant for the well-being of creation". So writes theologian Patricia Fox. For centuries these symbols have been male-centred, working in many ways to exclude women from imagining themselves to be fully a part of the Divine.

I work in the area of music. A religious woman once said to me: "If you want to install a theology, set it to music". Texts set to music have the power to evoke divine images in an embodied sense, engaging not only reason but also the emotions – and what might be called the soul or the spirit.

I began looking for foremothers who had shifted the emphasis from male-centred images to images which included all humanity and all creation. I found this shift in the works of Hildegard of Bingen. Although orthodox in her attitude to the male priesthood, she frequently images the Divine in

Making music – in the tradition of Hildegard

The music of Hildegard has become popular in recent times. Australian musician and scholar Lorna Collingridge speaks (to Kath Rushton) of her own part in this

powerful female figures. Many of these images are celebrated in the songs she wrote for her own community.

Hildegard's prime motive for writing – not just her songs but her play, the descriptions of her visions as well as the illuminations which abound in her works – was the spiritual education of the young women in her care. Kari Borreson writes that women like Hildegard sought to "establish a model of female human Godlikeness at the divine level". What better place to start, I thought, than by looking at our foremothers who spent their lives doing precisely this? As a composer of liturgical and spiritual music, I have found Hildegard's texts and melodies a rich mine of inspiration.

Firstly, it's her courage and persistence in describing the female Divine figures as she saw them in her visions. In 12th century Europe, Hildegard had to be careful describing female divine images, which could have been seen as threatening those in authority. Both her texts and melodies are beautiful as well as having theological depth. Her songs are challenging, but worth the effort to understand and perform. They are not easy to sing in general worship today because the Latin language and the extended modal chant are unfamiliar to many.

The songs were written for a community which sang Divine Office for up to nine hours each day. Those religious women were accomplished vocalists for whom singing was a spiritual exercise connecting them to the Divine. I

have learned from Hildegard that communities need words and melodies which are spiritually nourishing, inclusive, honouring all humanity, all creation and all creatures. And they need new melodies which worshippers can associate with fresh images of the Divine.

The neglect of Hildegard's music

Until very recently female composers have not been given a place in music history, and this is one reason why Hildegard's music was neglected. In four years of study at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music in the 1960s, I was never introduced to any music by a woman.

There are 77 songs by Hildegard which have come down to us in two major manuscripts, representing by far the largest body of 12th century music ascribed to any one named person. Yet she does not rate a mention in David Hiley's 1993 tome, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook*.

One reason given is that her chants are just devotional songs, not part of the 'official' liturgical chant. Yet there is evidence that her songs were used in chapel and chapter not only at Rupertsberg, where she lived, but in other neighbouring monasteries.

Nowadays I find the response to Hildegard's music is invariably positive. In spite of the language and genre being unfamiliar, people find the chants spiritually nourishing, alive and fresh. After hearing a few songs they will go away and buy a CD for themselves.

It helps for people to hear about Hildegard's world of the 12th century, and have the songs and music explained to them. Sometimes I can teach a group to sing one of the shorter antiphons. Singers often find something beautiful and sensual, as well as spiritual, in her melodies.

Personal history as music-maker

My own first love was music, and I have primarily taught music in secondary schools. I was brought up and confirmed an Anglican but would regard myself as ecumenical, having been closely associated with several other denominations. I first encountered feminism in a serious way in the early 1980s. This led me to combine music and theology with a feminist approach in my doctoral research into Hildegard's music and imaging the Divine.

My initial contribution to liturgical music was as performer, choir member, organist, conductor. Until very recently I had not thought of composing any liturgical or spiritual music myself. Then I was challenged by a situation where there was no suitable music available. I seem to need an imperative to push me into being creative! I composed music for women's worship, for inclusive worship, also services for marginalised groups.

For several years in Brisbane I wrote music for *Worship with a Difference*, a Uniting Church initiative for the disabled. I found this very rewarding. It was a challenge to write music which was both theologically sound, with musical integrity, and accessible to this special group of people.

Then, in 1996, the Uniting Church held a major women's conference in Brisbane – *Women Clothed with the Sun*. My friend and colleague, Adele Neal, and I were invited to be part of the liturgy team and were quickly faced with the problem of choosing liturgical songs for 500 women to sing. There were very few we felt were suitable, so we were inspired to write our own.

Our first attempt was *Woman Blessing*, a song which celebrates strong biblical women such as Deborah, Hagar, Ruth, and Miriam. Mary Zimmer had written the words, Adele adapted them, and I wrote the melody. This became the theme song for the journal writing sessions at the conference. The liturgy team liked it so much that we were encouraged to write more. Afterwards the group who had performed wanted to continue. And so, *Seeds of Wild Honey* was formed.

We sought funding from the Uniting Church to make a CD of the songs from the conference, as well as others which Adele and I continued to write. Some of the songs were commissioned by Elaine Wainwright, the feminist theologian, with whom most of the group had studied, and whose work informs

and inspires our efforts to produce music nourishing for women and for communities seeking to sing a new song.

This is very much in continuity with Hildegard's 'project', and we claim her as our foremother. One of the songs on the CD, *Shall we Look for Another?*, uses one of Hildegard's favourite modes at the beginning – a kind musical allusion to her own 'looking for another'. A contemporary, Odo of Soissons, called this 'bringing forth the melody of a new song'. ■

(Lorna Collingridge is a musician and composer who is studying the music and images of the Divine in the works of Hildegard of Bingen at the School of Theology, Griffith University, Brisbane. She was recently in Christchurch and this article arose out of talking to Kath Rushton RSM)

Seeds of Wild Honey

Featured here is the highly symbolic design on the CD cover for *Walking in the Wilderness*, which the group *Seeds of Wild Honey* has recorded.

The symbolism is explained below:-

- The waters are waters of birth, the original *tahom*, the deep watery abyss in *Genesis 1:2* over which the *ruach* (spirit) hovered. The *tahom* is not void but filled with potential life forms.
- The wilderness is like that where the woman in *Revelation 12:6* fled so she could rest and be nourished. This image is evoked in *Seeds* theme song *Come into the Wilderness*:
- The green shoots are the seeds now bursting into greenness and life,



showing all the world their strength and resolve, as we women do with the songs. Our resolve is to be seen and heard as we may not have been in

past times. The stars show that all is interconnected, and inter-dependent.

- The blood-red sun/moon reminds us of the blood shed by women, the sacred blood of menstruation and birth. The body and blood of women, once considered unclean, is now linked to that of Christ. Women's bodies are also broken and their living organ, the placenta, bleeds and dies

CD available from Wild Honey website <www.seedsofwildhoney.com>

Making music – choirs and people celebrating faith

*Philippa Chambers interviews Molly King, a musician serving the Anglican Church.
She asks: ‘does the traditional church choir still have a place?’*

Christians throughout the ages have found that using words with music – whether from scripture or theological concept – creates a helpful way of remembering and understanding.



Harry Brown, musical director of St. Mary's pro-Cathedral choir, New Plymouth

This is the judgment of Molly King, musician, teacher, spiritual director – and, incidentally, married to David, a New Plymouth Anglican priest. The Anglican Church has an historic tradition of choral music in liturgy drawing on the earliest forms of church music from the days before notation, when music was passed on from generation to generation by memory,” she says.

“European Christian Churches share the same early history. For at least 800 years the musical vehicle for worship was melody. Embellishment came gradually through what was known as the *organum* where certain items of the Mass had the Choir split into groups.

“This led to further development and movement from Gregorian Chant to polyphony. Guillaume de Machaut’s first setting of the Mass with its Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei and a final *Ite Missa Est* led to countless composers following this pattern.”

Possibly the most drastic effect on the English Church and its liturgical music came during Henry VIII’s reign with the breakaway from Rome and the dissolution of monasteries. However a number of centres of Christian culture were spared including cathedrals, some of which had schools attached – for example, the Chapel Royal at

Windsor, College foundations at Oxford and Cambridge, Winchester and Eton colleges.

“During Edward VI’s reign, Archbishop Cranmer’s reforms made the Book of Common Prayer compulsory in all places of worship in England, Wales and Ireland. And Queen Elizabeth I brought more development and change, moving towards the so-called Golden Age when Christopher Tye, Thomas Tallis and John Sheppard contributed their music to the now-established Church of England. From that time until the late 20th century Anglican liturgical music was based around the Prayer Book and followed established European patterns of music.

“The English Royal School of Church Music has spread its influence far and wide, and has played an important part in the functioning of Anglican Church Choirs and their selection of music”.

Molly believes that in today’s liturgy the choir still has an important role. “Music is the ‘shop window’ of any worship, and deserves much closer attention than is often given. Music, and often choral music, draws people into a church community. It is one of the best means I know of expressing the mystery beyond words of the God we worship. And for me it is these various elements of mystery that keep calling me back to worship.”

Molly and her husband David (recently retired vicar of St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral, New Plymouth) were drawn from different denominational backgrounds into the Anglican Church. For both, music was part of that magnet. In all the parishes they have worked, music, both choral and instrumental has been promoted as a deliberate enhancement of liturgy.

Molly suggests well presented music, traditional and non-traditional can be a great strength. And she contends the choir still has an important role in how this presentation is shaped within the liturgy.

“Hymns are important”, she says, “and here the choir can have a vital role supporting, leading and involving the congregation. Hymns help shape and contain theology and can often be what one takes away from a service – beyond the sermon even!”

“Traditional Jewish psalms have been chanted in various forms for the 2000 years of Christianity, but are not sung as frequently these days. They are an important ingredient in Anglican worship. Here the skills of the choir have been most important in their presentation.”

She agrees that ‘performance’ can get in the way of worship if it is not carefully orchestrated to be part of the overall worship experience. “Co-operation between musicians, clergy and everyone leading worship is vital. It isn’t easy if the priest is not musical because there must be sensitivity between the key players. Music is there to enhance liturgy”.

Many churches today don’t have and can’t afford choirs or organs or music groups. In general, parish music has become rather inadequate due to lack of resources and sometimes lack of knowledge. Molly believes it is worthwhile for those parishes to look at using new technology; to think whether they should call on people with more advanced skills to come in and help, or use some of the avenues that are continually being developed in the area of electronic gadgetry.

As regards modern choral music, Molly notes that in New Zealand, Anglican liturgical music has begun to evolve around the *New Zealand Prayer Book*. “New musicians are producing liturgical music that needs to be heard and presented. In some cases it took a long time for people to come to terms with what was known as the ‘new prayer book’ and similarly, it can take time for people to come to terms with new liturgical music.

“However, we risk missing out if we ignore responding to the talent available. There must always be an evolution of resources, a growth in our understanding and development of worship related to the society we live in. The framework of the worldwide Anglican liturgy and our own unique New Zealand response in our Prayer Book mean our worship and music can now express more about us and the contemporary world we live in.

“The style of hymns and songs written today reflect a difference – they often reflect social justice issues and can speak into our lives significantly. The important thing is to get the mix of traditional and modern right.”

One of the challenges the church faces is to adapt to the environment it works within. Local communities have become fragmented, and many people don’t relate to one another within their neighbourhoods the way they used to. Individuals claim the right to find their own paths rather than have things worked out for them. We have



moved from a traditional to post-traditional society, and we must recognise new ways and be prepared to use new music and forms of worship relevant to our contemporary communities.

“Choirs are not the only way to provide significant music and sometimes they are not the most appropriate, but I think they still have a very significant place. The important thing to remember is that music should be an enhancement to worship whether from a choir, music group, organ, piano

Our thanks to the choir of St Mary’s New Plymouth for the photographs taken specially to illustrate this article

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Vince Beuzer SJ is Director of the Holy Spirit Centre, Anchorage, Alaska. For 5 years he was chairperson of the Religious Studies dept of Gonzaga University, where he also taught. He has degrees in philosophy and theology, and studied at doctorate level at the Gregorian University, Rome.

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The art of preaching

*Jesus always had an 'angle' when he spoke to the multitudes.
And so should the preacher, suggests Neville Emsley*

A sermon has a life cycle of its own. It is birthed in work, grows in communion, is engaged to imagination, marries joy and produces life.

The birth process is the labour of exegesis. It has to be endured and it is generally a struggle. If I am preaching a series through a biblical book, I read the book in one sitting, observing recurrent themes, words and thoughts. The particular passage I am preaching I read out loud a couple of times, noticing rhythm, repetition and rhetorical devices. On one page I write out my responses and ideas that come from my reading. I observe what comes before and what follows, and do the exegetical work on unfamiliar words, phrases and historical features.

At this point I may need to commune with commentators and other interpreters, although I generally try to keep away from other preachers' sermons as they may overly 'railroad' me.

I want to identify two things, firstly the standard reading, secondly an 'angle'. The standard reading is the straightforward and commonly understood reading of the text, that which is generally said about this passage and what most church-goers have heard said about this before. In my view most preaching is simply reminding the saints what they have previously heard, dressed up with different props. But that is not what the Lord Jesus did. He always had an 'angle', a new perspective that gave a deeper meaning and consequently demanded a more meaningful response. Jesus said, "You have heard it said.., but I say to you.." New light on old texts demands a new response from old hearts.

How do find a new angle to preach?



My answer is by use of the imagination. So I say to myself, and then to my congregation when I am preaching, *imagine you are part of the scene*. Perhaps the text is about Jesus speaking to a person or a crowd. What would I be hearing if I were an onlooker, one of the crowd, Peter's mother, the blind man's father, the haemorrhaging woman's husband?

Too often we place ourselves too centrally in the story. We take Jesus' position when castigating the Pharisees, or we are Peter telling Jesus he is the Messiah, or King David calling up Bathsheba. However, this makes us the hero or villain, and almost always we are never that in life. We are the ordinary onlookers, supporting actors who get caught up in the vortex or get scattered in the fallout from the energies of the real heroes and villains.

I love art, so I will consult books that have biblical or contemporary scenes that pertain to the text from which I am preaching. Artists, whether they are painters, sculptors, dramatists, poets or novelists, are imaginers supreme, and they offer insights into the human condition through precisely this technique of looking at the ordinary from another angle. Preachers can engage with such and learn from them how to look at ordinariness from another angle. I scan pictures of paintings and sculptures, and on the overhead or data projector show how

the artist interprets the biblical story. What insight into the human condition does the artist convey? Where does the artist place the onlooker in relation to the text?

Two examples. In Raphael's *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, as the disciples are pulling the full nets into the boat their reflections are seen in the nets. The artist is thus indicating that disciples themselves must first be 'caught' by the gospel message before other fish can be drawn into the boat. Rembrandt's famous *The Return of the Prodigal Son* focuses on the father's embracing hands and the boy's worn feet. The road back is tough, but the embrace is full.

The critical phase here is how the text and the angle now engage the preacher. This is the marriage to joy. If my heart has not been moved, then it's likely my hearers will have the same experience: lifelessness. The angle must awaken or move something within me, preferably my will, and then I have the capacity, even the authority, to preach.

This 'angle' I push around in my sermon. I interrogate it and weigh its strengths and weaknesses. I deliberately exaggerate the point, sometimes for humour, sometimes to simply show the need for balance. But, to this one angle I keep.

A wise homiletician once said that a sermon is a truck, rather than a bus: it carries one heavy load rather than a lot of passengers. Particularly in our post-modern setting which celebrates story more than teaching, the three point sermon needs to be retired in favour of

Neville Emsley is Principal of the Knox College School of Ministry, in Dunedin

Mission. . . to a runaway world

Dominican scholar Timothy Radcliffe asks how the Christian message can be got across to a 'runaway world'. This talk is printed in full in his recent book I Call You Friends, reviewed page 29



What is really distinctive about our world is that we do not know where the world is going. We do not have a shared sense of the direction of our history. Tony Blair's guru, Anthony Giddens, calls it 'the runaway world'. It is for this runaway world that we must discover a vision and a spirituality of mission.

Are we going towards universal wealth, or is the economic system about to collapse? Will the global community expand to include everyone, including the forgotten continent of Africa, or will the global village shrink and leave most people outside? Is it global village or global pillage? We do not know.

We do not know because, according to Giddens, we have invented a new sort of risk. Human beings have always had to cope with risk. You never knew when a meteorite might hit the planet, or a flea-ridden rat might not arrive with the bubonic plague. But these were largely external risks, out of our control.

Now we are principally at risk from what we ourselves have done, what he calls 'manufactured risk': global warming, overpopulation, pollution, unstable markets, the unforeseen consequences of genetic engineering. We do not know the effects of what we are now doing. We live in a runaway world. We Christians do not know, any more than anyone else, whether we are on the way to war or peace, prosperity or poverty.

In this runaway world what Christians offer is not knowledge but **wisdom**, the wisdom of humanity's ultimate destination, the Kingdom of God. We may have no idea of how the Kingdom will come, but we believe in its triumph. The globalised world is rich in knowledge – but there is little wisdom. There is little sense of humanity's ultimate destiny. A missionary to this world may be the bearer of this wisdom in three ways: through presence, epiphany and through proclamation.

Presence

A missionary is sent. That is the meaning of the word. But to whom are missionaries sent in our runaway world? When I was a schoolboy, missionaries came to visit us from faraway places. We saved up our money so that children would be baptised with our names. There should be hundreds of middle-aged Timothys around the world! Missionaries were sent from the West to other places. But from where are they sent these days? In our globalised village there is no centre.

I suggest that in this new world missionaries are sent to those who are *other than us*, distant from us because of their culture, faith or history. They are not necessarily physically distant. Our global world is traversed by splits and fractures born of human sins and making us foreign to each other, even enemies. The missionary is sent to be in these places.

These lines of fracture traverse every country and every city: New York and Rome, Nairobi and Sao Paolo, Delhi and Tokyo. They divide those who have clean water and those who do not, those who have access to the Internet and those who do not, the literate and the illiterate; the left and the right, those of different faiths and none, black and white. The missionary is to be the bearer of God's wisdom and purpose to these (cf. *Ephesians 1:10*).

But we must take a further step. Being a missionary is not what I do; it is *who I am*. Being present to the other – living on the lines of fracture – implies a transformation of who I am. In being with and for that other person I discover a new identity. I think of an old Spanish missionary who had worked in China for many years. He was old and sick and his family wished him to return to Spain. But he said, 'I cannot go back. I'm Chinese. I would be a stranger in Spain.'

We are future citizens of the world, the future citizens of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is my country. I discover who I am to be by being close to those who are farthest away. We are pushed beyond every small and sectarian identity to that which we can barely glimpse now.

Mission also implies fidelity: the fidelity of a Spanish missionary whom I met in the Peruvian Amazon, who just goes on being there year after year, visiting his

▷▷ people, making his way around the little settlements, faithfully remaining, even if not much appears to happen. It is the stamina to go on being there, sometimes unappreciated.

The heroism of the missionary is in daring to discover who I am, with and for these others, even if they do not wish to discover who they are with and for me. We have to unpack our bags and throw them away. Presence is not merely 'being there'. It is staying there.

Epiphany

Mission begins anonymously. The worker-priest is simply there in the factory. But faith yearns to take visible form, to be seen. Mission pushes beyond presence to Epiphany, the disclosure of the glory of God among us.

In our world we are bombarded with faces. We have ever-new icons on our walls: Madonna, Tiger Woods, the Spice Girls. To be someone is to achieve 'icon status'! Everywhere there are faces: footballers, the rich, people who are famous just for being famous. They smile at us from billboards and television screens. But we believe that all humanity hungers to see another face, the face of God. How can we manifest that face?

*God's irresistible
beauty shines through
utter poverty*

It would not be enough just to add Christ's face to the crowd, to make a cartoon of the Gospels. I remember our giggles as children when we drove past the sign outside a local church which asked whether we watched with the wise virgins or slept with the foolish ones! We need to present images *different* from the faces we see in our streets. Beauty is disclosed not in the faces of the rich and the famous, but the poor and the powerless.

The images of the global village advertise the beauty of power and wealth. It is

the beauty of the young and the fit who have everything. Whereas the Gospels locate beauty elsewhere. The disclosure of the glory of God is the cross, a dying and deserted man. God's irresistible beauty shines through utter poverty.

This may seem crazy until one thinks of St Francis. I made a pilgrimage to Assisi recently. The Basilica was filled with crowds drawn by the beauty of his life. The frescoes of Giotto are lovely, but the deeper loveliness is that of *il poverello*. His life is hollowed by a void, a poverty which can only be filled by God. We see God's beauty in Francis because his life would make no sense if God did not exist. In 1223 he wrote: "I would like to represent the birth of the Child just as it took place at Bethlehem, so that people should see with their own eyes the hardships He suffered as an infant, how He was laid on hay in a manger with the ox and the ass standing by."

In the world of the 13th-century, with its new frescoes, new exotic consumer goods, its new urban civilisation, its mini-globalisation, Francis revealed the beauty of God with a new image of poverty.

Our challenge in the global village is likewise to show the beauty of the poor and powerless God. It is especially hard because often our mission is in the places of most terrible poverty: in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia where poverty is evidently ugly. Missionaries build schools, universities and hospitals. We are seen as rich. But in many countries the health and educational system would collapse if it were not for the Church. How can we offer these irreplaceable services and still lead lives which are mysteries and which make no sense without God?

A second way we can manifest God's beauty is through acts of *transformation*. We have no idea what sort of future we are creating for ourselves. We hardly dare to even contemplate the future and so it is easier to live just for now. This is the culture of instant gratification.

When I fly into London I often see the Millennium Wheel. All it does is to go round and round. It goes nowhere. It offers us the chance to be spectators, observing the world without commitment. It enables us to momentarily escape the hectic city. It is a good symbol in this runaway world: we are content to be entertained and escape for a while. Mind you, I am still waiting for one of my nieces to take me on the Millennium Wheel!

*Christianity
does not offer escapism,
but transformation*

Christianity finds its centre also in an utterly different sort of happening. It offers the cross. It does not offer escapism, but transformation. The challenge for our mission is how to make God visible through gestures of freedom, liberation, transformation – little 'happenings' that are signs of the end. Strangely enough, I have found it easier to think of rather obvious secular images than religious ones: the small figure in front of the tank in Tienanmen Square or the fall of the Berlin Wall.

What might be explicitly religious images? Perhaps a community of Dominican nuns in Northern Burundi, Tutsis and Hutus living and praying together in peace in a land of death. The little monastery, surrounded by the greenery of cultivated fields in a countryside that is burnt and barren, is a sign of God, who does not let death have the last word.

Another example might be an ecumenical community in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Catholics and Protestants live together and when anyone is killed in the sectarian battles, then a Catholic and a Protestant go from the community to visit the relatives and to pray with them. This community is an embodiment of our wisdom, a sign that we are not fated to violence, a little epiphany of the Kingdom. We do not know whether peace is around the corner, but here is a word made flesh,

which speaks of God's ultimate purpose.

Proclamation

We must make one last step, which is to proclamation. At the end of Matthew's Gospel, the disciples are sent out to all the nations to make disciples and to teach all that Jesus has com-manded. The Word becomes flesh, but the flesh also becomes Word.

Here we encounter what is perhaps the deepest crisis in our mission today. There is a profound suspicion of anyone who claims to teach – unless they have some strange New Age doctrine. Missionaries who teach are suspected of indoctrination, of cultural imperialism, of arrogance. To teach that Jesus is God is seen as indoctrination, whereas to teach that God is a sacred mushroom is part of the rich tapestry of human tradition!

In *Christianity Rediscovered*, Vincent Donovan describes how he worked for many years as a missionary with the Masai, building schools and hospitals but never proclaiming his faith. Finally, he could restrain himself no longer; so he gathered together the people and told them about his belief in Jesus. The elders said, "We always wondered why you were here, and now at last we know. Why did you not tell us before?"

This is why we are sent, to bring our faith to word, to proclaim the truth. We do not always have the freedom to speak and must choose the moment well, but, ultimately, it would be patronising and condescending not to proclaim what we believe to be true.

The missionary must seek that right integration between confidence and humility. This is a source of an immense tension within the Church, between the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and some Asian theologians, and indeed within many religious orders. It can be a fruitful tension at the heart of our proclamation of the mystery.

It may appear strange to talk of a spirituality of truthfulness. Obviously, we must say only what is true. But we will only know when to speak and when to be silent – that balance of confidence

and humility – if we have been trained in the acute discipline of truthfulness. This is a slow and painful asceticism, becoming attentive to one's use of words, in one's attention to what others say, aware of all the ways in which we use words to dominate, to subvert, to manipulate rather than to reveal and disclose: how we talk about our friends and our enemies, people when they have left the room, the Vatican, ourselves.

*stretched out,
pressing forward like an
athlete going for gold..*

It is only if we learn this truth in the heart that we will be able to tell the difference between a good confidence in the proclamation of the truth and the arrogance of those who claim to know more than they can; between humility in the face of the mystery and a wishy-washy relativism which does not dare to speak at all.

Finally, we will only be confident and humble preachers if we become contemplative. It is only if we learn to rest in God's silence that we can discover the right words; words that are neither arrogant nor vacuous; words that are both truthful and humble.

Future Citizens of the Kingdom

Does this add up to a coherent 'spirituality of mission'? Our runaway world is out of control. We do not know where it is going, whether to happiness or misery, to prosperity or poverty. We Christians believe that ultimately the Kingdom will come. That is our wisdom and it is a wisdom that missionaries embody.

St Paul writes to the Philippians that *forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil 3:13f). This is a wonderfully dynamic image. St Paul is stretched out, pressing forward like an Olympic athlete in Sydney going for gold! To be a future citizen of the Kingdom is to live by this dynamism.

We stretch out to the other, to those most distant, incomplete until we are one with them in the Kingdom. We reach out for a fullness of truth, which now we only glimpse dimly; all that we proclaim is haunted by silence. We are hollowed out by a longing for God, whose beauty may be glimpsed in our poverty. To be a future citizen of the Kingdom is to be dynamically, radiantly, joyfully incomplete.

Eckhart wrote: "just as much as you go out of all things, just so much, neither more nor less, does God come and enter in with all that is His – if indeed you go right out of all that is yours". The beauty of Eckhart is that the less one knows what he is talking about, the more wonderful it sounds! Perhaps he is inviting us to that radical exodus from ourselves, that makes a hollow for God to enter. We stretch out to God in our neighbour – God who is most other, so as to discover God in the centre of our being – God as most inward. For God is utterly other and utterly inward, which is why, in order to love God, we must both love our neighbour and ourselves.

This love is very risky. Giddens says that in this dangerous world the only solution is to take risks. Risk is characteristic of a society that looks to the future. He says: "a positive embrace of risk is the very source of that energy which creates wealth in a modern economy... Risk is the mobilising dynamic of a society bent on change, that wants to determine its own future rather than leaving it to religion, tradition, or the vagaries of nature".

He clearly sees religion as a refuge from risk, but our mission invites us to a risk beyond his imagining. This is the risk of love. It is the risk of living for the other who might not want me; the risk of living for a fullness of truth that I cannot capture; the risk of letting myself be hollowed out by yearning for the God whose Kingdom will come. This is most risky and yet most sure. ■

Timothy Radcliffe OP has just completed nine years as Master-General of the worldwide Dominican family. (See p 28)

Easter Beatitudes

Joy Cowley

*How happy are the poor in Spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

There was a man of wealth who was poor in spirit. He didn't know when the hunger began, nor did he call it poverty. It was simply a great inner restlessness, a desire for something he could not define. Possessions did not fill him; power was an empty promise; frantic activity increased his need. He could not bear the suffering of aloneness and at times he thought life was not worth living.

Then, on the third day, or perhaps it was the third year, or the 30th year, for the tomb experience has no limits, this man realised that his deficiency was spiritual. In all his gathering, he had neglected his greatest need, the growth of his own soul towards God. He was amazed at the simplicity of his discovery. Why had he not seen this before? The instant he recognised his spiritual poverty the stone at the tomb rolled away and the man walked into the light, carrying in his heart the kingdom of heaven.

*Happy are the gentle.
They shall have the earth for their heritage.*

She wasn't always gentle. Early in life, this woman needed to fight for survival and she became aggressively competitive to protect herself. It was important, she said, to beat before you were beaten. And yes, she was successful. She rose to the top in her job and defended her position by attacking those around her.

Then came a series of crucifixions in her work and her personal life. The people close to her fulfilled her worst suspicions. There were betrayals and hurt. Once more the woman seemed to be fighting for survival but this time the aggression turned inwards and she entered the tomb of clinical depression. The darkness was long. In it, she was stripped of everything that had been important to her, and reduced to the simplicity of emptiness.

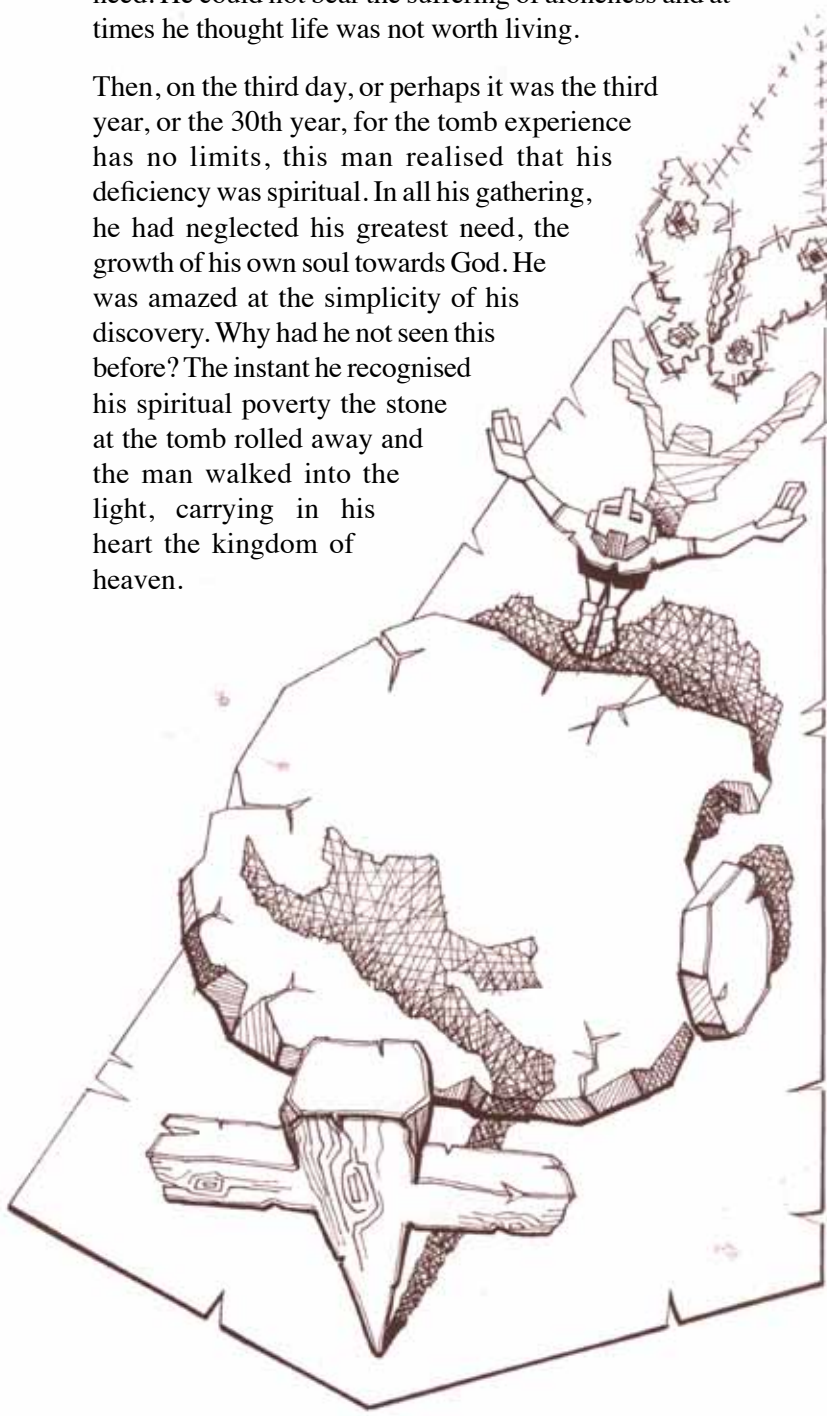
When she emerged into the light on the third day, she saw that the world too, was very simple. It had been made by love, for love, and because she had room for it, the love filled her to overflowing. The overflowing was manifest as gentleness and in it, she discovered her true strength.

*Happy those who mourn;
they shall be comforted.*

Their crucifixions had been many: a war-torn country; relatives killed; two children dead; hunger; fear; a new country with a language and customs they didn't understand. But this man and woman had faces alive with light as they welcomed guests and shared their meal with them.

The guests knew the couple's story and were amazed to the point of discomfort. With such loss, how could these people be so happy? With so little in their world, how could they give? It didn't make sense.

The guests didn't realise that the refugees' crucifixions had already brought resurrection. They had not become stuck with bitterness or self-pity but had trusted life to take them through to the third day. Now their pain had turned to wisdom; their loss had become compassion. Their freedom was not social or political but the greater freedom of the risen Christ.



*Happy are those who hunger and thirst for what is right:
they shall be satisfied.*

In her hunger and thirst she prayed to understand the meaning of Easter. She knew the teachings but her heart needed more, an explanation that was as big as the God she knew. Easter was hugely important to her. She had experienced 48 seasons of Lent, the early ones with her parents, alone as a student, with the man she loved, her children, 48 years and each experience was deeper than the one before. Now she cried on Good Friday. She couldn't help it. She was never sure where the grief came from. The world was full of it. It descended on her as real pain in her chest and arms and carried her into a deep sense of loss.

But when she woke on Easter morning, she felt radiant with light. That became the pattern. She didn't know why. She didn't know if this was answered prayer. But she did come to understand that the Easter journey was the reason for existence, not only hers but the entire world's. There could be no growth without resurrection, no resurrection without crucifixion, no crucifixion without discomfort. She didn't understand the mystery of this growth, but resting with that mystery brought satisfaction to her heart.

*Happy are the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown to them.*

The man had a difficult choice. His neighbour had stolen from him and was clearly in the wrong. No court would excuse such theft. Yet the neighbour had a young family and was in a financial mess. The man thought long and hard about justice and as he meditated, justice seemed to be less about his neighbour and more about his own heart. Initially, all he had considered was his own hurt and anger. Then he was able to reflect on possessions, stewardship, his own needs – especially his need to look at himself in the mirror every morning.

After days in the tomb of deep thought, he understood that whatever he did to his neighbour, he would do himself. On the third day he went next door and rolled away his neighbour's stone with the simple words, "It's okay". At that moment the man's stone also rolled away and he walked into the light of Christ, knowing that any debt he had incurred in life, was also forgiven.

*Happy are the pure of heart:
they shall see God.*

When she was young, her mother had talked about boys and babies and purity of heart so that for many years, she had left the sixth beatitude in the sex education file along with other well-intended advice. Only when the fullness of life drew her into mystery, only when her heart awakened to the presence of God in everything, only then did she know the meaning of purity of heart. Purity of intent – that's what it was about. Not physical abstinence but spiritual fulfilment, the heart leaning with singular devotion towards its true source.

It was a third day discovery that changed her life. When she planted spinach, she saw God. When she stirred the plum jam, she saw God. She saw God in her husband and family, God in her neighbours, God in the world's pain. Eventually, she saw God in everything, and she realised with great celebration, there was nothing that was not God.

Making peace was part of his vocation. He was sympathetic to the struggles of his parishioners, although there were times when he wanted to bang heads together, and he had a reputation for being a good mediator. A bit of common sense, a bit of the old blarney, a bit of genuine respect, it had always worked, thank God. Not with himself, though. He'd frozen burning memories so that they'd become an ice cube in a remote corner of his life, but now the ice had surfaced. He was aware of its coldness and hardness. His brother. A man he hadn't seen in 23 years. The back-stabbing Cain wanted to visit him, and he didn't know how to say no.

The peacemaker in him panicked. It tried to find middle ground. Forgive but don't forget, it said, but that didn't help. Prayer didn't help. In the end he had to go, sick in the stomach, dry of mouth, to meet the train. But the grey-headed man who stumbled across the platform was not Cain. He had a smiling mouth, nervous eyes and was as familiar as boiled eggs and toast. When he put down his bag and stretched out his arms, the third day just happened. No mediation, no act of forgiveness, not even a melting of the ice cube. It was instant resurrection and they stood there hugging each other, children of God. ■

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Easter Miracle

Mel Ironside

I became a smoker the day of my older sister's wedding 44 years ago. Nobody except the tobacco companies – and they weren't telling – knew smoking was harmful in those days. Doctors even recommended it to asthmatics because it relaxed their bronchial tubes.

For the next 12 years I puffed away happily. It was sophisticated, inexpensive, and everyone did it. I smoked at work, I smoked at home, in social situations, in a closed car with my children present, practically everywhere. No one questioned it. When I look back, my lack of consideration for non-smokers appals me. The only places I didn't smoke were in the movies and in church, and a few people I knew 'nicked out for a quick drag' from there as well!

In the maternity ward, after the birth of my third baby, a sister congratulated me on being so relaxed, and wished the new mums could emulate me. At the time I was sitting on a chair, feet up on the bed, baby at the breast, and smoking a cigarette. Hard to believe now.

It was about that time that the first warnings began to appear in the media of the harm nicotine does to the body. Prices had increased steadily and I already resented the money smoking took out of the budget, so when I realised the health problems associated with it, I really began to hate cigarettes. I cursed each one as it appeared between my fingers without any conscious planning from me.

Over the next two years I tried many times to quit. Cutting down, substituting, visualising the effects – nothing worked. I just got cranky and made everyone else miserable. I told myself if the doctor told me I'd die if I didn't stop, then I'd be able to. As it happened, I was given an even stronger incentive.

My fourth baby was prone to bronchitis, and we often spent hours in a steam-filled bathroom with him, trying to ease his breathing.

At the 5 a.m. feeding I would sit at the dining room table with only the kitchen light on to reduce the glare. In that setting I could actually see the smoke going up my son's nostrils as he suckled. I hated smoking, I cursed the day I'd started, and most of all I loathed myself for being too weak to stop.

Then, one Sunday, our priest read out a letter from the Bishop about self-sacrifice in preparation for Easter. I suddenly realised that not only had I 'missed' Ash Wednesday, but for the first time in six years I had no excuse for not fulfilling the Lenten obligation. I had been either expecting or breastfeeding each Lent before that. As I listened, I applied everything Father said to smoking, and decided, rather wearily, that I'd give quitting another go.

As Mass progressed I prayed again for God to help me. "Who do you think you're kidding?" a voice inside me sneered. "Help you? What can you contribute to the effort? Nothing,

that's what. You're useless!" My throat tightened, tears forced their presence, and with a kind of lurch inside me I admitted that if it was ever going to happen, God would have to do it without me.

At the end of Mass, I looked up at the tabernacle and said, "Dear Jesus, if you want me to stop smoking, you do it to me. I'll do my best to keep out of your way, but you do it to me."

As I rose and turned towards the back of the church, I thought, oh well, even if it's only for an hour, it'll be a big sacrifice for me. I went out to the van and started the engine. There was a cigarette in the glovebox, but I didn't light up. Three days later, I asked my family, "Has anyone noticed anything different about me?" After a few desperate guesses, they had to admit they hadn't.

That was 30 years ago this Easter, and I haven't had a cigarette since, although I still have vivid dreams that I've gone back to it. All the old enjoyment is there, followed by self-hatred for my stupidity. And each time I wake, I know again the faithfulness of my God. ■



Emmaus Café

Glynn Cardy

He used to sit at one of the tables outside, where café and street collided. He would preside over his short, black brew, and talk to whoever passed by. Meeting took precedence over working, and just about everything else.

Many years later I returned to that same middle-Eastern city. A city with over 500,000 inhabitants. Without a last name, an address, or a phone number, I found him. I just had to visit the right café.

There is something about a café at the intersection of people's lives. On the one hand there is the fast, noisy, busyness of the street. On the other, the slow pace of patrons sipping and pondering. The café is an oasis in the desert of demand.

One of the lies about prayer is that it is just a bow-the-head, recite-the-words, think-of-God sort of exercise. Limiting prayer to silent churches, mountains, beaches or bedrooms only satisfies the introvert in us. For is not God to be engaged in the everyday, in the bustle, in the friction, in the conversation and the coffee, at the intersection of lives?

Jesus likened God to the wind. The wind blows in the street, in the café, in the lives of ordinary people. Sometimes it is cool and refreshing. Sometimes it is hot and sticky. Religious people don't control the wind; it just comes or it doesn't.

There is a longtime favourite Easter story about a café. The story is about ordinary people. It is also about strangers we observe. The climax is in a café. It is about how we understand, recognise and connect with God.

The story goes that two people were walking along the road to a town called Emmaus. Although they were followers of Jesus before he was killed, we are only told one of their names and nothing of their history. Two ordinary people - certainly not part of the 'Big Twelve' apostles.

Then a stranger came alongside and they talked, and walked. They shared the big city goss. What had been going down. They shared their grief, over the death of their friend Jesus, over the death of the hopes they had pinned on him. They discussed Jesus' death referring to the Hebrew Bible.

Finally they got to the café - a place to sit, to sip, and to ponder. Bread and probably fish were shared. Some way into the meal the penny dropped. "Hey! This geezer is Jesus!" Then, as with any apparition, avoiding the paparazzi he disappeared. Poof!

That's the end of the story. God-in-Christ had been among them. Yet it's not the end of the story. For this is one of those

stories that lives on in the telling and re-telling, challenging how we live.

Four little lessons:

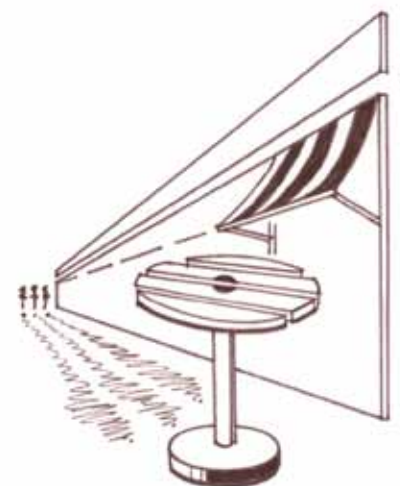
- Firstly, you don't have to be one of the leaders, like the 'Big Twelve', theologically trained and so on, to experience the God-in-Christ walking beside you.
- Secondly, we too never know when God might visit us. We have no protection from God. No alarm systems to alert us. To make us safe. God just comes.
- Thirdly, God, God-in-Christ, God-like-the wind... whatever clues we have about divinity, might not count for much. God doesn't wear a name tag. Or a suit. Or some oversized crucifix around his/her neck. God may well be a stranger. And, depending on our receptivity, may remain a stranger.
- Lastly, talk is one thing, stopping is something. In the korero their hearts burned within them, although they couldn't put words to this feeling until later.

But it was in the café that their 'eyes' were opened. The light bulb came on in the brain. Why?

Some would say it was the pattern: *He took... blessed... broke... and gave...* They connected their feelings with their memories of the Last Supper and recognition dawned.

My guess is that it was a bit like how, in sitting and eating, in the sharing of food, there can be a glimpse of soul revealed. The oasis in the desert of demand invites us to pause, to listen, to trust, and to recognise who we really are. In that communion with each other the fine brew of contentment, resolution, and strength to go on, is given and drunk. The mystery of God is present.

Prayer is connecting with God. But unlike the Internet there is no password to type in and suddenly you're there. Godding often sneaks up on you. Sometimes it is like a pebble in your shoe. Sometimes it is like extracting a pebble from your shoe. It's often a surprise. And it can happen in all sorts of places, even cafés. ■





Harijan woman (an Untouchable) preparing food for the family's evening meal

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The ever-expanding universe

Does anyone else live out there? Richard Dowden continues his review of the physical world as science reveals it and the theological questions posed.

The Universe is big! As far as we can see, it extends out some 15 billion light years.

The start of the measuring process began in about 300 BC by Eratosthenes of Alexandria, still a thriving city in Egypt. Eratosthenes measured the angle of the Sun from the zenith (directly overhead) from the length of the shadow cast by a vertical tower of measured height. This trick of measuring such angles had been invented by Thales of Miletos, the founder of Greek philo-sophy, about 300 years earlier.

Eratosthenes measured this angle at noon on the longest day (the summer solstice) because he knew there was a famous well at Syene, about 700 km south, where the Sun is exactly overhead at noon at the summer solstice, so if one looks down the well to the water, one sees the reflection of the Sun obscured by one's head. Clearly Eratosthenes knew the Earth was a sphere, but he also assumed that the Sun was at a very great distance compared to the diameter of the Earth, so that the angle he measured at Alexandria was that subtended at the Earth's centre by the arc from Alexandria to the well at Syene, near modern Aswan. (See *parchment right, specially drawn for Tui Motu by Eratosthenes*).

Then Eratosthenes measured the distance along this arc from Alexandria to Syene, from the time taken for a camel train (which apparently travels at a constant speed) to do this trip. It was then a simple proportion calculation to get the circumference of the Earth which he gave as 250,000 stadia. If this unit (stadium) was taken from the famous Olympic Stadium, which can be measured in metres today, then Eratosthenes' estimate was within 20 percent of what we know now – which

is not at all bad.

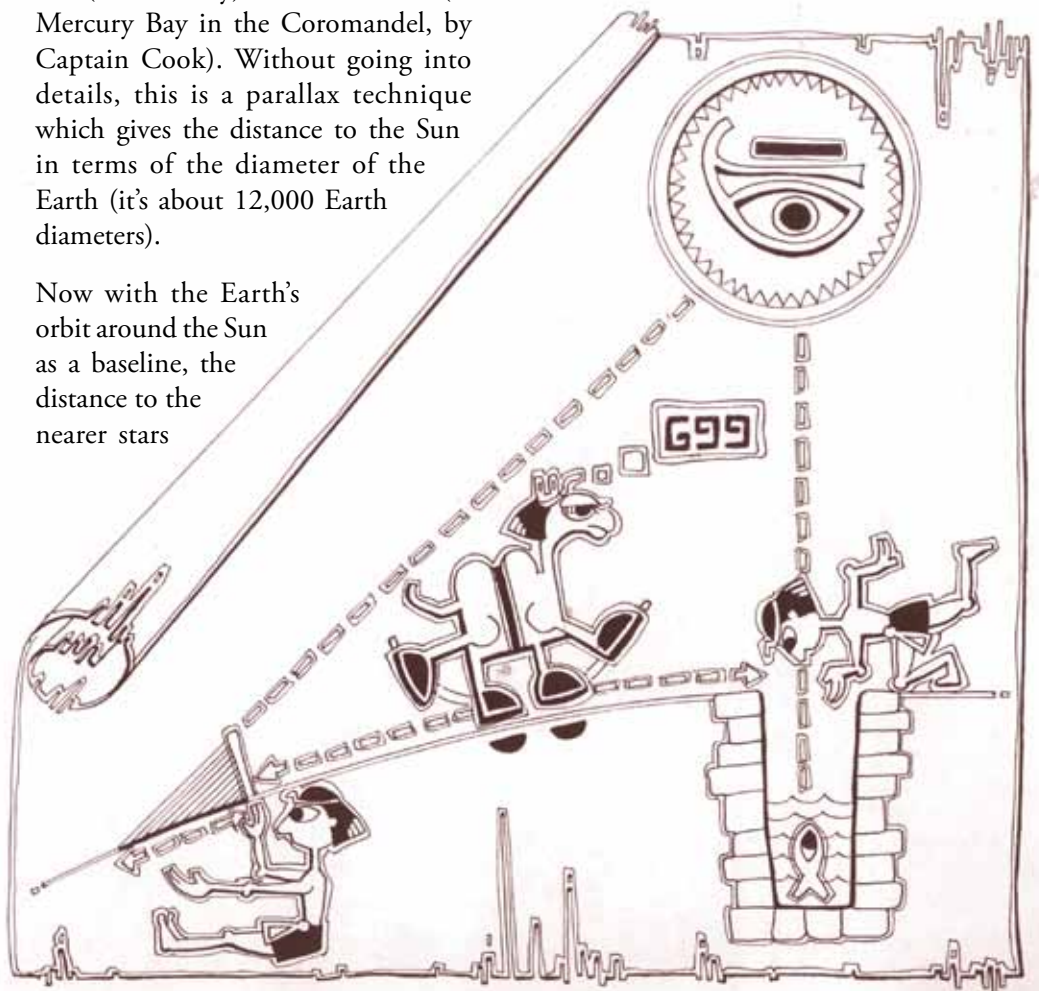
Over 1800 years later, Columbus used a later estimate which was far too small, so when he thought to take a short cut to India across the Atlantic Ocean, he ran into America thinking that it was India (and that the natives were Indians – an erroneous name which stuck). Perhaps Columbus did not know about the steady, reliable speed of the camel!

Having obtained the diameter of the Earth (from the circumference), the next step was to use this as a baseline to find the distance to the Sun and so the radius and hence diameter of the Earth's orbit around the Sun. This was done by observing the transit of the planets Venus and Mercury across the face of the Sun simultaneously in England and (for Mercury) in New Zealand (at Mercury Bay in the Coromandel, by Captain Cook). Without going into details, this is a parallax technique which gives the distance to the Sun in terms of the diameter of the Earth (it's about 12,000 Earth diameters).

Now with the Earth's orbit around the Sun as a baseline, the distance to the nearer stars

was worked out by parallax. The first star was so measured by Bessel in 1838. The closest star (the one with the largest parallax) is Alpha Centauri, one of the 'pointers' to the Southern Cross so prominent in our southern sky, which is about 4.3 light years distant. By about 1980, the distances to several thousand stars had been found, ranging up to about 75 light years. Now, with the Hubble telescope in space, we are extending this distance measuring by parallax out to some 1000 light years.

Some of these stars at known distances have a property depending on their absolute brightness, and similar but more distant stars with the same property must therefore have the same absolute brightness. This means we can



▷▷ estimate the distance to these stars by measuring their apparent brightness. In the process it was found that the distant stars are speeding away from us at speeds – measured as our traffic police do when they nab us for speeding, by Doppler shift – proportional to their distance from us. Having established this ‘red shift’ law by experiment, we can use it on the really distant objects (galaxies) so as to measure their distance.

The light by which we might see a galaxy 15 billion light years distant, must have begun its travel to us 15 billion years ago. But that, we think, is the age of the Universe! We can’t see any further than 15 billion light years. For all we know, it might be bigger, even infinite. So, as I said in the beginning, as far as we can see (literally!), it extends out some 15 billion light years.

In Part 2 of this article we will consider the likelihood of meeting up with intelligent beings from another planet, and some of the theological implications of such a meeting. In the meantime, here are a few thoughts to be going on with.

We live in a spiral galaxy, which we call “the Galaxy”, just as we call our star “the Sun”. It is a galaxy, something like the one (M31), shown on this page. We are not anywhere special in the Galaxy – we are just in one of the spiral arms, about two thirds of the way from the centre to the fuzzy rim of the galaxy. Our galaxy is about 80,000 light years in diameter

and contains some million million (a thousand billion) stars, most of them like our Sun. From recent research most may have planets like our Sun.

The nearest galaxy like ours is about 800,000 light years away, though there are two small ones (the two Magellan ‘Clouds’) only about 80,000 light years distant. There are also stars between galaxies, so at a rough estimate there is, on average throughout the Universe, about one star per million cubic light years, so the number of stars in the Universe (as far as we can see) is about a million billion billion. Even if only one star in a billion has a planet in which life has evolved to intelligent beings like us, there would be a thousand such stars in our Galaxy and a million billion in the Universe! The Universe is far too big to



be created just for us!

The point of the *Genesis* story (and what we repeat in the Nicene Creed) is that God created everything that is, seen and unseen. Most of the early Israelites saw Yahweh as exclusively ‘their’ God, thereby excluding the gentiles who had their own gods. In the same way

most of us, perhaps unconsciously, see God as the creator of just ‘the World’ – our world – and interpret *seen* as the physical world, and *unseen* as the spiritual world of angels, etc. I prefer to interpret *unseen* in a more inclusive way (but not excluding angels, etc), to include bacteria and atoms, electrons and protons, pulsars and black holes, and all those other things and ideas we have yet to discover but don’t yet see. Surely God made these unseen things for us to discover and understand, as is implied in *Genesis*.

We may no longer be literalist *Creationists* who limit God to a time scale, who take it literally that God needed to rest after making the World, and who made an unjust decision until talked out of it by Moses! But we still think of God as having to keep an eye on Creation as if its imperfect design has still some bugs in it which need God’s direct intervention. Do we really think the design was inadequate to evolve Adam (and the soul of each one of us) which required God’s ‘personal’ intervention? This seems to me to be in contradiction to an omnipotent – and so unlimited – God.

God is not in the flow of time, located at some point in space at some point in time. God is completely outside and so unlimited by space and time. The act of creating is literally timeless – it is not restricted to a beginning, 15 billion years ago, and it is not continuing as corrections from time to time to an imperfect design. It simply is. ■

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Harry Potter and the Book Burners

Dunedin minister, Peter Frost, dismisses the scruples of some Christian critics

Among the sillier of criticisms I have read about J K Rowling's books, was one that appeared in a church magazine. The writer had grave misgivings regarding the magical and demonic characteristics of the story line. He was concerned that children might be motivated to want to become witches, and felt that children should be at least discouraged, or even prevented, from reading this dangerously suggestive material. In his conclusion, he said he of course had not read any of the Potter series himself – thus assuring his piety and confirming his ignorance.

He is right about one thing: children who read Harry Potter will want to become writers, as well as learning to ride a broomstick, fight a Norwegian Ridgeback Dragon, levitate feathers and, most of all, play Quiddich. All these are improbable or impossible, yet have formed the stuff of children's fantasy in various guises for centuries.

Recently I watched my granddaughter of five years don some wings and wave a wand with just the right "lift and flick". I noticed that she didn't actually try to fly nor was she dismayed when her wand failed to produce any magic. Instead she seemed happy playing and just as happy saying grace at tea that evening. Her life is full of imagination and fantasy: it is the way she tests the world for realities, and it helps her develop her values.

Harry Potter is an oppressed, abused and neglected child, like many thousands of the world's victims who don't necessarily populate our churches. Harry knows no other world but wishes for something better, starting with acceptance. Hagrid provides that, and reintroduces to Harry an idea of having caring parents, people who love him and always did. Harry discovers he can 'belong' to his own world.

Another excitement for him is magic,

the ancient idea of having power over an oppressor. We learn that magic must be treated with the utmost respect or the 'Ministry' will want answers. I well remember a wise pastor once saying to me, "Treat prayer with great care, you may well get what you ask for." Here lies power – and the oppressed Harry uses his power instinctively for good.

As the story unfolds in book after book, decency, honesty, loyalty, persistence and other such virtues overcome negative emotions and choices. And all the time we are faced with new manifestations of evil to both fear and repudiate.

Voldemort appears as an attachment to the querulous Professor Quirrell, who seems innocuous, but is an instrument of someone else's rule. We learn from Voldemort that good and evil don't exist, only power matters! We see that he is a shadow of a being, lifeless without the blood of others – and we know he is lying. We are fearful of his attack but find that Quirrell, his *alter ego*, disintegrates when he touches Harry's protective love, given by his sacrificial mother. Then we see that the frightening Voldemort becomes ephemeral and can only feint at Harry with no lasting effect. High drama for impressionable children.

So where did our unreading critic lead us? Certainly he didn't encourage a review of human values, nor did he suggest we look at the way both modern stories and ancient Scripture retell the struggle between good and evil. He made no allusion to Biblical stories of giants, monsters, miraculous staffs, levitating chariots, nor did he refer to compromised leaders and teachers, nor again did he mention that.

To destroy or burn a story because you disagree with it is simply fear – and fear is a product of evil. Ultimate evil is, according to the Bible, no-thing;

it is already overwhelmed because it has nothing to offer. This image is successfully recreated by Rowling's image of Voldemort. He has nothing but his quest for power, which in turn strips him of substance – so that we meet a non-person.

What do you suppose a child capable of reading a 700 page book might think of a critic who does not read, or of a book burner who would destroy her ability to learn and judge? What would she think of those who offer neither insight nor wisdom – in fact, no-thing? ■



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What true reconciliation demands

The Ash Garden

Dennis Bock

Bloomsbury, \$34.95

Atonement

Ian McEwan

Jonathan Cope, \$59.95

Review: Kathleen Doherty

In the days when the success of *Lent* appeared to be gauged largely by what one had managed to 'give up' for the full stretch, it was sometimes suggested that abstaining from reading novels and instead reading overtly spiritual tomes was a suitable penance. The implication was that novels were enjoyable and for entertainment only, of little value in honing moral values or uplifting the mind to eternal truths. Yet within the pages of novels can lurk profound lessons in how humans interact with each other and with God. They can teach lessons as memorable as any to be found in a work of philosophy.

Two such novels have enriched my *Lent*, and their re-reading will enrich the days after Easter too. These are not novels to be read once and dismissed. They are multi-layered and complex and immensely rewarding reads. Within their stories they fulfil Penelope Lively's requirements of her own novels: *taking the immediate and particular and giving it universal resonance*. Both cover a period of 50-plus years, both concern happenings which change lives and which reach a resolution, of sorts, only when the protagonists have reached a stage when, as one of them says, the temptation to look back is greater than the temptation to look forward.

The Ash Garden, by Canadian author Dennis Bock, was published in September 2001 when the events of September 11 in New York were focussing minds on the fragility of life in the face of attack, the shattering of what was thought to be secure, and the morality of military payback. It deals with an earlier event which destroyed

lives and society – in this case the destruction of Hiroshima in 1945, and the eventual intertwining of the lives of a Japanese woman who had survived the devastation, a German-born scientist who was one of the team which had developed the bomb, and his wife, the daughter of a Jewish father who had escaped from Austria to Canada and eventual marriage to a man too wrapped up in his own guilt to understand her.

Emiko Amai was six in the summer when "they burned away my face". It is stated with a simplicity which is truly stunning. Her parents are killed instantly – as an adult she gets a little comfort from knowing that neither had to live without the other – her brother, two years younger, dies of his injuries in the hospital bed beside hers. She is left hideously scarred, but is one of the group chosen to travel to the United States for reconstructive surgery. She subsequently remains in the States and forges a successful career as a television producer, and in this role seeks out the nuclear scientist Anton Böll in an effort to understand the thinking behind the event which destroyed her life.

She finds a man who is living in his own hell, emotionally isolated, unable to recognise the pain of his wife's experience, rationalising the bomb as the lesser evil required to stop a greater evil. He has never stopped thinking about it. His place in engineering Emiko's travel to America for surgery does not endear him to her – quite the reverse. These damaged souls all have much to forgive; their struggle is to accept the hands held out to them, to realise that reconciliation demands that each step towards the other.

For Briony Tallis, in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, forgiveness is something she seeks continually for the 60 years following the incident which changes everyone's lives.

Briony is one of the most odious 13 year-olds ever to have emerged in literature – precocious, manipulative, self-absorbed, she is unable to grasp that other people are as real as she is, that they are not there merely to fit into her fantasies. In 1935, when the novel opens, she is no longer a child, but not yet an adult, and in this twilight area misconstrues an encounter she witnesses between her sister Cecilia and Robbie, the son of the family's charlady in their great country house who, with the family's funding, is aiming for a career in medicine. With only an overactive imagination on which to draw she is instrumental in having the innocent Robbie imprisoned for rape: his life is ruined, and her realisation, years later, that she was wrong, can do nothing to change that or to heal the rift with her sister.

World War 2, with its opportunity for personal pain to be lost in sheer hard work for the cause, gives Briony the opportunity to make amends, in part, for the damage she has done. It also presents the challenge of separation for Robbie and Cecilia, still together after his time in prison. One, in the ranks of the army, lives through the retreat from France and the evacuation from Dunkirk; the other advances her nursing career, waits, and keeps faith.

But *Atonement* is more than a narrative, absorbing though that is. In a clever literary twist it turns out to be the novel which Briony, in her 70s at the end of the book, has written as her act of repentance. In accepting and portraying herself as so flawed and so needing of redemption, she has achieved peace. This is an Easter novel as well as a Lenten one.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the inevitable outcomes of the actions of one's youth, nor are they achieved merely with the passing years. They demand a resolve and an effort of will. Ian McEwan in his ninth, and arguably best, novel, and Dennis Bock in his first have created wounded characters whose struggles will not easily be forgotten. ■

Two prophetic voices for today

Seeking Spirituality

Ronald Rolheiser

Hodder & Stoughton 228pp

I Call You Friends

Timothy Radcliffe OP

Continuum, N Y & London 225pp

Review: Michael Hill IC

Both Ronald Rolheiser and Timothy Radcliffe are academics with a rare gift of communication. Rolheiser's columns in the *NZ Catholic* are well known and appreciated. Timothy Radcliffe was first Provincial of the English Dominicans and then, for nine years, Master-General of the Order worldwide. During those years he was often called on to speak and write to wider audiences. Both are rare prophetic voices for these difficult times of retrenchment.

In *Seeking Spirituality* Ronald Rolheiser echoes a concern which has preoccupied the columns of *Tui Motu* (see *May and June issues 2001*) – the evident disparity between a universal hunger for spirituality together with a distaste for organised religion. “We are,” he says, “witnessing a drastic decline in church life... A divorce is taking place between spirituality and ecclesiology, between those who understand themselves to be on a spiritual quest and those inside our churches” (p 32).

For Rolheiser, spirituality is not an esoteric, fringe activity. It is central to everyone's life. “All of us are precisely fired into life with a certain madness that comes from the gods... what we do with it is our spirituality”. He distinguishes various spiritualities: that which is peculiar to each Christian tradition; the paschal mystery of dying and rising impacting on all; the spirituality of justice and of peace-making; of sexuality; of what he calls our ‘sustenance’. His thesis is that the Christian faith is centred on the Incarnation of Christ: understanding Incarnation is the key to everything.

Here are a few more gems. On *celibacy*: “..when Christ went to bed at night he was in real solidarity with the many persons who, not by choice but by circumstance, sleep alone... Anyone who because of unwanted circumstances is effectively blocked from enjoying sexual consummation is a victim of a most painful poverty... To sleep alone is to be poor. To sleep alone is to be stigmatised... outside the norm for human intimacy and to feel acutely the sting of that... When Jesus went to bed alone he was in solidarity with that pain, in solidarity with the poor” (p 199). Comforting words indeed for those who struggle with celibacy, vowed or not.

In another place he asks what does it mean to ‘lose one's soul’? Not eternal damnation, he suggests. Rather, it is to become ‘unglued’, to fall apart. “When I don't know where I'm going, then I lose my soul. This, as much as the question of eternity, is what Jesus meant when he asked; *what does it profit a man...*” (p 13)

This idea provides a link with our other author. In one of his addresses, printed in *I Call You Friends*, Timothy Radcliffe speaks of a ‘runaway world’. Our world is on a mad helter-skelter, going nowhere at an ever-increasing pace. Yet it is precisely to today's mad world that Christian mission is directed. We may not have a solution – but at least we can share our wisdom.

I Call You Friends is an anthology of Radcliffe's writings, addresses and homilies – some delivered to his fellow religious, some to wider audiences. Like the good preacher he is, he often has a telling story. He describes a party celebrating the vows of a Dominican Sister in a Portuguese barrio. A thousand people came. Why? “Because if she would come and share their life and make a promise to be poor with them, then there must be hope” (p 95).

The first section of the book is a series of interviews about Radcliffe's life, conducted for the French religious journal *La Croix*. Beneath the expanse of urbane and witty comment there is a rich profundity. Here is an example. The reporter quotes a comment about Timothy from an English paper: “He has the capacity for associating the most progressive tolerance with the most conservative orthodoxy”. Was that an accurate description?

“Not in the least,” Radcliffe replies. “That sort of opposition is typical of a way of looking at the world that I absolutely do not share. First, I don't think I am really tolerant. Nor do I think most progressives are: the most intolerant people I know are ideologues of left or right... I do care what other people think. If I don't agree with them, I want to tell them so...” (p 80). There is an engaging simplicity and bubbling humour about these writings. Timothy has already borne weighty responsibilities, yet he constantly reveals a youthful freshness of spirit.

Both these books I can recommend. Both authors write well. Both are thoroughly in touch with their world. And both spring from a richly Catholic, prophetic tradition. ■

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The most dangerous man on the planet

George W. Bush's rhetoric in his 'enduring war against terrorism' appears to be more and more an excuse for maintaining a wartime status in the minds of Americans. It is pure propaganda designed for the US public. He now bundles Iraq, Iran and North Korea together as the 'axis of evil' in his worldwide fight against terrorism. According to Bush, these countries harbour weapons of mass destruction, so they must be contained either by covert financial and diplomatic pressure or by straight-out war. Bush ignores world opinion and all international treaties and is reasserting American technological supremacy abroad. It is the idea of an unending conflict which takes the place of the Cold War – American ideology against a supposed enemy.

The defence of American values as against the values of Islam has become a way of quelling dissent and unpopular opinion. Bush's propaganda spreads the idea that 'everyone' knows which culture or civilisation is superior. The American way of life is known and accepted as superior while 'theirs' is different and often barbaric. What is described as 'Islam' (and its supporters) is couched in terms that whip up feelings of hostility against a part of the world that happens to be of strategic importance for its oil. In this age of globalisation, the idea of an 'axis of evil' is anathema to the principle of globalisation. America cannot isolate itself from the rest of the world.

Another purpose of propaganda is to hide the truth. Figures are emerging of the civilian casualties in Afghanistan which surpass the sad number of those killed on September 11. The country is ruined, its infrastructure destroyed, but America has promised the least amount of money for its rehabilitation. Bush, according to his acting ambassador Robert Fitts, is now moving on to

the Philippines "to help eliminate the terrorist parasites". His defence spending, rising by \$379b, is plunging the US government into deficit. His further tax cuts of \$591b for the rich will come from funds allocated for social security, Medicaid and environmental protection expenditure. American

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

propaganda is alienating the whole of the Arab world and its so-called allies against terrorism. The name of Osama bin Laden has been dropped from Bush's limited vocabulary. Bush himself has taken on the mantle of the most dangerous man on the planet.

Jaded stadium

It seems an appropriate time to warn readers of two events coming this year which will occupy the media to the point of hysteria. You must all gird your loins, as they say, for the rugby season which is upon us already. Then the general election, on which this column will comment later in the year.

Now rugby is taken very seriously in Christchurch. Lancaster Park – oops! *Jade Stadium* – is being extended skywards with a monolithic concrete structure to accommodate the fans who do not suffer from vertigo, who have binoculars, ear plugs and plenty of money to buy the expensive seats. You can take the kids, but buy some life insurance first. All spectators will be subjected to deafening music that will herald the appearance of riders dressed in funny costumes (Marian Hobbs would say "jolly"), who will emerge from a papier-mâché castle façade. The opposing teams have names such as The Hurricanes, Chiefs, Bulls, Neanderthals and Stormers. They will be roundly

booed, spat upon and have empty beer cans thrown at them. Then, The Crusaders will appear and they will get the same treatment if they don't perform well. There will be ugly scenes, broken heads and fights on-field and off-field. This is professional rugby. You can read about it in the local paper which, in the rugby season, has more about all this than about George W. Bush. This will go on until next November. When I think about it – I need a lie-down and a cup of tea.

A bad appointment

The appointment of Ralph Norris as managing director and chief executive of Air New Zealand is outrageous. It indicates, dramatically, the pervasive influence of the Business Roundtable and the incestuous juggling of directorships among its members, many of whom have been proved sadly lacking in talent. It is another example of the lack of capable senior management in New Zealand.

Ralph Norris, ex-chairman of NZ Business Roundtable, was a board member of Air NZ together with such luminaries as Bill Wilson and Greg Terry, and was therefore partly responsible for the disastrous collapse of the airline last year. His lack of experience in airline operations along with that of the chairman, John Palmer, must send shivers up the spine of Michael Cullen.

One thing is certain. Private consultants will be rubbing their hands and their consultancy fees will be a considerable cost for the board. The government bailed out the company for a billion dollars on behalf of New Zealand taxpayers. Was the main shareholder, the government, consulted? No – it was informed after the appointment. Such is the arrogance of Roundtable thinking. Perhaps Ralph Norris's first call will be to his old friend Sir Selwyn Cushing to come back on board the gravy plane. ■

Christians celebrating Chinese New Year

Lunar New Year became real for me this year for the first time in my life. I was in Singapore for a meeting. Singapore has a seven-days-a-week shopping culture. But as I arrived, shops and business were already closing down in anticipation of the two days of public holidays that would mark the beginning of Chinese New Year. Shops are open in Singapore every day in the year – be damned! Nothing was going to interfere with the celebration of Chinese New Year.

A feature of the celebration is family dinners. Offspring gather in the home of their parents and the family comes together at least on these days of the year. I was privileged to be invited by a fellow Redemptorist to join with his widowed mother and his four sisters, not to mention in-laws and grandchildren, for a festive dinner. I was at the heart of the celebration of Chinese New Year.

One of my colleague's sisters was married to a Dutchman. In conversation with him it turned out that he was from the province of Holland called Zeeland. We were mutually intrigued to meet in Singapore, one from the Netherlands and the other from a country on the

other side of the world that drew its name from the other's home patch.

A feature of every family's lead up to Chinese New Year is the preparation of a series of red envelopes. Red is for the Chinese the colour of joy and celebration. Money is put in these envelopes and they are given to friends and to revered individuals. I was embarrassed as a mere visitor to Novena Church in Thomson Road to have such envelopes pressed on me, an embarrassment that was alleviated by the realisation that a fair proportion of my incidental expenses in Singapore was covered by these gifts.

In shops red banners and decorations proliferated bearing New Year greetings in Chinese and in English. In that section of old Singapore where traditional two-storied Chinese houses still stand, the main street was spanned by a series of red arches celebrating the feast.

Novena Church had a special Family Mass at 10.30 pm on the eve of the New Year. There was an overflow attendance. Except for a visitor like myself and a few non-Chinese spouses, the congregation was made up entirely of Chinese Singaporeans. The preacher dwelt on the traditional

Chinese values exemplified in Chinese New Year. Family solidarity, generosity, forgiveness of injuries, the making of a fresh start. He pointed out how well these age-old values fitted in with the Christian faith of the congregation. He exhorted his hearers to remain faithful to their culture.

There was an ironic twist to this. Except for some sentences in the latter part of the sermon, every word spoken, every hymn sung, was in English. This English language Mass drew a much larger attendance than a New Year's Mass celebrated next day in Mandarin. Our Singaporean fellow Catholics are so bi-cultural that they are quite at ease when they use the English language to celebrate and extol the values of their Chinese heritage.

In this and in a number of other ways, they live out their faith in a fashion different to ourselves in New Zealand. But a Christian way of life, it certainly is. A visit to Singapore at the time of Chinese New Year was a healthy reminder to a Kiwi of the varied forms Christian belief and living can take. ■

The first of a series of pieces on aspects of Christian faith and life, by Fr Humphrey O'Leary CSsR

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A success story in ethics

Having a famous name on your programme is one way of raising the profile of a conference and encouraging a good attendance. So the *Otago Bioethics Centre* was onto a good thing inviting the Governor General, Dame Sylvia Cartwright, to be keynote speaker at their February meeting. In welcoming Dame Sylvia, Professor Donald Evans noted that if it hadn't been for her, there would have been no conference and, indeed, most of those attending would probably not have been involved in bioethics at all.

Dame Sylvia retold her experience when, as a relatively new District Court Judge, she was given the task of conducting an inquiry into the treatment of women with cervical cancer, at National Women's Hospital during the '70s and '80s. An article in *Metro* magazine had implied that women had been subjected to being part of a research programme without either their knowledge or consent. The Government launched an inquiry which at the time received extensive media

coverage. The outcome was the much heralded Cartwright Report.

In this Dame Sylvia recommended a series of significant new measures:

- there should be a Health and Disability Commissioner – and now there is one;
- there be Health and Disability Advocates in hospitals – and now we have them;
- there should be regional Ethics Committees. There are now 12 of these throughout the country with over a hundred members, medical and lay;
- that ethics needed to be taught more rigorously in our medical schools. This led to the establishment of the *Otago Bioethics Centre* which has organised many conferences such as this over recent years, aiming to assist those making difficult bioethical decisions.

All these structures have been set up with one primary aim – the protection of the rights of individual patients and participants in research projects. The most pressing demand of the Cartwright Report was that people's

rights be respected and that those involved in any form of research be fully informed and give their consent.

Dame Sylvia has a commanding presence which engenders instant respect and attention. At the same time she comes across as a very human individual and speaks with warmth and humour. She was not merely telling a story from the past. She was giving a human face to the field of bioethics, reminding her listeners of the basic human values of dignity and respect, compassion and humility.

It is ironic that only a few days later, a scandal erupted about the storage of the hearts of dead babies without the consent or knowledge of their families. This simply underlines the need for absolute care and vigilance on the part of medical personnel when working in areas of ethical sensitivity.

Dame Sylvia is a splendid example of a public servant who exposes a situation of serious shortcoming in society, and initiates the sort of changes which significantly enhance the public good. ■

Gerard Aynsley, is parish priest of Mornington, in Dunedin, and has a particular interest in



A Retreat with Edith Stein

Trusting God's Purpose

Patricia L Marks

Edith Stein's search for truth led her first to agnosticism and eventually to Catholicism and life as a Carmelite nun. Her philosophy, revealed in this seven-day retreat, is simple: ultimately we all live at the hand of God. The wise among us will accept and cherish this fact and trust in God's purpose. Pbk, 74 pp \$33.00 (post 80c)

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